Writing a News Release

An effective news release is one of the most common ways of getting media coverage. In smaller markets such as community newspapers, your release might command front-page attention and will often be reprinted almost word-for-word. However, at major news outlets, the same story will likely have to compete with hundreds of other news releases every day, so yours has to stand out.

1. Make sure you have something newsworthy to say.
2. The title, date of release, name and phone number of contact person (work, home and cell if appropriate) should be listed.
3. The first paragraph should be no more than two sentences, and must contain the five "Ws" in it: Who, What, Where, When and Why.
4. There should be a quotation from your group's spokesperson no further down in the release than the third paragraph. Additional quotations can follow in later paragraphs. Stick to one spokesperson, whose name and phone number appear "For Further Information" as well.
5. Information should be given in descending order of interest. Double-check your facts.
6. Be exact. State accuratelydates and places, ensure that all names are given in full, correctly spelled and with their titles.
7. Be objective, not subjective.
8. Your news release should preferably be only one page in length; at the very most, it can be two pages. If there is considerable background factual material to convey, attach a one-page "Backgrounder."
9. Distribute the news release widely: large and small newspapers, local and campus radio stations, and television stations.
10. Follow up with phone calls to reporters who are especially important to your group's success.

Your Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Date

Your Headline

City/Town –

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For Further Information:
Joe Smith, Your Organization, Tel. number (s)

Advantages

- Free publicity
- Wide circulation
- News coverage lends clout

Disadvantages

- Not appropriate for small audiences
- Might not be the best method to reach your target audience: e-mail and website communication, posters, flyers, etc. might also be appropriate.

Ontario Nature protects and restores nature through research, education and conservation action. Ontario Nature champions woodlands, wetlands and wildlife, and preserves essential habitat through its own system of nature reserves. It is a charitable organization representing 25,000 members and over 140 member groups across the province, connecting individuals and communities to nature.

If you wish to support FON or learn more about current conservation issues in Ontario visit: www.ontarionature.org

Ontario Nature
FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS

ONTARIO NATURE
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