

Mommie!

Please read me...

a Press Release!

2017 NATIONAL PAO ACADEMY, CIVIL AIR PATROL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

LT. COL, ANDREW OPPMANN, CAP

Cracking the Code of CAP.NEWS

How you can get your content on Civil Air Patrol's primary news and information platform

Newsroom



Search & Rescue Saves Surpass Century Mark for Fiscal 2017
August 16, 2017
Col. Martha Morris, Arizona Wing commander, calls Civil Air Patrol's National Cell Phone Forensics Team "The League of Secret Super Heroes:" "They work in the dark of night, many hours, sifting data ..."
[Read more](#)

Multimedia

Contact Information

CAP National Headquarters
105 S. Hansell Street
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112
Tel: 877.227.9142 Exts. 250, 251, 255
Email: publicaffairs@capnhq.gov

Feature Stories



Aerospace Education Great Lakes Region's Residential Flight

Social Media

Facebook



Civil Air Patrol 
55,839 likes
 [Learn More](#)



Residential Flight Scholarship Test Program Produces 5 New Private Pilots

August 04, 2017

Five Civil Air Patrol cadets are now certified private single-engine pilots, thanks to Civil Air Patrol's Residential Flight Scholarship program. The new pilots were pinned in a ceremony Wednesday at the Air Mobility Command Museum at Dover ...



36112, August 22, 2017

Kentucky Wing Participates in Eclipse Activity Response

Mission Focuses on Hopkinsville

Kentucky Wing members helped ensure that Great American Eclipse-related activity around Hopkinsville – which laid claim to being the closest city on Earth to the celestial wonder – remained under control over the weekend and through Monday evening.

Wyo. Unit Launches 'Superday' Recruitment Push

Cheyenne Composite Squadron Uses Car Show Entry as Opportunity

Tech. Sgt. Salvatore Chiporo
Public Affairs Officer
Cheyenne Composite Squadron
Wyoming Wing

Members of the Wyoming Wing's Cheyenne Composite Squadron used the 35th annual Cheyenne Superday at Lions Park as a recruiting and networking opportunity – a campaign bolstered by the unit deputy commander's entry in the event's car show.



The activity, sponsored by HollyFrontier Refinery, annually celebrates Cheyenne and its culture. Such attractions as the car show, rides, live music, games, exhibits, arts and crafts and refreshment brought hundreds of Wyoming residents to the park.

The car show included

Cracking the Code of CAP.NEWS: Feature Stories (top)



August 24, 2017

FEMA Corps Volunteers Learn About CAP at National HQ

Group of 6 Also Attends NESAs

A FEMA Corps team from AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps learned about Civil Air Patrol's missions and programs while serving this summer at National Headquarters.

- Content written by PAOs from a general-interest perspective that could appeal to the general public as well as CAP members.
- Strong examples of this style of writing and story selection have traditionally been found in the print edition of Volunteer Magazine.
- Typically, these stories are 400 words and above.
- They include photos and video.

Cracking the Code of CAP.NEWS: Wing News



36112, August 22, 2017

Kentucky Wing Participates in Eclipse Activity Response

Mission Focuses on Hopkinsville

Kentucky Wing members helped ensure that Great American Eclipse-related activity around Hopkinsville – which laid claim to being the closest city on Earth to the celestial wonder – remained under control over the weekend and through Monday evening.

- Shorter, newsy reports that are drawn from good works and significant happenings by Wings, Groups and Squadrons.
- Typically, these stories range from 100 to 400 words and should be quick-read, timely news briefs.
- Examples could include:
 - Coverage of Wing or Region conferences, events or training exercises;
 - Good works in service to community;
 - Or other recognition.

Cracking the Code of CAP.NEWS: Press Releases



AUBURN COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SER-AL-113)
CIVIL AIR PATROL, ALABAMA WING
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
PO BOX 327
AUBURN, AL 36830-0327

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Original Release: November 5, 2007

SQUADRON TO LAY MEMORIAL WREATHS AT FORT MITCHELL Annual Wreaths Across America Event Honors Armed Forces; Public Invited to Lay Wreaths on Headstones of Fallen Heroes

AUBURN, Ala. — The Auburn Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol is sponsoring the second annual 'Wreaths Across America' event held this Saturday, Dec. 15, 2007, at 12:00 p.m. EST (11:00 a.m. CST) on the grounds of the Fort Mitchell National Cemetery in Seale, Ala. Seven memorial wreaths representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Merchant Marines, and POWs/MIAs will be placed to remember those who gave their lives in service for our country.

