

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL MEDIA RELATIONS

PERSONAL CONTACTS are invaluable. Visit the offices of local print and broadcast editors. Introduce yourself and your program. Be sure to leave your name, business address and phone number. Establish a personal and professional rapport which will encourage editors to consider you a potential reliable news source in the future.

DEADLINES are critical. Find out when newspaper editions go to press and when your local news broadcasts are scheduled. Make certain that releases or statements are in the hands of editors well in advance of deadlines. Make an effort not to phone or visit editors when you know a deadline is imminent. Be considerate of the professional constraints under which they must operate.

BREVITY is always desirable. News releases or statements should be clearly stated and to the point. Strive for a single page, double spaced, if possible. Always include the name and phone number of someone who can be contacted easily for further information or clarification. This information can be typed in the upper left or right hand corner of the page under your letterhead.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTORS are often more easily accessible than broadcast news editors or reporters. They are most often responsible for the taping, scheduling and airing of the public service announcements. They may also be helpful in scheduling appearances on local “talk shows”. Their interest in you and your program should be cultivated in the same way that editors and reporters are encouraged to develop a rapport with you.

“TALK SHOW” APPEARANCES should be made only by individuals who are thoroughly knowledgeable of your program and authorized to represent your program publicly. It is advisable to provide interviewer with background materials on your program well in advance of the date for taping or airing. If you intend to publicize your phone number, be certain to mention it several times during the course of the “talk show” interview.

OBSERVE ONE CARDINAL RULE when dealing with the media. If you do not know the answer, **do not** guess or attempt to evade the issue. Admit that you do not know the answer and assure your interviewer that you will investigate and report back. Then, be sure to follow-up.