

# CIVIL AIR PATROL PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN



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## STATUS BRIEFING

### THE BOTTOM LINE

As Civil Air Patrol kicks off an exciting national branding effort, we as Public Affairs Officers are the only way to truly make it work. **If CAP ever needed us, it's now!**

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS MISSION

"The mission of the Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs (PA) program is to inform internal and external audiences of Civil Air Patrol's national importance, safeguard the image and assets of the corporation, and strengthen relations with key audiences and customers, which enables the organization to grow." (CAP Regulation 190-1)

### WHERE WE ARE

CAP has kicked off a major communications initiative—not a short-lived “campaign,” **but a long-term branding strategy** built on the tried and true principles **of integrated marketing communications**. It's an exciting and critical endeavor that will take CAP to the next level in garnering the support and respect we deserve!

**Integrated Marketing Communications—a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time. (American Marketing Association)**

Everyone knows companies like Coca-Cola and Nike are powerful “brands.” But CAP is a brand in our own right, too. And everything we do and say contributes to our “brand image” out in the general public. We are going to be purposeful and deliberate in consistently communicating one clear message so that our brand is growing and healthy.

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Brand—A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name. (American Marketing Association)

Brand Image—The perception of a brand in the minds of persons. The brand image is a mirror reflection (though perhaps inaccurate) of the brand personality or product. It is what people believe about a brand--their thoughts, feelings, expectations. (American Marketing Association)

Our brand image is not a bad one now. People who do know about CAP respect us and have warm admiration and esteem for all that CAP does and stands for (our brand). The problem is simply that the vast majority of people either aren't aware that we exist or they are misguided in the perception that all we do is fly. **It's a basic "awareness" problem.** If more people were aware and informed, CAP would certainly have people lining up to be members, donors and outspoken supporters! It is up to us as Public Affairs Officers to communicate the truth about all the ways CAP is serving America's communities every day.

That's what this plan will do. We are going to take a **grassroots approach** to getting the word out. Each PAO will take responsibility for their part, and in the end we will see that awareness **multiply** for all of us as a national group. The public awareness plan will outline in detail exactly what each of us needs to do in order to achieve the brand goals.

### HOW WE GOT HERE

The need for a national marketing effort was recognized when CAP leaders noticed a steady decline in membership over the past few years.

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<b>Year</b>	<b>Cadets</b>	<b>Seniors</b>	<b>Total Membership</b>
2004	24,356	34,100	58,456
2005	22,721	33,492	56,213
2006	21,892	33,697	55,580
2007	22,009	34,455	56,464

The decline has prompted the obvious question: Why? And, of course, what can be done to reverse the trend?

The Public Affairs office at CAP National Headquarters issued a request for proposal and began the process of finding a partner to help us identify the answers to those very important questions. Cunningham Group, a nationally recognized advertising and public relations agency, was chosen. Their first order of business was to develop a clear, accurate assessment of the situation and to establish a baseline for all future brand growth through a three-phase research study. The study was conducted by Southeast Research, Inc.

## RESEARCH SUMMARY\*

“During recent times, the total membership of CAP has been declining at a steady but slow rate. Concern over the membership trend has prompted officials to investigate reasons for this decline and to develop strategies for reversing the trend. It is against this backdrop that a three-phase research project was undertaken. Phase one consisted of a focus group with CAP Directors/Wing Commanders while phase two included interviews with current and former CAP members. [The third phase of research] includes the findings of a national survey with adults 18 years of age and older. The principal objective of the public opinion survey was to assess the awareness, perceptions and knowledge of the Civil Air Patrol.”

“The focus group conducted with CAP officers (February 2006) indicated that there is a great deal of satisfaction at the officer level. There were, however, some concerns about the drop in senior membership and the perceived changes in CAP’s ‘corporate culture.’ It was felt that the drop in senior membership was not only increasing the workload for the remaining senior members but was reducing the opportunity for seniors to work with cadets. The officers expressed concern that in some units there was a lack of

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professionalism as evidenced by members' lack of pride in the proper care of their uniform and a trend to 'dress down.' Additionally, the officers noted that there was a need to more effectively brand CAP with perhaps a tie-in with the tagline US Air Force Auxiliary.