In addition, smaller wreaths donated by the Auburn squadron and other organizations will be available to members of the public to place on the headstones of fallen heroes. Members of the public are invited attend; anyone wishing to place a wreath may contact Capt. Christopher Tate, CAP, by email at ChristopherTate@Charter.net or by phone at 205.240.4169 for more information.

December 15 marks the 16th anniversary of wreath donation for graves at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., and the second year of the Wreaths Across America campaign, which brings the same remembrance wreaths to over 230 national and state veterans cemeteries and monuments across the nation.

The specially made wreaths are donated by Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine. The full story can be seen and heard on line at the below Wreaths Across America website at www.wreathscrossamerica.org. Sponsors can donate online at the website or at www.cap.gov/visitors/donations.

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with almost 60,000 members nationwide. CAP performs 95 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the almost 25,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 60 years.

On the web at www.cap.gov and www.alwg.cap.gov

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Media Inquiries: Jonathan W. Lartigue
Public Affairs Officer
727.776.6769
jlart@yahoo.com

- CAP.news will include selected press releases that have been vetted and approved by the appropriate PAO for distribution.
- Typically, press releases included in this section are either written or approved by Wing and Region PAOs.
- Releases from emergency service missions may be included in this section (and may also be in addition to stories posted under Feature Stories or Wing News).

Why tell our stories?

- Your story is too important not to tell it yourself.
- It's our mission: PAOs exist not just for when airplanes go missing.
- Good PR builds awareness, which aids fundraising and membership.



Proactive Media Relations

Proactive Media Relations

“DOD policy is very explicit: maximum disclosure with **minimum delay**. ... Getting our side of the story **out as soon as possible** and as completely as practicable is essential to maintaining the high level of credibility and public support enjoyed by the U.S. military.”

Press Releases: Know Your News

Not every story is equal – and that's a good thing.

Know the difference between big and small, news and features, human interest and agate.

➤ BIG NEWS can be obvious (think baseball – home runs, triples).

- Search and Rescue
- Disaster Relief
- Humanitarian Efforts



➤ **They need singles and doubles, too**

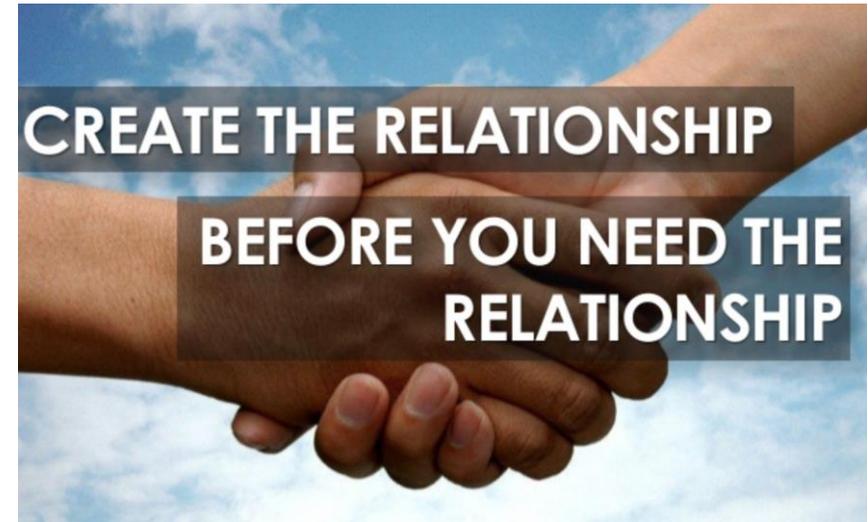
- Good news in our community – media wants and needs feel-good stuff, too.
- Volunteer service
 - Significant service anniversaries
 - Milestone awards
- Youth as role models
 - Cadet achievement
 - Aerospace Education
- People in the News
 - Change of command



➤ Avoid inside-baseball content.

