Driving Indiana’s Economic Growth

HEARINGS, MEETINGS AND MEDIA...OH MY!

PART 1
THE MEDIA
Introductions

- Who’s who in INDOT’s Office of Communications (Central Office and District Public Information Officers).

Communications Department

Gary Abell, Deputy Commissioner

Central Office - Public Information Office

- Andy Dietrick, Communications Director
- Shelley Haney, Communications Specialist
- Megan Kaderavek, Communications Specialist
- Jennifer Tate, Communications Specialist
- Pam Grant, Administrative Assistant
District Office Communications

- Crawfordsville – Debbie Calder
- Ft. Wayne – Stacie McCormick
- Greenfield – Will Wingfield
- LaPorte – Joshua Bingham
- Seymour – Marvin Jenkins
- Vincennes – Cher Goodwin

Today’s speakers

- Andy Dietrich
- Stacie McCormick
- Megan Kaderavek
- Will Wingfield
- INDOT Communications Team
Today’s presentation

- The benefits of media relations
- Researching and effectively constructing your message
- Tips for a successful media interview
- Utilizing press releases, media advisories and crisis communications
- Review and questions or comments?

Media relations

- The media can be intimidating.
Media relations

- The media can also be your best friend in getting positive publicity and public support for a project or program.

Why should I talk to the media?

- The media plays a vital role in the dissemination of information to the public.
- You have an opportunity to affect the story.
- You are the expert on your project or program and a valuable resource to the media.
Building bridges

- Be accessible to the media.
- Be responsive to deadlines.
- Speak about facts only – never speculate or give opinions unless you are being interviewed as an expert in the field and giving a professional opinion.

“The Reporter” is on line 4

- The media is calling....now what?
- You are not obligated to answer any questions immediately.....in fact, it’s best to gather some information first.
Media calls questionnaire

- Having a questionnaire notepad by the phone for media inquiries will assist in getting the reporter their story as well as assisting you in creating your response or message.

Media calls questionnaire items

- Incoming Date/Incoming Time
- Reporter’s Name, Phone, E-mail, Fax
- Organization (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.)
- Reporter’s Deadline (Date and Time)
- When will this story run or air?
- Note person’s name responding to the reporter on your questionnaire
Media calls questionnaire items

- When reporters call regarding a project or program ask them other questions:
- Is there a specific aspect to this story you are interested in?
- Are you interviewing others regarding this story?
- Your response (to be noted after interview for your records).

Media call exercise
Think about your message

- How does your message affect your audience?
- Remember people will want to know..."what’s in it for me?"

Who is your audience?

- Are you trying to persuade a particular group or person?
- Who are the people that can persuade this group or person?
- What angle do I put on the topic?
Remember the “big picture”

- What are the goals of your organization?
- What are the goals of a particular project or program?

Effective messaging

- Messages are a road map. Start with where you are and then take the audience where you want to go.
More messaging to consider…

- What do people want to know?
- How do you gain their support?
- What obstacles are there?
- What needs to happen or what do people need to do to reach your goal?
- How would things be different if you had support toward your goal?

Construct your message—101

- Have a primary message.
- Have 2-3 secondary messages.
- Remember your messages should support your goals.
Construct your message-201

- Make sure your primary and secondary messages are simple – ideas that can be expressed in one or two sentences.
- Be consistent with your message throughout all communications.
- Messages must be repeated to have an impact.

Construct your message-301

- Be accurate with your messages – again, facts only – never speculate or give opinion unless you are being interviewed as an expert in the field and giving a professional opinion.
- If appropriate, cite sources to support your message.
- If the topic is not your area of expertise, refer the reporter to someone else in your organization.
Lastly, what’s unique about your project or program? Journalists are always looking for a new spin on an “old” topic. Having a unique approach or a new product, etc. will be news-worthy.

Avoid detours

The media may have another agenda. Use their questions to get back to your message. Don’t let them detour you!
Messaging exercise

Before the interview

- Like a good Boy Scout.......... be prepared!
- Rehearse and get feedback from others. Then rehearse some more!
It’s “Show Time”—Scene 1

- State your messages clearly and with confidence. Then repeat.
- If you don’t have an answer, it’s okay. Offer to get an answer and get back with the reporter.
- Avoid jokes or nervous laughter.
- Avoid using industry jargon and acronyms.
- Try not to be nervous – the media are “people” too.

It’s “Show Time”—Scene 2

Body language “don’ts” include:

- Crossing your arms (keep at your side).
- Running your hands through your hair.
- Covering your mouth while speaking or touching your nose, eyes, etc.
- Jingling change or keys in your pockets.
It’s “Show Time”—Scene 3

More body language “don’ts”:

- If on camera, look directly at the reporter, not the camera.
- Fidgeting, swaying or shifting your weight from one foot to the other – and remember good posture.
- If sitting, do not swivel or slouch in your chair.
- Absolutely no gum or tobacco products.