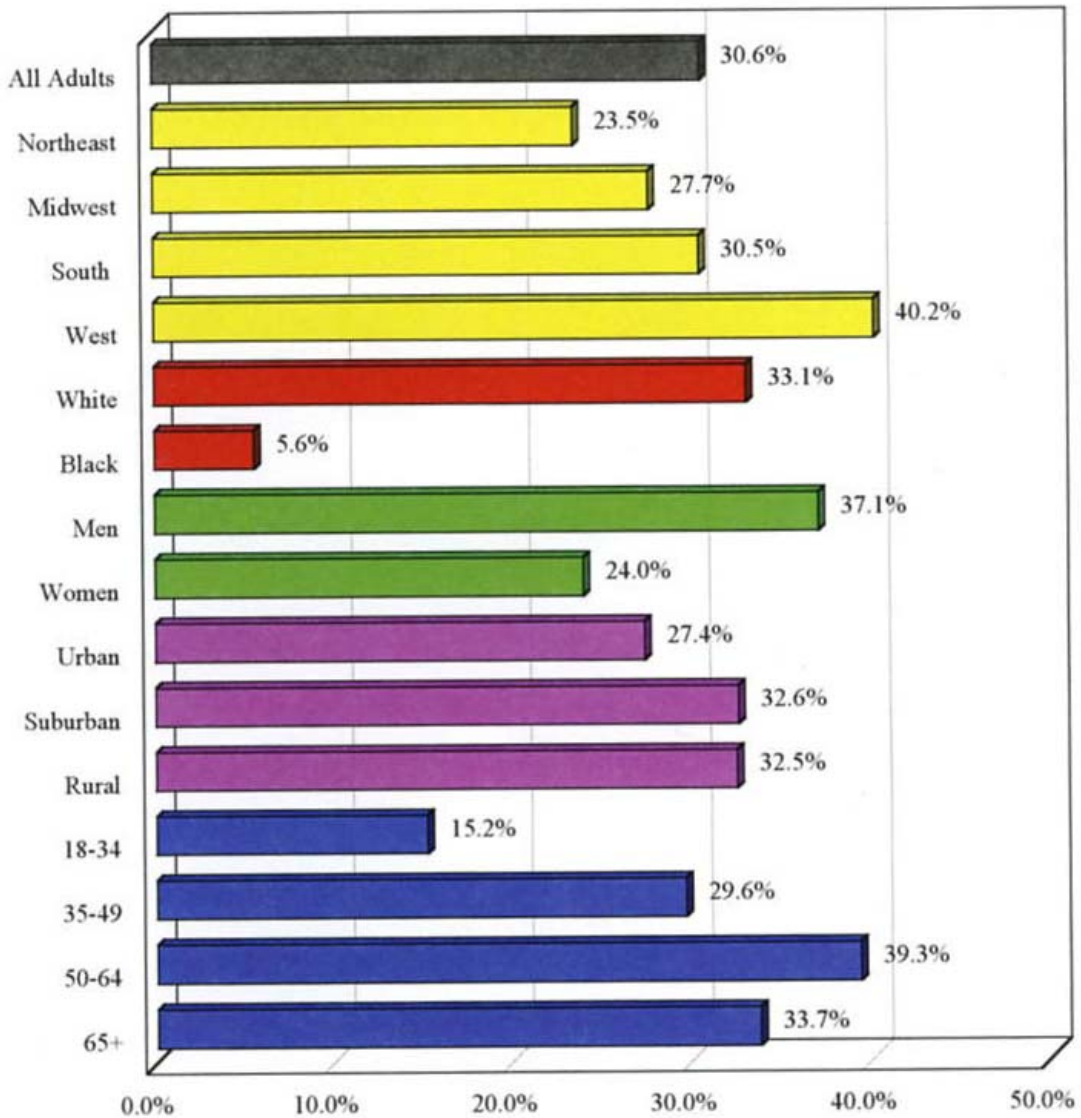
"The survey of both current and former CAP members (August 2006) indicated that there is a high level of satisfaction among those who become volunteers in the organization. Significantly, the former members do not leave the organization due principally to dissatisfaction, but they typically leave due to life circumstances such as moving to a new location. This survey pointed out a need to stay in touch with members as they move around the country and to make sure they are contacted by the CAP unit closest to their new address. Both current and former members indicated that they became a member of CAP through personal contacts including friends, coworkers, family members, etc. Significantly, none of the surveyed indicated that they became aware of CAP from non-personal sources (i.e. printed materials, television, radio or outdoor.) This finding was not unexpected in view of the fact that CAP has not had the resources to develop a formalized media awareness and image program.

