

2010/2011 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Town of Cary, North Carolina



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Public Information Officer

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MISSION STATEMENT

At the Town of Cary we focus every day on enriching the lives of our citizens by creating an exceptional environment and providing exemplary services that enable our community to thrive and prosper.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

To achieve our mission we will uphold the following values:

1. Our organization exists to serve our citizens. We will be open, ensure access, encourage involvement and be accountable to our citizens.
2. Employees are our most important resource. We will attract and retain the best employees and invest in their personal and professional growth.
3. We will be honest, ethical and diligent. Our actions will comply with local, state and federal laws.
4. We will treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness.
5. We will achieve the best results through effective teamwork, strategic partnerships and community participation.
6. We will provide outstanding customer service that is polite, friendly and responsive.
7. We value creative thinking and innovation. We will continue to be nationally recognized for excellence in local government.
8. We value growth that balances desired service levels, economic benefits and continued stability for our community.
9. We are cost conscious. We spend public funds responsibly and effectively to ensure the Town's short and long term financial strength.
10. We are committed to proactive, comprehensive planning to guide the future of our community.
11. We will preserve and protect our environment. We will be good stewards of our finite natural resources.

CITIZEN SERVICE COMMITMENT STATEMENT

With service as our only product, the Town of Cary is dedicated to providing the highest achievable level of customer satisfaction by providing citizen services in

the most effective manner possible. We will accomplish this through polite, friendly, and courteous interactions with citizens and by making a personal commitment to resolving citizen problems quickly and thoroughly. We strive to give immediate attention to citizen needs and to provide citizens with complete and accurate information in a timely manner. Our goal is to be recognized throughout the Eastern United States for providing the highest quality customer service to all citizens.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS VALUE STATEMENT

Effective communication is necessary to fulfill our mission of creating an exceptional environment and providing exemplary service. In keeping with our Statement of Values, we treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness. We avoid gossip and rumor by sharing accurate, valid and timely information because we achieve the best results through teamwork. We welcome information, even when it is “bad news,” understanding that when problems are identified early, proactive solutions can be developed. We value openness and transparency in dealing with our citizens and with each other. When decisions are made that affect others, input is solicited whenever possible, and the rationale for decisions is shared. We identify stakeholders, solicit their input and make early and ongoing efforts to ensure that complete information is exchanged. We understand that while each division and department has its own focus and responsibilities, it is also a part of the larger organization. While fulfilling our individual and departmental roles to the best of our abilities, we promote the interests of the entire organization. We choose the most appropriate and effective method of communication – whether email, telephone or face to face – for each situation, especially when information is sensitive or when disagreement or emotions are involved. The communication vehicle is different based on the content, complexity, and purpose of the information, and based on the individuals involved.

INTRODUCTION

Believing that government effectiveness, efficiency, and equity are strengthened with open communication, the Town of Cary established its Public Information program in 1997 to develop and direct a comprehensive communications effort by building and maintaining beneficial relationships between the Town of Cary and our many publics through appropriate, consistent, timely, complete, and accurate information sharing.

In accordance with the policies and philosophies of the Cary Town Council, the Town of Cary's annual ***Communications Plan*** articulates the communication goals of Cary Town Government and the initiatives to be undertaken during the fiscal year to achieve these goals.

Where appropriate and consistent with nationally accepted best practices, detailed communications plans are developed for individual initiatives – including crisis preparation – throughout the year. These plans include project goals, measurable objectives, strategies, tactics, target publics, key messages, timeline, and budget.

2009/2010 COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM SUMMARY

Fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) was the 12th full year of the Town's comprehensive, strategic communications program. During FY 2010, the Town:

INTERNAL EFFORTS

- Established and regularly tested TENS, an effective electronic means of contacting Town employees during emergencies;
- Developed and implemented communication efforts to notify affected customers of transition to "lock box";
- Refined and began implementing the Aquastar communication plan;
- Continued a financial management program to include training for new users and conducted a required annual training for the security of sensitive information and other miscellaneous training as requested by departments;
- Produced the FY 2009 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report on time and without a management letter comment from external auditors;
- Updated the Web site standard procedure;
- Continued the staff committees to explore problem solving, communications, and organizational change as well as established a work team to make recommendations on issue activism;
- Completed the business plan for the USA Baseball National Training Complex;
- Held regular meetings between PIO and PRCR staff to discuss issues, updates and future plans;
- Continued implementing the FIT Community Communications Plan;
- Continued creating departmental business development plans based on an organization-wide model;
- Enhanced C-Net information pertaining to "Sunshine Week";
- Began a lab training program on managing public record emails;
- Continued using CAP Team volunteers to assist police staff with park patrol, handicapped parking enforcement, special events, and staffing the police service center at Cary Towne Center;
- Developed a long-range communications plan for the Inspections & Permits Department;
- Continued using "Click to Gov" interactive Web service enabling citizens to access online Inspections and Permits data;
- Worked to maintain employee organizational knowledge by implementing the Employee Shadowing program;
- Worked to maintain employee effectiveness through a number of in-house training courses;
- Launched the Media Relations Reminder Tips initiative;
- Continued to use C-Net, the organization's internal Web site, to feature important activities and issues for Town staff;

- Continued preparing and distributing to staff and Council electronic fact sheets, emails, and other materials on emerging and key Town government issues;
- Continued developing and revising crisis-specific communications plans;
- Continued the day-long new employee orientation;
- Continued holding the annual Employee Recognition luncheon;
- Continued offering benefits and financial fairs to provide financial planning education and clarification for current and future financial goals and to prepare for financial emergencies;
- Continued Holding regular meetings between PIO staff and PD staff, to discuss issues, updates and future plans
- Continued issuing benefits statements to all Town employees emphasizing total compensation package;
- Continued media relations classes: basic, refresher, and public safety;
- Continued training staff on how to write standardized communications plans; and,
- Continued monthly meetings of the Public Education Group and quarterly meetings of the Internal Web Focus Group.