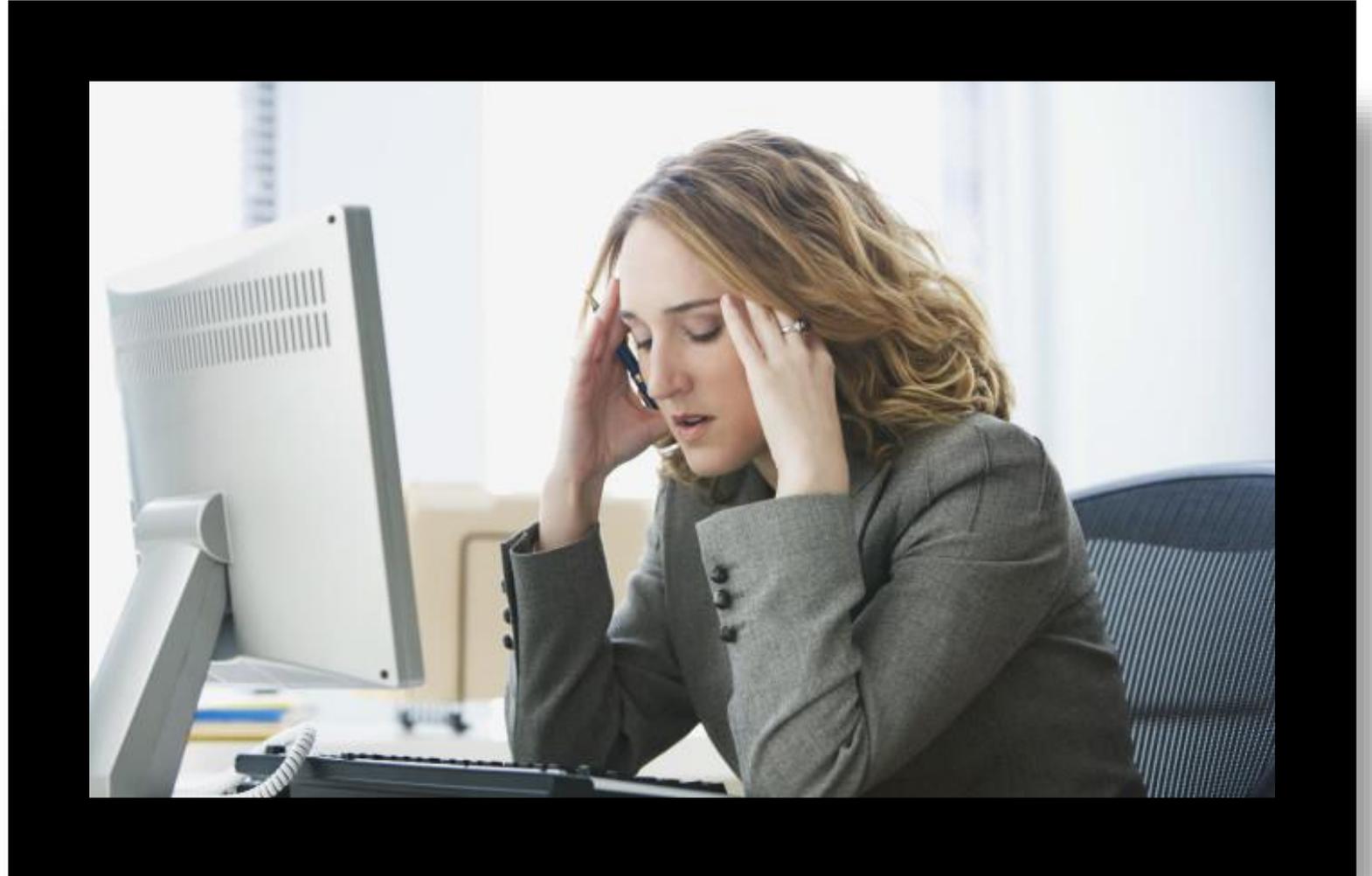
Press Releases: Know the media before you need them

- Make a connection – with no overt agenda
 - Visit the newsroom
 - Invite a reporter to be a guest speaker at a meeting
 - Follow them on social media
- **Pitchers should know their catchers**
 - Do they run content like you have to offer?
 - If they don't run it, ask them how they want you to send it
- Read/watch/listen to the reporters you want to pitch
 - Demonstrate that you like them and respect their work
 - Send them a note (or post or retweet) when they do a great story – even if it's not about you.
- Remember: **Make relationships when times are good**



Write releases that they need

- Don't sell journalists your stories; help them solve their problems.
- DO: Know the pressures they are facing. You can help!
 - Lack of something to write or report about
 - Few reporting resources
 - Time crunch and need for ready-made content