"The general public survey... pointed out that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of CAP's mission and service contributions to communities throughout the country. The survey revealed that the lack of awareness of CAP, its mission/programs and contributions to this country is especially noteworthy among women, blacks, and the 18-34 age group. While more focused local programs may help create awareness and interest with the above noted groups, a formalized national media effort can be more productive in targeting specific groups with 'product' information and image-creating messages. Additionally, a national image/branding program will likely serve to increase current membership satisfaction as well."



# Chart A

## Level of Familiarity with CAP

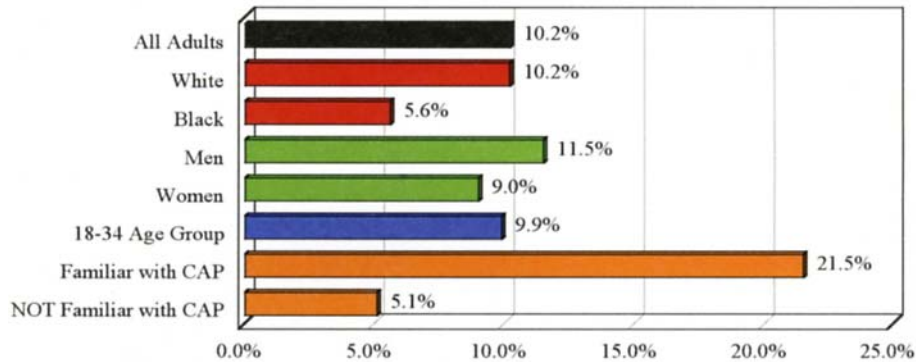


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## Chart G

**Proportion Who Are Aware That the Civil Air Patrol Has Done Things to Benefit Their Community**



## Chart G-1

**Ways the Civil Air Patrol Has Benefited Communities**

	Those who indicated that CAP has benefited their community	All Adults
Search & Rescue	28.9%	3%
Educate Youth	10.8%	1.2%
Help Patrol Community	11.2%	1.2%
Protect the environment	4.8%	0.5%
Not Sure	36.2%	NA
Not aware that CAP has done things which have benefited community	NA	89.8%

- Excerpted from the "Awareness, Perceptions and Knowledge of the Civil Air Patrol" report prepared by Southeast Research, Inc.

The awareness problem brought forth in the research is not a new one for CAP. We have long been **"unsung heroes"** quietly performing critically important missions and **service for our country**. It is not often that we receive massive credit or kudos for the tireless effort we put forth. And for the vast majority of members and cadets, that's just fine with us. We're obviously not seeking glory or fame and fortune. We're just giving back to the **communities** we love and the nation whose **freedom** we cherish.

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It is a bit surprising, though, how few Americans really know and understand the many ways Civil Air Patrol has contributed to the fabric of their communities. Ego aside, then, the fact of the matter remains that without great awareness, CAP cannot realistically hope to recruit great amounts of new members or garner great press coverage. **If we do not purposefully tell the story, no one will.** That's what this public awareness plan is all about... intentionally and consistently communicating the powerful message behind CAP so that awareness (and therefore membership) increases nationwide.

It is important to note, however, that it will be completely ineffective to produce a national campaign of any sort without a combined grassroots effort that will help put the CAP message directly before the desired audience.