EXTERNAL–GENERAL CITIZENRY

- Implemented public involvement efforts for the update to the Community Development Block Grant 5-year consolidated plan and the Affordable Housing Plan;
- Implemented the communications plan for the Historic Resources Master Plan;
- Began implementing a public involvement effort for the Sustainable Site Design Standards project;
- Launched VIP, the Web-based, interactive tool to help guide citizens through the development process – the tool won a statewide communications award;
- Implemented a communications effort to support the comprehensive update to the sign regulations, including an on-line survey that set a Town record for participation;
- Updated the Citizens Guide to Services;
- Participated in a Time Warner Cable Pilot TV advertising program;
- Implemented the use of GovDelivery, a Web-based system that facilitates mass email delivery and allows citizens to sign up for email lists;
- Worked with the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau on the production of several promotional videos (Town, Koka Booth Amphitheatre, WakeMed Soccer Park, USA Baseball NTC, Cary Tennis Park);
- Developed a Master Plan for the WakeMed Soccer Park. The plan development involved obtaining input from the park’s user groups as well as public meetings;
- Held numerous public input meetings on proposed Town projects including roads, planning, parks, cultural resources, and public art;
- Developed the Historic Preservation Master Plan;

- Continued leading the communications effort to support the Western Wake Partners' new regional wastewater management facilities;
- Adopted the Water Shortage Response Plan
- Continued utilizing Block Leader program participants to disseminate Town environmental information;
- Developed and implemented Beat the Peak, the Town's annual summer water conservation outreach campaign;
- Integrated the EPA WaterSense partnership into the Town's Water Conservation program;
- Evaluated "Let's Be Water Conscious" Water Conservation brochure and created new design;
- Continued to partner with the business community to promote water conservation messages and programs and Spruce initiatives;
- Continued public outreach and education efforts designed to support the Water Conservation and the Cary Recycles programs at Town festivals and events;
- Continued public outreach and education efforts designed to support the Water Conservation and the Cary Recycles programs through elementary and middle school lessons, programs for civic and business groups, and HOA newsletters;
- Began creating a new sign plan for the Citizen's Convenience Center;
- Updated the Cary Recycles and Let's Talk Trash brochures;
- Created yellow and blue recycling collection calendars and mailed to corresponding residential accounts;
- Worked with Wake and Chatham counties to implement Census 2010 communication initiatives;
- Designed, printed and mailed Annual Mailing (holiday and leaf collection schedule) to yellow and blue residential accounts;
- Continued issuing Solid Waste/Recycling Holiday postcards for altered schedules;
- Conducted public education efforts regarding the 2009 NC State disposal ban on plastic bottles, wood pallets, and motor oil filters in the landfill;
- Completed the communications plan to support the new litter reduction and beautification program, Spruce;
- Began formulating Spruce brochure design and content;
- Conducted the annual recruitment open house for citizens interested in council-appointed volunteer boards and commissions;
- Conducted the annual orientation for newly appointed boards and commissions members and chairs;
- Clarified and unified board/commissions structure, goals and work plans;
- Continued to develop and implement communications plans for street improvement projects;
- Revised and began implementing the communications plan for the Hometown Spirit Award Program;
- Created and successfully implemented a comprehensive communications plan to support "Sunshine Week";

- Revised and implemented the residential backflow communications plan;
- Continued a month-long effort toward collecting public input on budget priorities for the FY 2011 budget;
- Implemented the 2010 Biennial Citizen Satisfaction Survey and Focus Groups;
- Proclaimed May 2010 as "Building Safety Month" and participated in several community outreach events;
- Developed and distributed numerous crime prevention flyers;
- Developed and implemented a communications plan to support the move to Geographical Policing;
- Continued Gang Prevention Initiative and "Sidekick" program;
- Conducted the first Camp Confidence Police/Youth mentoring program;
- Continued Citizens Police Academy, CERT, and the School of Government education/outreach programs;
- Continued to conduct town-wide Community Watch leader meetings to bring all community watch leaders together for training and information sharing;
- Continued holding National Fire Prevention Week and National Night Out activities as key components in the annual public safety education program;
- Continued operation of police service center at Cary Towne Center staffed by CAP team volunteers;
- Conducted aggressive driving campaigns as part of Operation Patient Payoff;
- Held the first pill take-back outreach event;
- Continued utilizing the *Neighborhood America/Engage* software program to facilitate online comments on several proposed development initiatives as well as the Water Shortage Response Plan;
- Issued the annual water quality and wastewater reports
- Continued a comprehensive communications effort to update water customers on the annual water treatment disinfection process;
- Created and implemented communications efforts surrounding the Town's annual reclaimed water holiday and annual smoke testing program;
- Continued producing the weekly Cary Connections Ad in *The Cary News* along with monthly issues of BUD, BUD TV, and Cary Matters;
- Continued to issue Traffic Alerts prior to all significant road construction and closures;
- Launched the fifth comprehensive overhaul of the Town's external Web site;
- Launched the online employment application service that provides internal and external efficiencies through its paperless process;
- Began using Twitter as a new outreach tool, and developed the standard procedure to support its use;
- Launched *Bottom Line*, a Web section to help the Town correct misinformation and settle rumors;
- Continued utilizing online bidding and online surplus property sales methods;
- Continued supporting the Black Creek Watershed Association in an advisory role;
- Conducted annual workshops for local contractors and developers concerning stormwater and erosion control;

- Continued public outreach and education efforts designed to support the Town of Cary's Phase II Stormwater Permit through mass mailings, outreach at Town events, newspaper advertising, HOA newsletters and BUD;
- Continued to notify citizens of pending development issues via direct mail, advertising, and sign postings on subject properties;
- Continued striving to make time/space in all external communications to explain why something is occurring and how it affects quality of life in addition to the basic facts of an issue;
- Continued working towards a consistent Town image and focus; and,
- cablecast more than 4767 hours of non-bulletin board programming, 262 of that being original/first run programming hours.