Press Releases (really, everything): Keep it Simple

- Follow the inverted pyramid style with **the most important facts first.**
- **Keep sentences short.**
- Use short, well-known words. **Avoid jargon.**
- **Use active words** to add zest to your writing. Avoid, for example, "it was thought."
- Use specific, concrete - not abstract - words and terms.
- **Do not editorialize**, which means injecting your own preferences or even preferences of the subject you are writing about without attributing.
- Avoid adjectives that reflect opinion. **Stick to the facts.**
- **Include your contact info.**



“A communicator’s credibility is the bedrock of their relationship with news organizations. The journalists you work with need to know and trust that you have the expertise, experience and perspective to add to their story. What you say and how you say it can make or break that credibility.”

Eleanor Cates,
PR Newswire

Press Releases: Clean Copy Works Best

➤ **Clean it up**

- Know and follow The Associated Press Stylebook.
- Spell check!
- Send by email (but do your homework)
- **Be transparent in your writing**
- State your objective and sources early on, and provide links that direct readers to useful information. This helps with both verification and reader engagement.

➤ **Be consistent**

- Establish a consistent presence in the eyes of the press by using a regular cadence of press releases, social media and other media outreach tactics.

➤ **Keep learning**

- Guidelines change. It’s important to not only stay current with PR and marketing best practices, but also journalism best practices. For instance, follow #APStyleChat on Twitter or [Storify](#) to keep your content up-to-date with the style rules many journalists follow.

The Inverted Pyramid: The standard in newswriting

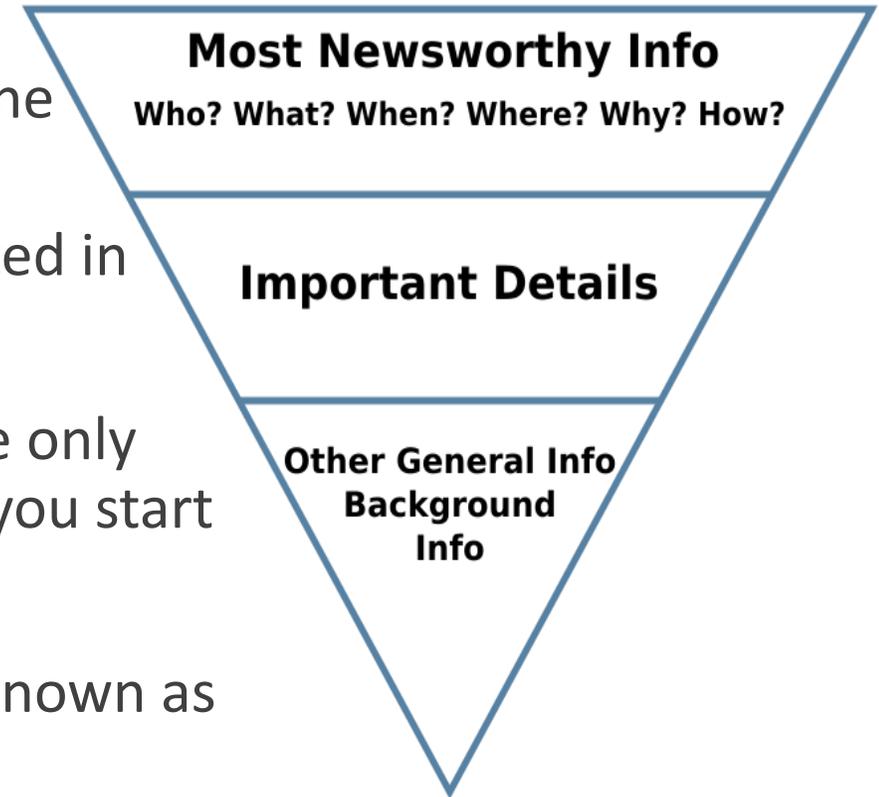
1. Offers quick reading
2. Features less repetition
3. Offers easier editing (easier to cut and paste)
4. Offers faster headline preparation
5. Easier to add to a story (as well as cut it)
6. Allows for faster writing of a story
7. Offers a quick organizing tool

Journalists don't want their stories told from the beginning of a news event.

