



Press Releases

A Press Release is a brief news announcement about any newsworthy event which can be submitted to the media for publication or broadcast. They are usually associated with print media (newspapers or magazines) but maybe used by radio and television as well.

Press Releases should answer six basic questions:

- WHO** (is involved)?
- WHAT** (is happening)?
- WHEN** (is the event taking place)?
- WHERE** (is the event occurring)?
- WHY** (is the event important)?
- HOW** (does the event effect the group)?

Press Releases should follow these basic guidelines which the media prefers:

- Type the press release; double space; it should be not more that 5 lines if possible.
- Keep the lead sentence short (30 words or less) ...it may be used as a headline.
- Indicate "PRESS RELEASE" and "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" at the top.
- Make sure the contact (for the club) person's name and phone is clearly listed.
- Indicate a date for release (if other than "IMMEDIATE"); submit press release 7-10 days in advance of the last date you'd like it released.
- Make sure first and last names of people are given and spelled correctly.
- Keep the press release simple...if someone at the paper wants more details or information, he/she will call the contact person.
- Look at how press releases are done by the paper or television/radio station. Write in the same manner and arrangement.
- Type "END" or "30" at the end of your copy...try to keep it to one page.
- Identify clearly who the press release is to go to on the press release and/or the envelope; better to do both in case they get separated.
- Be prepared. A press release could be catch enough that a full article may be written instead of it. You may get a phone call for more details and filler.
- If it's after-the-fact information, still get it in on a timely basis with an "Immediate" release date.
- If you are unsure about any of the above, contact the paper and ask how they would like things done. They would prefer having to do little rewriting or editing. If it's too much work, it will probably get "circular-filed".

Keep track of your press releases by (1) filing chronologically or chronologically by topic (i.e., meeting notices, community service events, county events, etc.) and (2) clipping the released information to a copy of the original press release or by noting where it is on an audio or video tape.

Pictures usually don't go with a press release. Most papers use them with a longer article. Occasionally, however, they need filler and a good picture with a short caption may be just the thing they are looking for. Check with the paper.

General News Coverage/Articles -- Photography

Success/Achievement Stories

Articles can always be written to point up the success or achievement of a 4H club or member. Pictures are usually taken and submitted along with the written article. The article should be simple, brief and yet catchy. Try to answer the question: "why should this individual or club be singled out for special recognition?"

Articles should be expanded- upon press releases, answering the same six questions but in more detail. The hardest part is to consider the article from a stranger's point of view. If you were not involved with or knowledgeable about 4-H, would you read this article?

You might want to work on that communication link with your local paper, and provide a reporter with the basic facts, and let him/her write the story. Inviting 3 local reporters to events that you feel are newsworthy and which may have follow-up article or picture material for the paper, will save you a lot of effort.

If you single out one member or one achievement for the month of November, for example, it is important to try to cover all achievements or get coverage for all members in some way. Reading about oneself in the paper sometimes encourages youth to do more so they see their name or picture again. Giving one or two members all the coverage will only turn others off.

Photography

Study photographs used by a paper to which you will be submitting information. Call and talk with a staff photographer or an editor on what kinds of shots representing different events they feel would be best.

You should have written permission from people who are photographed for publicity purpose. A simple form would be like:

Permission is hereby given to use my name and/or photographs for any publicity purposes.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____