MEDIA

- Established a For the Media section on the Town's Web site to help increase reporters' success in working with the Town of Cary;
- Updated and continued to utilize the Town's Media Contacts Standard Procedure to ensure consistency in dealing with the media;
- Continued using the media pager system to help ensure that media get responses to inquiries within 10 minutes of contacting the Town;
- Continued holding weekly briefings on current crimes;
- Continued building the electronic image library;
- Continued to focus on regional media coverage by emailing news releases to a broad group of media outlets;
- Continued to promote use of the Web site as a media tool;
- Continued to identify, explore, coordinate, and promote opportunities to secure appropriate media sponsorship of programs and events;
- Issued 365 news releases, public service announcements, and media advisories (down 5% from 382 last year) to assist the media with getting information and focusing attention on key issues; and,
- Completed the 12th annual Media Contact Survey designed to assess the Town's day-to-day responsiveness to the needs of the regional news media; this year the Town received an "A"/93 (up from a "B"/88 last year).

POLITICIANS

- Successfully produced the 2009 Cary Community Candidate Forum;
- Continued the annual Cary Mayor State of the Town address;
- Continued writing biographies and remarks for Town Council and appointed officials;
- Continued to produce the Town Council's monthly cable television show, *Cary Matters*;
- Continued to cablecast live election results;
- Continued to raise public awareness on the Town's legislative agenda; and,
- Continued regularly communicating with local, state, and federal elected officials on high profile issues.

2010/2011 COMMUNICATIONS GOALS & INITIATIVES

OVERVIEW

The organization looks forward to another very full year of projects and initiatives designed to build and maintain beneficial, open, and transparent relations with our many publics, both internal and external. This year's communications program continues the Town's focus on consistency, timeliness, accuracy, exchange, evaluation, responsiveness, courteousness, and technology.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Even though the number of Town employees has dropped to 1,140, Town of Cary staff continues to comprise an influential communications group frequently tapped for information by the general citizenry. This year's program continues to focus on maintaining the staff's high level of knowledge and awareness about Town government in order to improve their responsiveness, including the connection between this knowledge and the provision of exemplary service.

GOALS

- Maintain a high level of employee knowledge about overall Town government;
- Increase employee attention to strategic communications, including being proactive and deadline oriented in communications planning;
- Increase employee effectiveness at presenting and communicating information to internal and external publics;
- Increase employee attention to effectiveness at coordinating interdepartmental communications; and,
- Maintain a high awareness among employees to make all communications polite, friendly, and fair.

INITIATIVES

HIGHEST PRIORITY

1. Revise and successfully implement a comprehensive communications plan to support "Sunshine Week";
2. Regularly test the Town Emergency Notification System for contacting Town employees during emergencies;
3. Maintain a high level of employee knowledge on the requirements for security of sensitive information, including developing a supplemental training video;
4. Continue to train staff on new Web content management software and protocols;
5. Continue the day-long, comprehensive new employee orientation, including distributing the employee guide and video that cover key elements of the organization's structure and culture;

6. Continue media relations training and implement the recommendations of the 2010 Media Contact Survey Report;
7. Continue the staff committees to explore problem solving, communications, and issue advocacy;
8. Continue holding one-day Management Team Meetings three times a year along with the annual Council/Staff retreat;
9. Continue developing a communications component of a comprehensive strategy to support Town efforts to "green" itself; and,
10. Complete the update of and continue to ensure that staff supports the Town's Public Records Policy.

MODERATE PRIORITY

1. Develop PRCR Departmental section on C-Net;
2. Continue using the Internal Web Focus Group and other strategies for regularly reviewing the accuracy, consistency, and relevance of www.townofcary.org;
3. Continue using CAP Team volunteers to assist police staff with park patrol, handicapped parking enforcement, special events, and staffing the police service center at Cary Towne Center;
4. Begin designing a study of optimal average number and topics of daily, non-emergency communications from the Town to employees, media, and the public;
5. Acquire necessary software/hardware and begin developing practices/procedures for Phase II use of/participation in new media;
6. Continue building employee knowledge, effectiveness, and morale through in-house training courses and Shadowing as well as programs and events such as PEER, Team Player, and the Employee Recognition Luncheon.

LOWER PRIORITY

1. Continue developing and implementing an effective communications effort regarding payroll e-notification in lieu of pay stubs;
2. Continue to prepare for and distribute to staff and Council electronic fact sheets, emails, and other materials on emerging and key Town government issues.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

This year's plan again directly targets three external publics: the general citizenry, politicians, and the media. The program relies upon a mix of public relations and marketing to improve constituent involvement, participation, support, knowledge, and awareness.

GENERAL CITIZENRY

The Town of Cary continues its ongoing efforts to optimize effective, efficient, and friendly communications with all Cary citizens through a multi-layered communications program. Because of the demographic differences in the Town's population, a variety of tactics must be employed to reach as many people as possible in the target groups on each issue.

GOALS

- Maintain a high level of citizen awareness, knowledge, and understanding of Town services, projects, and initiatives;
- Increase how well-informed citizens feel about their government;
- Increase citizen satisfaction with how Cary makes information available to them;
- Increase citizen satisfaction with opportunities the Town provides to them to participate in the decision-making process; and,
- Maintain a high level of citizen participation in Town-sponsored programs and events.