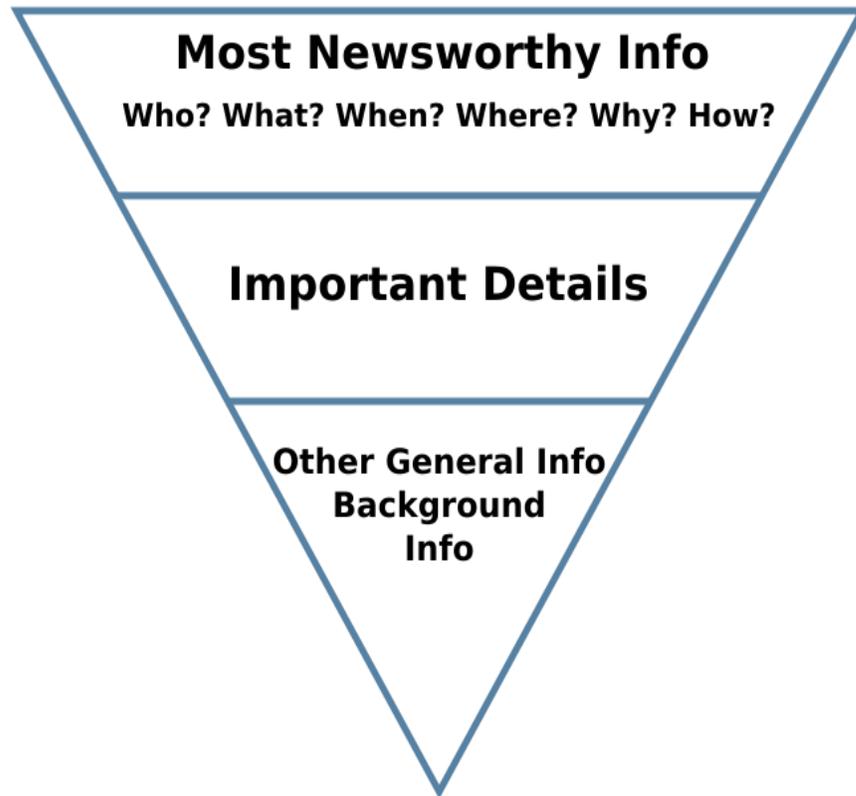
- They focus on the end result, and then may go back to the beginning.
- They like giving away the ending.
- They are more interested in the outcome.

News writing is about the only form of writing in which you start with the climax.

This story form is widely known as *the inverted pyramid*.



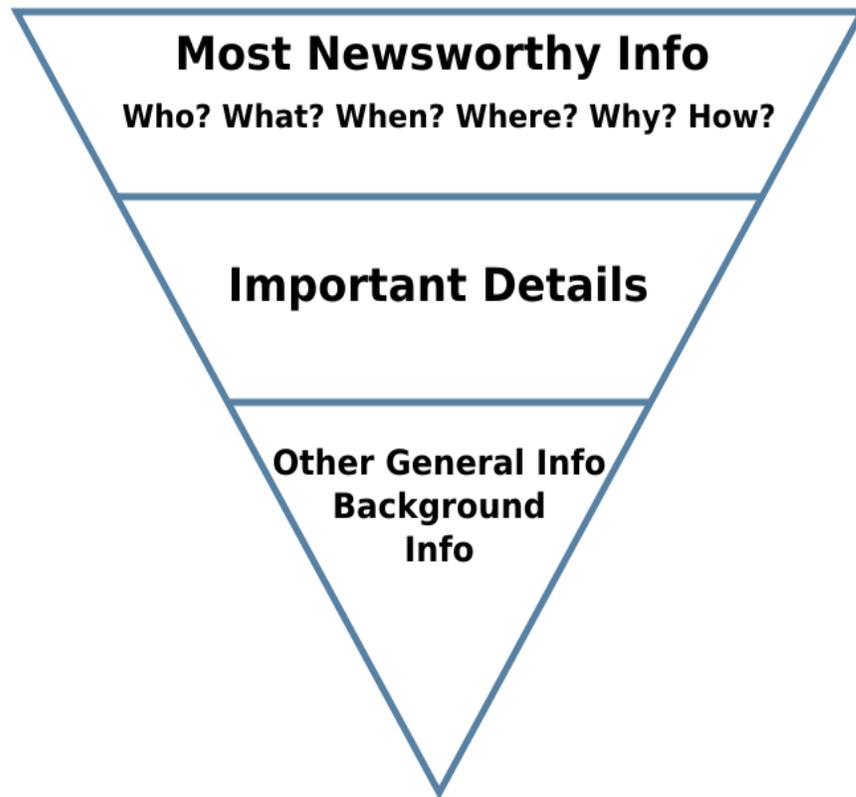
The Inverted Pyramid: Take a News Writing Quiz



