

Working with the Media

By Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist- Minnesota NRCS

Making News: Tips for getting noticed!

- Make sure your information is newsworthy and targeted to the appropriate audience
- Find out the best way to contact reporters—mail, e-mail or fax!
- Don't issue a news release until you have something of substance to say

More on getting noticed!

- Learn the publication or station deadlines
- Radio/Print or TV media



How to track your news releases

- Check the local papers or listen to the local radio or TV stations
- Utilize the internet search engines such as Google

Earned Media Coverage

- The best way to implement your communication strategy is to keep repeating your message to a targeted audience
- Make your News Newsworthy
- Often, what we think is newsworthy and exciting might make a reporter yawn!



<http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

- Mention MN NRCS webpage in your news releases
- <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>
- Repeating the webpage address will make people aware of where to do for conservation news



Get your News to the Right Person

- This will take time and effort
- Call the media to see which reporters covers your agency or a topic, such as agriculture or the environment
- Follow up with a call to see if the reporter needs additional information



Other ways to Earn Media Attention:

- Write a letter to the editor
- Create a Public Service Announcement (PSA)
- Stage and event



Freebies: Don't forget Your Community!

- Many cable companies provide free production facilities and air time on their public access channels.
- Be creative and don't be afraid to ask for what you want. The worst they can say to you is "no." More than like, though, they just might say yes!



Public Service Announcements (PSA's)

- Don't do any creative work on PSAs until you've thought long and hard about your target audience
- Too many people launch public education campaigns without any thought or research



PSA's

- Check with the local radio station to see if they have a preferred length on a PSA
- 30 seconds, 45 seconds or 60 seconds
- Develop the script you want to use as a PSA and then practice for the specific time frame



Agency Newsletters

- Work with your local SWCD, FSA and Extension offices as these agencies have Newsletters
- Use digital pictures to enhance your printed message



Share your results

- Share your media results with the Public Affairs Specialist
- NRCS National Office is interested in hearing the story from the field



Sharing your conservation story with Public Affairs Spec.

- Let your Area Conservationist, Kevin Daw know if you have a story line that needs to be told.
- MY.NRCS, MN Web page and Current Developments are a few avenues that are available for telling your story



AG Learn

- Enhance your skills by using the courses which are available on AG Learn. Numerous courses are available for your use!
- PIT STOP- Public Information Tips located on the MN NRCS web page contains tips for NRCS employees



Thank you

- If you have additional questions about working with the media or Public Relations, please call Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist in Saint Paul, MN
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