INITIATIVES

HIGHEST PRIORITY

1. Revise and implement the communications plan for the Hometown Spirit Award Program;
2. Continue implementing the communications plan for Aquastar, the Advanced Meter Infrastructure;
3. Help ensure that Cary citizens have timely access to regional transit and transportation planning information;
4. Restructure the PRCR Departmental Communications Plan to meet Town and CAPRA Accreditation standards;
5. Begin the PRCR Master Plan Update process;
6. Utilize the Neighborhood America software program to facilitate online comments on Sk8 Cary and Dog Park operations;
7. Continue issuing the Annual Water Quality and Wastewater reports;
8. Continue leading the communications effort to support the Western Wake Partners' new regional wastewater management facilities;
9. Continue collecting public input on budget priorities for the annual budget;
10. Continue developing and implementing project-specific communications plans for significant capital projects;

11. Create 2011 yellow and blue recycling collection calendars and mail to corresponding residential accounts;
12. Design, print and mail Annual Mailing (holiday and leaf collection schedule) to yellow and blue residential accounts;
13. Conduct public education efforts regarding the 2011 NC State disposal ban on computers and televisions in the landfill;
14. Develop and implement a communication plan for the implementation of electronic plan review as well as the update to the Town's sign regulations;
15. Continue implementing the NCAA Championship City communications plan;
16. Continue public outreach and education efforts designed to support the Water Conservation, Cary Recycles, and Spruce programs;
17. Maintain the communications plan for Koka Booth Amphitheatre and support and supplement Booth Amphitheatre marketing and promotional efforts as appropriate; and,
18. Continue to hold public meetings for the general public to review and comment on all major park, greenway and special use facility capital projects.

MODERATE PRIORITY

1. Develop appropriate communications tools to explain the process for requesting sidewalks;
2. Develop and implement initiatives to help citizens understand who is responsible for Cary streets (state, Town, private) and the implications of these designations/responsibilities;
3. Develop appropriate communications tools to explain the process for how the Town acquires easements/right of way and what citizens can expect;
4. Continue C-Tran marketing to help increase ridership;
5. Investigate a 311/One Call system for tracking and responding to citizen contacts;
6. Begin to develop a plan to increase the number of citizens who subscribe to Town online communications services;
7. Create new water conservation Web pages with comprehensive water resources information;
8. Continue utilizing Block Leader program participants to disseminate Town environmental information;
9. Develop and implement Beat the Peak, the town's annual summer water conservation outreach campaign;
10. Continue using "Click to Gov" interactive Web service enabling citizens to access online Inspections and Permits data;
11. Continue implementing the PRCR sign plan;
12. Continue Gang Prevention Initiative and "White Tiger" programs;
13. Continue CPA, CAP, CERT, and the School of Government education/outreach programs;
14. Continue to conduct town-wide Community Watch leader meetings to bring all community watch leaders together for training and information sharing;
15. Continue to provide orientation for newly appointed boards and commissions members, chairs, and staff liaisons;

16. Develop an on-line boards and commissions application;
17. Begin developing a comprehensive environmental communications effort that includes the current efforts as well as new programs under one "green Cary" focus;
18. Create short videos to help citizens understand flooding and water quality issues;
19. Continue to promote FIT Community through implementation of the communications plan;
20. Continue communications efforts to recruit qualified applicants for Town Council's boards and commissions;
21. Continue working to improve citizen understanding of the difference between storm drain and sanitary sewer system destinations;
22. Continue to review and evaluate program brochures and their effectiveness in providing information to the public;
23. Continue distributing pretreatment letters to utility customers in areas near sanitary sewer overflows;
24. Continue holding National Fire Prevention Week and National Night Out activities as key components in the annual public safety education program;
25. Continue ongoing communications efforts related to Finance Department activities including rate changes, Oasis, drop boxes, bank draft, E-bill presentment, and meter boxes;
26. Hold regular meetings between PIO staff and PRCR staff, as well as between PIO staff and PD staff, to discuss issues, updates and future plans;
27. Continue making time/space in all external communications to explain why something is occurring and how it affects quality of life instead of simply focusing only on the basic facts of an issue; and,
28. Continue producing monthly issues of BUD and BUD TV.

LOWER PRIORITY

1. Submit nomination for WaterSense Partner of the Year;
2. Finalize and print "Let's Be Water Conscious" Water Conservation brochure;
3. Install new signs at the Citizen's Convenience Center;
4. Develop and implement a scientific survey to gain statistically valid information to help guide future PRCR planning and programming;
5. Continue to plan and execute special events to publicize the completion of important capital projects such as streets, parks, and greenways; and,
6. Continue working towards a consistent Town image and focus.

THE MEDIA

The Town of Cary continues to view the media as important partners in ensuring an informed citizenry. The organization will, therefore, strive to maintain its positive, proactive relationship with regional media by continuing all aspects of the current media relations program.

GOALS

- Maintain a high level of accurate, comprehensive regional media coverage of Town issues;
- Maintain the media's perception of Cary as an easy place to report on and from; and,
- Increase media sponsorship and support of Town programs and events.

INITIATIVES

HIGHEST PRIORITY

1. Develop and implement a plan and process to transition away from the Cary Connections display ad;
2. Conduct a comprehensive review of PRCR advertising;
3. Continue issuing regular news releases 2-3 business days in advance of and issuing Traffic Alerts at least 24 hours before planned road closures;
4. Continue ensuring that all staff who do media interviews are prepared with Key Messages;
5. Continue using topic-specific media distribution lists such as sports, entertainment, general government, traffic, and severe weather; and,
6. Continue to utilize the Town's updated Media Contacts Standard Procedure to ensure consistency in working with the media.

MODERATE PRIORITY

1. Implement the recommendations of the 2010 Media Contact Survey;
2. Begin a process to effectively integrate non-traditional/citizen journalists into the Town's communications program by defining the current state and researching best practices;
3. Continue offering weekly crime report briefings;
4. Improve efforts to provide prompt and appropriate feedback to reporters on all stories;
5. Continue promoting the Web site as a media tool; and,
6. Continue enhancing the Image Library.

