

# Press Release Suggestions and Considerations

## 1. Determine the goal of the press release.

- a. Community Calendar Alert:
  - i. If the goal is to get the event listed on community calendar announcements be sure, first, that the event is already listed on [www.catchdesmoines.com](http://www.catchdesmoines.com).
  - ii. Within the press release itself, denote “Community Calendar Alert” at the top of the document instead of “News Release.”
  - iii. Keep the release very brief and to the point; bullet points are best.
  - iv. Remember to include the vital information – the Who, What, Where, When and Why.
  - v. Send the press release out to media at least three weeks in advance if you hope to have it listed on Community Calendar Announcements.
- b. News Release
  - i. If the goal is to share information and gain media coverage, try to keep the press release to about one page.
  - ii. Include quotes to show emotion. The rest of the release should be just the facts. (You can get creative and clever with your writing if it complements the tone of the release and/or organization.)
  - iii. Don’t bury the lead! Be up front – at the very opening of the press release state what makes this newsworthy.
  - iv. If you send out a news release, be sure to include your contact information and keep yourself available to respond to the media calls/questions. Getting a news release and then having the contact person no here to be found will only damage your reputation with the media.
  - v. This type of release can be sent out 2-3 days in advance. Too much further in advance and it may be forgotten or overlooked.
- c. Media Alert
  - i. If the goal is to get the media at a press conference, denote “Media Alert” at the top of the document.
  - ii. Include vital details; bullet points. Brevity is best.
  - iii. Be up front – tell them who they can expect to hear from at the press conference.
  - iv. Sometimes it is helpful to outline a few story ideas, with different angles, that may be generated from the press conference.
  - v. Tell the media to RSVP if an RSVP is required; and direct them on your RSVP expectations. (i.e. RSVP to Jan Doe at (515) 286-4960 or [jan@yourorganization.com](mailto:jan@yourorganization.com) by 2 p.m. tomorrow.

- vi. Tell them if there will be any AV they can plug into in order to capture sound from the podium. (i.e. mult box)
- vii. This can be sent out a day in advance or the day of, as long as the media has at least a couple of hours to plan when possible.
- d. Photo Opportunity
  - i. If the goal is to get a photo or video of your event in the newspaper or on the news, denote “Photo Opportunity” at the top of the document.
  - ii. Include vital details; bullet points.
  - iii. Briefly explain what will make this an outstanding photo opportunity.
  - iv. This can be sent out a day in advance or the day of, as long as the media has a couple of hours to plan.

## 2. Overall Tips/Tricks

- a. Do not send multiple press releases to the media in one day.
- b. Try to space out sending press releases. Try to keep it to just a couple a week if possible. Again, make sure it is newsworthy before you hit send!
- c. As simple as it sounds, remember to proof your work before sending. Is all of the vital information included? Did you include the location? The date? The time? The contact information?
- d. When emailing the press release, blind copy all recipients. While you’re at it, blind copy yourself to in order to ensure the release went through.
- e. Most newsroom editorial meetings in Central Iowa happen around mid-morning and early afternoon. To get the most potential play out of your release, send it before 9:30 a.m. or before 1 p.m. Otherwise, try to hold the press release and send it the next day to maximize attention.
- f. Newsrooms and news editors are very busy. Don’t call them and email them multiple times to ensure they received your release. Send and follow up once if necessary.
- g. Don’t take it personally if your story pitch isn’t picked up. Many times decisions are made based off of the news of the day. Therefore, on big media days (i.e. A highly publicized referendum vote; The Governor’s State of the State Address) avoid sending your release unless it somehow ties back to the big news of the day.
- h. Telling the media “thank you” after they cover your story goes a long way.

## 3. Helpful articles

- a. <http://service.prweb.com/learning/article/quality-online-press-releases/>
- b. [http://prwebmaster.blogs.com/prweb\\_quickstart\\_success/](http://prwebmaster.blogs.com/prweb_quickstart_success/)

For customized media support and assistance, please contact Kristine Reeves, Marketing Specialist, (515) 699-3445 or [kristine@catchdesmoines.com](mailto:kristine@catchdesmoines.com) one month prior to your event.