It’s “Show Time”—Scene 4

- Remember to smile (unless your topic is a somber one). Even while interviewing over the phone – your smile will “show” over the phone.
- There is no such thing as “off the record.”
Media interview exercise

Any volunteers from our audience?

Now that you’re media savvy...

- Be proactive! Use press releases and media advisories to communicate with the media about your projects and programs.
- Take advantage of weekly/monthly radio or television shows and provide a visual, if available.
- Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- What’s the difference between a press release and a media advisory?
A press release typically is written on your organization's letterhead in paragraph form and includes more in-depth information and attributes such as quotes from the experts and people in charge of a project or program (governors, mayors, directors, project managers, engineers, etc.)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 3, 2007

LANE RESTRICTION SCHEDULED IN HAMILTON COUNTY
Workers to make repairs to temporary barrier wall

HAMILTON COUNTY, Ind. – A lane restriction on Interstate 465 (I-465) in Hamilton County is scheduled for Thursday, January 4. Beginning at 10 a.m., 2,000 feet of roadway in the eastbound right lane between Ditch Road and Spring Mill Road will be closed. During this restriction, motorists will use the center and left lanes. This repair is expected to be completed on January 4 at 2 p.m. Work will occur weather permitting.

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Media Contact: Shelley Haney, INDOT Office of Communications, (317) 233-4676
Media Advisories

- Media Advisories are quick “bullets” and often state the facts of a project or program. Sometimes a media advisory is sent as a follow-up or reminder to the press after a press release was sent previously.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2006

MEDIA ADVISORY
INDOT to mark early completion of I-69 interchange work

** Due to inclement weather, event will be held at rain location. **

FISHERS, Ind. – Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Commissioner Tom Sharp, with officials representing Hamilton County, will celebrate the completion of safety and traffic flow improvements at the State Road 37 and 116th Street interchange with Interstate 69.

DATE: Tuesday, September 12, 2006

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Fishers Town Hall Council Auditorium
One Municipal Drive (One block north of 116th Street)
Fishers, IN 46038

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INDOT Greenfield District Contact: Will Wingfield, 317-467-3479 or wwingfield@indot.in.gov.
Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up!

- Your story may be competing with many other news-worthy stories. Follow-up phone calls to the assignment desk or editors may help get your release to the top of the pile.

“Late-breaking” news...

- Know that despite your best efforts and your new great relationship with the media, a late-breaking “big story” could bump your interview or story.
Plan B

- Don’t be discouraged if your story does get bumped due to other news. Try to get some post-event publicity for your project or program. Also, it’s a good idea to follow up in the later stages or conclusion of the project or program as well and tout your success!

Who, what, when, where?

- Press releases and media advisories should include the basics – who, what, when, where, why and possibly how.
- Contact information should be on your communications.
- Distribute via e-mail or fax – ask your local media how they prefer to receive these communications.
Track your results

- Keep track of your news clips and electronic coverage about your organization’s projects and programs for future use or reference.

Crisis communications

- What you say and do, especially in a crisis, can have a huge impact on how your organization is perceived by the public.
- Have a response plan in place should a crisis arrive and when the crisis arrives, implement that plan.
Crisis communications

- Your plan should address different crisis scenarios with template responses.
- When it’s time to respond to a crisis, the facts can be inserted into these template responses with your organization’s plan to reduce or eliminate a future crisis of this nature.

Crisis communications

- In your response, first and foremost, express concern and sympathy for any injured people or family members if there are fatalities.
- If you don’t have an answer say so and state you will respond when you have an answer – try to avoid “no comment.”
Crisis communications exercise

Let’s review...

- Your relationship with the media can affect the story. Remember most people get their information from the media.
- Communicate your message effectively – state your messages clearly and with confidence. Then repeat.
Let’s review…

- Remember tips for a successful media interview. Practice to gain confidence or brush up on your interviewing skills.
- Contact your district public information officer if you have any questions or need to consult with a communications professional.

Questions or comments?
Thank you!

District Office contact information

- Crawfordsville – Debbie Calder
dcalder@indot.in.gov or (765) 361-5236
- Ft. Wayne – Stacie McCormick
smccormick@indot.in.gov or (260) 399-7330
- Greenfield – Will Wingfield
wwingfield@indot.in.gov or (317) 467-3479
- LaPorte – Joshua Bingham
jbingham@indot.in.gov or (219) 325-7455
- Seymour – Marvin Jenkins
mjenkins2@indot.in.gov or (812) 524-3733
- Vincennes – Cher Goodwin
cgoodwin@indot.in.gov or (812) 895-5649
Central Office contact information

- Andy Dietrick
  adietrick@indot.in.gov or (317) 232-5503
- Shelley Haney
  shaney@indot.in.gov or (317) 233-4676
- Megan Kaderavek
  mkaderavek@indot.in.gov or (317) 232-8558
- Jennifer Tate
  jtate@indot.in.gov or (317) 234-1213