LOWER PRIORITY

1. Ensure the media are informed of PRCR programs and events by continuing to improve the method of communication between PRCR, PIO and media via community calendars, news releases, feature stories, and Web pages;
2. Develop feature stories on interesting Town topics, including a focus on stories that would be useful based on the yearly calendar—holidays, annual events;
3. Schedule editorial board meetings prior to major events or campaigns as needed;
4. Continue using the calendar listing procedure for PRCR events to allow staff to submit event information directly to media outlets for their calendar listings; and,
5. Identify, explore, coordinate, and promote opportunities to secure appropriate media sponsorship of programs and events.

POLITICIANS

While there are no Town Council elections this fiscal year, the year's plan continues to focus on working effectively with elected officials.

GOALS

Build and maintain effective relationships between the Town and outside elected officials/bodies at the local, state and federal levels

INITIATIVES

HIGHEST PRIORITY

1. Continue producing monthly episodes of *Cary Matters*;
2. Continue the annual Cary Mayor State of the Town address;
3. Support the Town Council with background information, talking points, and remarks for official government communications as requested; and,
4. Monitor statements made by and information from politicians for accuracy and provide fact checks as appropriate.

HIGHEST PRIORITY

1. Continue carrying elections results live on Cary TV 11.

MODERATE PRIORITY

1. Develop and update biographies for Town Council and appointed officials; and,
2. Continue to raise public awareness on the Town's legislative goals by developing fact sheets, Web pages, articles, and face-to-face meetings as needed.

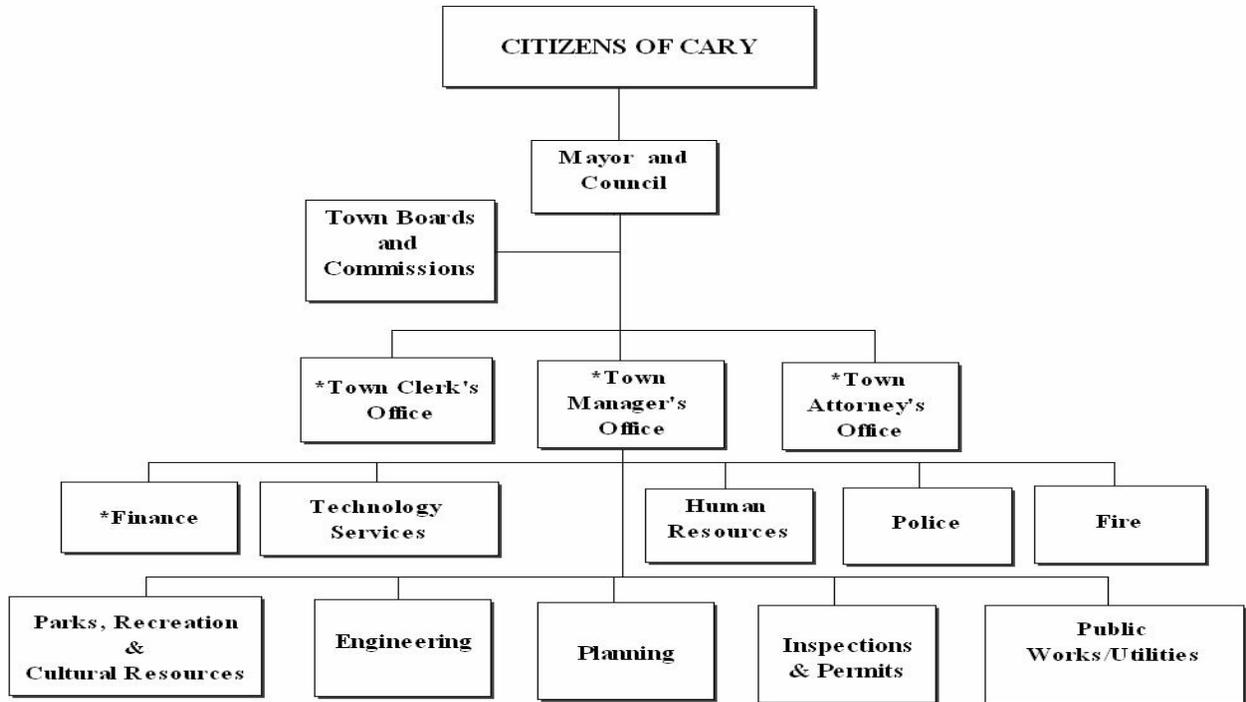
LOWER PRIORITY

1. Develop the plan for the 2011 Cary Community Candidate Forum.



APPENDIX

Town of Cary Organization Chart



** The Town Clerk and Treasurer, Town Manager, and Town Attorney are appointed by Town Council. The function of Treasurer is a responsibility assigned by Town Council to the Finance Director. The function of Treasurer is an appointment; however, the position of Finance Director is not.*

**Standard Procedure 105
Media Contacts**

Effective: 6/18/2010

Supersedes: 8/23/2005

Prepared by: Susan Moran, Public Information Officer

Approved by: Benjamin T. Shivar, Town Manager

PURPOSE:

- To provide accurate information in a timely and professional manner;
- To present information in a manner that is consistent with Council's policies and philosophies;
- To reduce the incidents of conflicting information being disseminated by the organization;
- To ensure that Council and staff are aware of any communications issues;
- To manage issues before they become problematic; and,
- To ensure consistent, comprehensive, and equitable distribution of Town information on a regional scale.

DEFINITIONS:

Media – Journalists, editors, publishers, photographers, videographers, or other persons who collect, report and distribute information to a large audience via any medium (television, print, radio, Internet).

PROCEDURE:

General:

1. The Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and the Public Information Officer are the only Town staff authorized to initiate contact or to direct others to initiate contact with the media.
2. Staff who would like to interact with the media on behalf of themselves personally or on behalf of outside organizations, associations, or groups must coordinate in advance with the Public Information Officer.
3. Staff contacted by media regarding their efforts outside of their work with the Town should immediately notify the Public Information Office of the contact and make every effort to ensure that references to their position/work with the Town are kept separate from and not included in stories about outside efforts.
4. Staff will complete Town basic media relations training before responding to inquiries from the media about the Town.