Another very key ingredient for success will be the high level of consistency in every sector. Maintaining **brand consistency** in an organization as big as CAP will be challenging, but we are a legion of talented and committed Public Affairs Officers throughout the country, and we will no doubt make it happen. **The true success of the plan rests in our very capable hands.**

As is often the case with organizations such as CAP, financial resources are quite limited. Currently, there is simply not the budget for massive, widespread branding in a traditional marketing sense. Therefore, careful attention will be paid to the cost-effective (and incidentally very credible) methods of **grassroots communication** and **visibility-boosting initiatives.**

As these intentional grassroots efforts take effect throughout year one, momentum will be on the upswing. The hope is that decision-makers will see the positive changes and choose to capitalize on the **swelling ground movement** by appointing more funding and resources in years two and three. As awareness grows in local communities nationwide, it will be of utmost importance to begin a national media campaign that serves to unite the local awareness with the message of **belonging** to something **much bigger.** Constructing a formidable national presence and groundbreaking awareness will not likely happen without an intentional branding campaign across the country.

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## PLAN OF ACTION

### PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN

National Headquarters has employed the services of Cunningham Group, Inc. to develop a comprehensive branding strategy. The directive is clear — create a plan that will accomplish three major feats:

1. Garner greater awareness of the name, brand and mission of Civil Air Patrol
2. Gain more new members than ever before, and
3. Retain a greater percentage of current members.

### STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

**Stakeholder—Any group who has a stake in the success of a brand's mission. Basically, anyone who has any influence over, or is influenced by, the success (or failure) of Civil Air Patrol's reason for being is a stakeholder. (Also known as a "public.")**

Any comprehensive branding effort has to begin and end with stakeholder relationships. While each stakeholder group may not hold the same sway over CAP, it remains true that none can be ignored without consequences of some nature. In any comprehensive branding plan, it is critical that each stakeholder group be nurtured effectively.

A laundry list of CAP stakeholders is as follows:

- Current members (seniors and cadets)
- Parents/families of cadets
- Former members
- National and local media (broadcast, print and trade)
- Air Force and other military leadership (national and local levels)
- Congress/Capitol Hill
- Potential members/natural affinity groups
- Emergency services groups
- Cessna and other interested corporations/vendors

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- Groups, universities, associations and other current or potential CAP partners
- Aerospace Connections in Education students/families
- Donors
- Potential donors

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## OBJECTIVE I

Establish brand synergy among internal and external CAP stakeholder groups so that every communication piece speaks with one voice.

**Synergy**—The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. (American Heritage Dictionary)

## GOAL

Unify brand “look” and “language” on every piece of collateral produced on a national *and* local level.

- Use new tagline everywhere.
- Utilize the following uniform explanation paragraph from National Headquarters consistently with every printed piece:

*Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with 57,000 members nationwide. CAP performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and was credited by the AFRCC with saving 91 lives in fiscal year 2008. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the nearly 22,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 67 years. For more information on CAP, visit [gocivilairpatrol.com](http://gocivilairpatrol.com).*

- Establish a brand standards policy to ensure seamless brand representation across media vehicles, graphic elements and geographical contexts.
  - Incorporate “Citizens Serving Communities ... Above and Beyond” into your CAP vocabulary.
  - Use the explanation paragraph every time you print something.
  - Check [members.gocivilairpatrol.com/pa](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/pa) often for updated toolkit items.

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## OBJECTIVE II

Improve awareness among all stakeholder groups so that baseline awareness from the Southeast Research, Inc. Report increases 30 percent over three years.

### GOAL

Produce and place a 30-second PSA.

- Partner with a sponsor corporation or organization to pay for production of the public service announcement.
- Local PAOs will coordinate the timing for increased promotional efforts (listed below) to coincide with the national PSA broadcast release.

### GOAL

Maximize exposure through grassroots visibility and tenacious public relations efforts by every PAO successfully implementing the following:

- Place at least one article in local print or online media each quarter.
- Secure local TV coverage at least once per year (with National Headquarters successfully garnering broader media coverage at least twice per quarter).
- Speak at local civic clubs, schools, association meetings or other community-based gatherings at least three times per year.
- Look for announcements from National Headquarters regarding their public awareness efforts & coordinate your local push with the national efforts.
- Utilize updated toolkit and hometown news releases.
- Belong to local Speaker's Bureau.
- Send an introduction letter to groups like Lion's Club, Rotary Club, local schools, etc. Follow up with a phone call.
- Take advantage of the full-time personnel at National Headquarters who are dedicated to helping PAOs make it happen.
- Get local print & broadcast media coverage.
- Represent CAP as a keynote speaker around town.