Assemble these paragraphs into an inverted pyramid story. The dateline is Austin. Simply arrange by the appropriate letter:

- A. David Bailey, homeland security division chief for the Austin Fire Department, said nine workers from the mailroom where the letter was processed were quarantined until tests could determine whether the powder was toxic.
- B. The mailroom is in the State Insurance Building.
- C. Gov. Rick Perry's office said the letter came from a prison inmate but provided no other details. The substance was sent to the Texas Department of State Health Services for testing.
- D. Bailey said none of the workers became ill.
- E. Authorities evacuated a state office building on Wednesday after a suspicious powder was found in a letter sent to the governor's office.

The Inverted Pyramid: How it ran (e, a, c, d, b)



AUSTIN — Authorities evacuated a state office building on Wednesday after a suspicious powder was found in a letter sent to the governor's office.

David Bailey, homeland security division chief for the Austin Fire Department, said nine workers from the mailroom where the letter was processed were quarantined until tests could determine whether the powder was toxic.

Gov. Rick Perry's office said the letter came from a prison inmate but provided no other details. The substance was sent to the Texas Department of State Health Services for testing.

Bailey said none of the workers became ill.

The mailroom is in the State Insurance Building.

Press Releases: Know the right times to pitch

- **DO: Know your platform's news cycle**
 - Knowing the right time means thinking about when would be the most convenient time to contact a journalist or put something in their inbox.
 - Think about when you would hate talking to someone or reading an email (such as a Monday morning or right before you leave for the weekend).
- Match your stories to the media
 - Visual stories to TV
 - Feature stories to outlets with longer lead times
 - Bylined articles to outlets that invite contributed content
 - Don't forget local radio
 - Remember: Almost all legacy media have websites
- Always follow up
 - Just sending an email isn't enough for a big story
 - When the news is big enough, call the reporter/editor to ask if they got the release, determine interest



Press Releases: Holiday bonus

- **Ways to increase your odds of media coverage**
 - Provide local angles/perspective on national stories
 - Be an example of a national trend (volunteerism, youth activities, leadership, community involvement)
 - Tie into safety reminders, back-to-school news, day-week-month observances
 - The holiday drought and how to use it!





VS



Legacy Media vs. Social Media
It's not a binary question

Bonus Tips: How to tune TV

- Reporters generally don't want drawn-out explanations.
- **DO:** In most cases, they're looking for something punchy that will fill 20 seconds of airtime.
- Know advance what you want to say.
- Don't exaggerate or use superlatives that make things sound bigger and better.



Bonus tips: Nailing the media interview

“Everything you bring to the interview will be better than anything you make up after you hear the question.”

*Army Corps of Engineers
Media Training*

- Come to an interview prepared with the message (two or three) you want to deliver.
- Find opportunities to get your messages across without ignoring the reporter’s questions.
- Give direct answers with asked direct questions, even if your answers may be:
 - *“I don’t know.”*
 - *“I’ll find an answer to that and get back with you.”*
 - *“I’m sorry, but I can’t answer that question.”*
- Your goal is to come across as honest and forthright.
- Don’t feel obligated to maintain social rules or prompts that guide many conversations.
- Only answer questions that you are asked.
- DO NOT ad lib.

Bonus Tips:
Don't let them
see you sweat



- Relate your answers to your audience
- Speak plainly and conversationally
- Buy time; engage your brain before speaking
- Listen for negatives – don't repeat them
- Never assume understanding – educate
- Never criticize other organizations
- Solid eye contact conveys confidence
- Illustrate points with small hand gestures
- Stand straight, sit forward
- If you fumble, start the sentence over
- Look sharp (Air Force uniform is a plus)!

Final Advice: Pay it forward

- **DO: Share and retweet media stories about your organization**
 - Make sure you tag the organization and/or reporter.
 - Add words of praise to your comment or tweet if you feel it is worthy of praise.
- Write letters to the editor about stories that you feel were great.
- Send a congratulatory note to a reporter about the story she/he wrote.



Thanks to these great sources

- “The Inverted Pyramid Presentation,” Paul McGrath, Houston Chronicle and University of Houston-Clear Lake
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Questions?