5. The Public Information Office will be notified when a reporter or other member of the media is on Town property. Notification should fall to the staff member meeting with the media representative. However, any staff member who sees live trucks operating on Town property should always call Public Information.
6. All persons involved in speaking to the media on a particular issue will actively coordinate with each other during the response period to ensure accuracy and consistency in message delivery.
7. Staff will not offer personal opinions or answer any questions outside their immediate scope, even if as non-experts they believe they know the correct answer.
8. Staff will not comment on actions or matters of other governments instead, staff comments will only be made on what the Town does. When media request Information for use in stories focusing on other local governments, Town staff will contact the appropriate person in that local government as a courtesy.
9. Errors in reporting will be brought to the immediate attention of the Public Information Office, which will determine the appropriate steps necessary in correcting the errors.
10. Staff will make every effort to have a member of the Public Information Office present at all person-to-person interviews in order to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of staff; (2) evaluate the interaction with media; (3) offer assistance to staff and media where necessary.
11. News conferences will be planned in advance and coordinated by the Public Information Office.
12. While working for the Town, staff may not accept outside employment that involves communicating about Town staff, programs, events, initiatives, or issues.

Issue Assessment:

- A distinction will be made between routine communications (for example: traffic reports, class/meeting schedules, weather advisories) and significant communications (issues that involve existing or potential threats to public safety/welfare/property or issues that may affect the Town's image/citizen confidence in their government). Routine and significant communications issues may or may not involve the media.
- An assessment tool will be available to aid staff in determining the nature of an issue.
- The Public Information Office will be notified of all media contacts, routine or significant.
- Staff will forward significant issues to the Manager, Assistant Manager, or Public Information Officer to manage.
- Routine issues may be handled by appropriate personnel within each division without prior contact with the Public Information Officer.

Materials Distribution:

- The Public Information Office will determine the standard format for materials distributed by the Town to the media, including but not limited to news releases, media advisories, public service announcements, alerts, and fact sheets.
- The Public Information Office will maintain a comprehensive media contact list which will be utilized throughout Town government.
- All news releases, media advisories, alerts, and public service announcements will be distributed using the comprehensive media email list;
- The Public Information Officer will be listed as a contact on all releases to the media.
- Council and staff will be copied on all news releases, public service announcements, alerts, and advisories.
- All news releases, media advisories, alerts, and public service announcements will be added to the Web site by the Public Information Office as part of the distribution process.

ISSUE ASSESSMENT FOR MEDIA CONTACTS

Answering YES to any of the following suggests that the communications issue may be significant, not routine:

1. *Is the issue a threat, existing or potential, to life, health, or property?*
2. *Could the issue likely be interpreted to negatively affect public confidence in or opinion of Town government or Town Council?*
3. *Is the issue of particular interest to the general public?*
4. *Are there legal ramifications, existing or potential, raised by the issue?*
5. *Has more than one member of the media contacted you regarding the same issue?*
6. *Has someone threatened to go to the media about the issue?*
7. *Is there unusual or inappropriate interest by a person or a small group of people about a seemingly routine issue?*
8. *Would you be worried if you woke up and found yourself quoted about the issue in the morning paper?*



<p>Town of Cary STANDARD PROCEDURE</p> <p>PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS</p>	<p>Standard Procedure No. 106 Effective: June 1, 1999 Supersedes: N/A Prepared by: Ben Shivar Title: Assistant Town Manager Prepared by: Susan Moran Title: Public Information Office Approved by: William B. Coleman, Jr. Town Manager</p>
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PURPOSE:

- To present public information materials in a manner consistent with Council’s policies and philosophies;
- To ensure that the creation and use of public information materials are consistent with and supportive of the Town’s Mission Statement, Statement of Values, and long-range communications goals as well as the operations of Town departments;
- To ensure consistency and uniformity in the creation and use of public information materials;
- To ensure that reasonable standards of quality are met in the creation and use of public information materials; and,
- To maximize economy and efficiency in the creation and use of public information materials;

DEFINITIONS:

Public Information Materials include all of the following:

- Promotional Items: supplemental items created or modified to carry a message about or advertise any aspect of Town Government to internal or external publics. Such items include but are not limited to pins, pens, pencils, magnets, key chains, paperweights, flags, banners, cups, hats, shirts, visors, bumper stickers.
- Collateral Pieces: text-based, supplemental items created or modified to carry a message about or advertise any aspect of Town Government to internal or external publics. Such items include but are not limited to flyers, brochures, pamphlets, booklets, newsletters, postcards, letterhead, business cards, holiday cards.
- Promotional Messages: any slogans, tag lines, or other short summary statements referring to any aspect of Town Government and used on internal or external promotional items or collateral pieces or in advertising.

PROCEDURE:

- Initial proposals for public information materials shall be directed to the Public Information Officer (PIO) and shall address or include the following:
 1. A brief description of the proposed item
 2. Purpose or objective(s) of the proposed item
 3. Intended audience(s) for the item
 4. Intended method of distribution
 5. A brief explanation of how the proposed item supports or advances program goals
- The PIO shall be involved in the design and distribution of all public information materials.
- No Town funds shall be budgeted or used for public information materials without prior approval of the Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager.
- No outside funds or sponsorships for public information materials shall be solicited or utilized without prior approval of the Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager.