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### GOAL

Boost visibility within local communities by actively partnering with Points of Light Foundation on a national and local level to connect CAP members with community service opportunities.

- Find listing of Volunteer Centers at [http://www.pointsoflight.org/centers/find\\_center.cfm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/centers/find_center.cfm) to find the closest center to individual squadrons. Meet with the executive director or volunteer coordinator to establish a personal relationship. Show them the attached national MOU and discuss ways to partner together on a local level. (See “Official Documents.”)
- Members will always wear CAP uniforms when performing volunteer service work.
- PAOs will use community service projects as a source for promotional opportunities and press releases. *Every single time* the group performs an act of service in the community, a press release should be sent to the local hometown media.
- While out in the community, PAOs and members in general will purposefully get contact information from potential new members and follow up with them about opportunities to join CAP.
  - Contact your closest Points of Light Volunteer Center.
  - Always send a press release every time.
  - Intentionally seek new members.

### GOAL

Employ a MOU on a national level with The Weather Channel and create relationships at the local level with hometown media outlets to provide aerial imagery and ride-along opportunities as appropriate in exchange for on-air credit.

- Call the news director at the leading television station in your community. Inform him/her about how CAP can partner with the station to provide photos and potential ride-along opportunities following disasters or when working in search and rescue. Stress the importance of having an understanding in place *before* news breaks.

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### GOAL

Increase name and brand recognition by providing car/van wraps for every sanctioned CAP vehicle.

### GOAL

Strengthen awareness among military members nationwide by having PAOs near each military base meet with the PAO of that base and arrange a meeting between the wing commander and base commander at least once per year.

- Inform military personnel about what local squadrons are doing and how they are involved in the community. Ask about ways to partner together for greater impact and exposure.
- Make sure local military bases have plenty of *Volunteer* magazines in high-traffic, long-stay areas.
- Create a relationship with your nearest Air Force base CAP coordinating officer. The CAP state director should be involved in each of these contacts.

### GOAL

Improve Congressional ties by having each wing PAO include the Congressional office in their state in the distribution of items of interest and other branded communications.

- Support the wing commander in actively pursuing a personal relationship with state and national members of Congress. Meet with them and keep them informed of all the wonderful things CAP is doing in their districts.
- Invite them to major events, ceremonies and civic volunteer days.

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## OBJECTIVE III

Increase new memberships by 5% during year one, 10% during year two and 25% during year three.

### GOAL

Purposefully foster relationships with local groups who have a natural affinity for patriotism, civic duty, aerospace education, leadership development and service to community.

- Communicate benefits from and opportunities for membership and service with groups such as the following:
  - Retired military groups/associations
  - Chaplains at local military installations, hospitals, prisons, etc.
  - Home school associations
  - Local ROTC squadrons
  - Boy Scouts/ Girl Scouts
  - AARP
  - Local Red Cross
  - Local pilots/smaller community airports
  - Ham radio operators
  - American Legion, VFW
- Brainstorm with members of your squadron about what local groups you can reach out to in efforts to partner together in the local community.

### GOAL

Use current members and donors to reach potential members and/or donors in their circle of influence.

- Encourage current members and donors to persuade their friends, family and circle of influence to join or donate by sharing the intrinsic value of an all-volunteer humanitarian organization and in the process inspiring them to be an active member.
- Update current national and unit Web sites to be more realtime interactive and exciting.

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- Discuss with Air Force authorities the possibility of having CAP representatives participate regularly in base-level “Warrior Start” briefings for newly assigned AF personnel.
- Have members in your local squadron purposefully invite others to join.
- Reward them as appropriate.

### GOAL

Partner with military services to specifically market to retiring or resigning servicemen and women.

- Have PAOs place *Volunteer* magazines in high-traffic areas at their nearest military base (where appropriate).
- Seek an agreement with military authorities where they share database information about outgoing service people in return for CAP’s database of cadets who become of age for military service.
- Discuss with military authorities the possibility of having CAP representatives participate regularly in base-level out-briefings for retiring service members.