TOWN OF CARY MEDIA DISTRIBUTION LIST (2010)

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
Active Alex		(919) 388-3106		michelle.dawson@activealex.com
Associated Press	4020 Westchase Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27607	(919) 833-8687	834-1078	apraleigh@ap.org
Business North Carolina	5605 77 Center Drive, Suite 101, Charlotte, NC 28217	(704) 927-6273		fmaley@businessnc.com
Carolina Woman	PO Box 52687, Durham, NC 27717	(919) 852-5900	(919) 852-5910	publisher@carolinawoman.com
Cary Magazine	301 Cascade Pointe Lane, Cary, NC 27513	(919) 674-6020	(919) 674-6027	dcasper@carolinamagazine.com
Cary News	1100 Situs Court, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27606	(919) 460-2600	(919) 460-2601	carynews@nando.com
Carolina Parent	5716 Fayetteville Road, 201, Durham, NC 27713	(919) 956-2430	(919) 956-2427	editorial@carolinaparent.com
Cary Citizen				editor@carycitizen.com
Chapel Hill News	P.O. Box 870, 505 W. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC	(919) 932-2007	(919) 932-2017	ewarnock@nando.com
Chatham News & Record	PO Box 290, Siler City, NC 27344	(919) 663-3232	(919) 663-4042	donbe51@yahoo.com
Daily Tar Heel	P.O. Box 3257 Chapel Hill, NC 27515	(919) 962-4103		
Durham Herald-Sun	PO Box 2092, Durham, NC 27702	(919) 419-6500	(919) 419-6889 /6837	news@heraldsun.com
Independent Weekly	112 E. Hargett Street, Raleigh, NC 27601	(919) 832-8774	(919) 286-4274	editors@indyweek.com
LaConexion	722 N. West Street, Raleigh, NC 27603	(919) 832-1225	(919) 856-0164	conectese@laconexionusa.com
News & Observer	215 S. McDowell Street, Raleigh, NC 27602	(919) 829-4500	(919) 829-4529	continuousnewsteam@newsobserver.com
NC League of Municipalities	PO Box 3069, Raleigh, NC 27602	(919) 733-9519	(919) 733-9519	
NC News Network	711 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, NC 27603	(919) 890-6030	(919) 890-6192	mwilloughby@ncnn.com
News 14 Carolina	2505 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 102, Raleigh, NC 27604	(919) 882-4040	(919) 882-4045	news@news14.com
Our State	PO Box 4552, Greensboro, NC 27404	(336) 286-0600	(336) 286-0100	vjarrett@ourstate.com
Que Pasa	4600 New Bern Ave., Suite 101, Raleigh, NC 27610	(919) 645-1680	(919) 345-2503	jcusicanqui@quepasamedia.com
The Carolinian	649 Maywood Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27603	(919) 834-5558	(919) 832-3243	carolinian@mindspring.com
Triangle Business Journal	1305 Navaho Drive, Suite 401, Raleigh, NC 27609	(919) 878-0010	(919) 790-6885	triangle@bizjournals.com
WNCN (NBC)	1205 Front Street, Raleigh, NC 27609	(919) 836-1717	(919) 836-1687	newstips@wncn.com
WRAL (CBS)	2619 Western Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27606	(919) 821-8600	(919) 821-8541	assignmentdesk@wral.com
WRAZ (FOX)	P.O. Box 30050 Durham, NC 2770	(919) 595-5050	(919) 821-8541	assignmentdesk@wral.com
WTVD (ABC) Durham	411 Liberty Street, Durham, NC 27701	(919) 899-3601	(919) 687-4373	wtvassignmentdesk@abc.com
WTVD (ABC) Raleigh	319 Fayetteville Street, 107, Raleigh, NC 27601	(919) 683-1111	(919) 834-0550	wtvassignmentdesk@abc.com
WUNC TV	PO Box 14900, RTP, NC 27709-4900	(919) 549-7000	(919) 549-7201	ncnow@unctv.org
Clear Channel (WRVA The River, WDCG 105, WKSL 93.9 Kiss FM, WRDU Rush Radio 106.1)	8001-101 Creedmoor Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613	(919) 954-1043	(919) 844-3947	mikesochacki@clearchannel.com
WAUG 750	1315 Oakwood Ave., Raleigh, NC 27610	(919) 516-4750	(919) 516-4425	waug@st-aug.edu
Curtis Media (WPTF, WQDR, WBBB, WYMY, WMMY)	3012 Highwoods Blvd, Raleigh, NC 27604	(919) 878-1724	(919) 790-8369	mblackmon@curtismedia.com
Radio One (WQOK, WNNL, WFXC, K97.5, FOXY 107/104, The Light 103.9)	8601 Six Forks Rd., Raleigh, NC 27615	(919) 844-3947	(919) 848-4724	tthomas@ccraleigh.com
WSHA 88.9	118 E. South St., Raleigh, NC 27601	(919) 546-8430	(919) 546-8315	wsha@shawu.edu
WUNC-FM Radio	Campus Box 0915, Swain Hall @ UNC, Chapel Hill, NC 27599	(919) 966-5454	(919) 966-5955	news@wunc.org

CURRENT TOWN OF CARY INFORMATION VEHICLES

Banners, Booklets, & Brochures
Block Leaders
Blogs
BUD Newsletter
Cary TV 11
Cary Connections Weekly Display Ad in *The Cary News*
C-NET employee Web site
Direct Mail
Door Hangers & Yard Flags
Dynamic Message Signs
Electronic Mailing List Service
Email
Fax
Flyers, Posters
New and Traditional Media
Newsletters
Promotional Items—magnets, bumper stickers, pens, mugs
Speakers Bureau Program
Special Events
Telephone Banks
Town Employees
Town Council
Twitter
Utility Bill Envelope Messages
Utility Bill Messages
Voicemail
Web site

INFORMATION GROUPS

Businesses
Cary Chamber Members
Churches
Civic Organizations
Employees
Homeowners Associations
Media
Other Governments
Political Candidates
Professional Associations
Schools

Town of Cary Guidelines on Social Media

(Including personal Web sites, wikis, blogs and online communities)

At the Town of Cary, we neither encourage nor discourage your personal participation (off duty and using personal/non-Town equipment) in social media. Our goal in offering these guidelines is to provide you with best practices so that, if you choose to participate, you can do so appropriately and effectively. We also think it's important for you to know the Town's expectations for virtual communications that involve Town activities, issues, staff, and volunteers.

1. While blogs, wikis and other forms of online discourse are individual interactions, please remember that to our citizens, you are always a representative of the Town of Cary.
2. Respect your audience and welcome feedback about your posts. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc., and show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. If your posting reflects negatively on the Town (the organization as a whole or co-workers individually) – by being lewd, illegal or offensive – it can become a personnel issue. Keep in mind that the Town's [Personnel Ordinance](#) stipulates that personal detrimental conduct – on or off duty -- can be grounds for discipline or dismissal.
3. Know the legal risks of participating in social media. You can be held personally legally and financially responsible for the things you say and do, including defaming a person or entity with your posts; don't use other people's writings or images without their permission; respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
4. Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
5. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.
6. Protect your privacy and your reputation. Be mindful that what you post will be public for a long time, even if you think you've successfully removed the posting from the Internet.
7. When posting about online references and original source materials, link to them directly. Remember: there is only one official Web site for the Town. Direct people to the Town's Web site for information about Town services, projects, programs, etc.
8. To help ensure that no one mistakes your personal postings with official Town communications, please refrain from posting videos, photographs, or other images of yourself in/with/alongside Town of Cary property including but not limited to vehicles, uniforms/clothing, offices, etc.
9. Your participation in social media during breaks at work or from work devices should be extremely limited and in accordance with these guidelines, the Town's [Technology Appropriate Use Policy](#), and the Town's [Standard Procedure \(105\) on media contacts](#).
10. If your personal participation in social media starts to involve the Town, let your supervisor and the Public Information Office know.
11. If you believe your work should involve social media or you want to respond to a post, talk to your supervisor and the Public Information Office before doing so.
12. Remember: true and complete anonymity on the Internet does not exist. So, when personally blogging about the Town of Cary or any issue involving the Town of Cary, you have a responsibility to identify yourself - name and, when relevant, role at TOC. Write in the first person, and include a disclaimer that makes it clear that your postings are your own and don't necessarily represent TOC's positions, strategies or opinions.

Questions? Contact the Public Information Officer.

Update February 5, 2008

Standard Procedure 142 New Media Protocol

Effective: 3/29/10
Prepared by: Susan Moran, Public Information Officer,
and Bill Stice, Director of Technology Services
Approved by: Ben Shivar, Town Manager

PURPOSE:

To provide a procedural framework that allows the Town timely adaptation to and incorporation of emerging New Media tools, technologies, and applications; to present accurate and timely information in a manner that is consistent with the Town Council's policies and philosophies as well as state and federal laws and regulations; to present information in a manner that is consistent with the Town of Cary's Mission Statement, Statement of Values, and annual Communications Plan; to ensure consistency and uniformity between elements of the organization.

DEFINITIONS:

Communiqué: Message, report, posting, statement, document, or other product distributed via New Media.

New Media: Internet and mobile-based video, audio, text or multimedia communications, services, tools, or applications that facilitate dynamic, multi-directional information sharing; includes but is not limited to Blogs, microblogs, text messaging, and social networking and news sites; excludes traditional media such as television, radio, newspaper and other print journalism.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The Technology Services Department oversees all technical aspects of the Town's use of new media, and the Public Information Office oversees all New Media content.
- New Media activities are supplemental and additive to the Town's Web site, which serves as the primary information vehicle for the Town.
- The Town's New Media personality will be informative, caring, authentic, proactive, constructive, conversational, respectful, specific, and, wherever possible, include a call to action.
- Communiqués will avoid debate; Communiqués will be focused on adding value.
- New Media tools will only be utilized after Technology Services has the necessary security and retention hardware, software, and protocols in place for the particular application.
- New Media records will be created and managed according to the Town of Cary's Public Records Policy and the North Carolina General Statutes.

PROCEDURES:

1. New Media will be developed using only Town of Cary approved hardware, software, protocols and technical practices established by the Technology Services Department.
2. The Public Information Office is the only Town staff authorized to create/authorize the creation of New Media sites/accounts/feeds or to distribute/authorize the distribution of content via New Media.
3. Town staff and others working on behalf of the Town including consultants, contractors, and volunteers will complete Town-specific New Media training from the Public Information Office and the Technology Services Department before utilizing New Media.
4. New Media communiqués will be “one-way” and adhere to the Town’s New Media Style Guide.
5. The Town will not re-distribute or forward third-party communiqués.
6. Wherever possible, New Media communiqués will reference/point to the Town’s Web site, which serves as the primary and official source for Town information.
7. Promotional announcements for Town-sponsored events, programs, and activities are permitted; however, promotional announcements for events, charities or outside organizations in which the Town has no official interest or sponsorship are not permitted.
8. Hyperlinks may be provided in the Town’s New Media communiqués to any other local, state, federal, or international government site as well as to any site managed by a not-for-profit corporation providing services to Cary citizens and having a direct, official relationship with or receiving financial support from the Town of Cary. Hyperlinks to any for-profit corporation may be provided only in special circumstances where the for-profit entity is co-sponsoring a Town of Cary activity or event. The link may only be active during the event and during a specifically-defined, limited promotional period.
9. Videos, photos, and other media may be utilized with New Media provided that they are supported by security and retention hardware, software, and protocols.
10. Requests for project/initiative-specific New Media sites/accounts/feeds/communiqués should be made to the Public Information Office, preferably as part of project communication plans that articulate the audience, purpose, and messages involving New Media.
11. The Public Information Office will maintain a New Media page on www.townofcary.org that includes the Town’s New Media policies and practices as well as information on which New Media tools the Town is utilizing.
12. The Public Information Office will regularly monitor New Media sites and communications by and about the Town and issue/authorize “fact checks,” clarifications, and other communiqués in response as needed.