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## OBJECTIVE IV

Cultivate greater retention rates among current members.

### GOAL

Foster sense of community and belonging nationwide by providing online forums for discussion and idea sharing.

- Expand CAP Web site utilities to include more interactivity among members nationwide.
- Support launch of expanded Web site utilities and ongoing efforts for personal connection by highlighting it in the *Volunteer* and new member information.
- Create buzz for the new interactive site by sponsoring weekly contests. Prizes could include old CAP merchandise that needs clearing away. Aside from building buzz, this would also build up the nationwide database. Be purposeful in collecting as much information as possible about each contact.
  - Encourage your cadets to include CAP in their online activities.

### GOAL

Create and maintain a clean, comprehensive, real-time database of members and donors nationwide.

- Make name, address, phone and email collection a priority for both old and new members as well as donors and supporters. Include current and previous career and volunteer experience, as well as special interests. Take care that the squadron, wing and National Headquarters are sharing all information.
- Undergo a complete database overhaul during 2009-10.
  - Go through and update your squadron's membership and donor directory file.
  - Send current list to National Headquarters.

### GOAL

Develop a "welcome" system used when active members move to a new city or state. Have closest squadron in new location engage recent transfer ASAP.

- Have a place to enter this information on the newly improved, interactive CAP Web site.

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- When you know a senior member or cadet is moving to a new location, find out where they're moving and then contact the closest CAP squadron to alert them about the need to contact him or her.
  - When someone moves away from your squadron, contact a squadron close to their new location.
  - Follow through as fast as possible with leads you receive, as well.

### GOAL

Consistently administer exit surveys to aid in better understanding reasons for decreasing retention rates.

- Every time you are aware that someone has not renewed or does not plan to renew membership, follow through with them by sending them the exit survey.

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### PAO CHECKLIST

- \_ Share new tagline with local squadron. Encourage everyone to use it as they talk about CAP.
- \_ Use uniform explanation paragraph on every press release, newsletter and any other branded communication.
- \_ Check [members.gocivilairpatrol.com/pa](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/pa) often for updated toolkit and other information.
- \_ Coordinate with National Headquarters for increased visibility when they distribute the Public Service Announcement.
- \_ Place at least one article in local print or online media each quarter.
- \_ Secure local TV coverage at least once per year.
- \_ Send an introduction letter to local civic groups.
- \_ Join the local Speaker's Bureau.
- \_ Speak at local civic clubs, schools, association meetings or other community-based gatherings at least three times per year.
- \_ Contact local Volunteer Center to form a working relationship.
- \_ Work with Volunteer Center to perform community service on an ongoing basis.
- \_ Make sure all members wear same CAP uniform when performing community service.
- \_ Send a press release to local hometown media every single time the group performs an act of service in the community.
- \_ Purposefully get contact information from potential new members and follow up with them about opportunities to join CAP.
- \_ Establish a personal relationship and mutual understanding with local television station before news breaks.
- \_ Arrange a meeting between your wing commander and the base commander at the closest military base at least once per year (where applicable).
- \_ Make sure local military bases have plenty of *Volunteer* magazines in high-traffic, long-stay areas.
- \_ Create a relationship with your nearest Air Force base CAP Coordinating Officer. The CAP State Director should be involved in each of these contacts.
- \_ Support the Wing Commander in actively pursuing a personal relationship with state and national members of Congress.

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- \_ Foster relationships with local groups who have a natural affinity for patriotism, civic duty, aerospace education, leadership development and service to community.
- \_ Encourage current members and donors to persuade their friends, family and circle of influence to join or donate.
- \_ Update Unit website to be real-time, interactive and exciting.
- \_ See about having CAP representatives participate regularly in baselevel "Warrior Start" briefings for newly assigned AF personnel.
- \_ See about having CAP representatives participate regularly in baselevel out-briefings for retiring service members.
- \_ Encourage cadets to include CAP in their positive online activities.
- \_ Update contact, experience and interests database. Send to National Headquarters.
- \_ Inform other squadrons when you know of a member moving to their area.
- \_ Follow up on any leads other squadrons send you.
- \_ Send exit surveys to everyone who has not renewed and/or does not plan to renew membership.