

TELLING SCOUTING'S POSITIVE STORY

through the local Media

Special points of Interest:

- Let the community know what Scouts are doing.
- Generate new members.



Earn this Patch!



Why?

Promoting your unit to the public can help recruit new members, retain current members and promote the positive message of Scouting in your community.

Writing Your Story

The following content tips and news release format information may be helpful to you in writing newspaper article. A news release should communicate key information - the who, what, when, where, and how of an event or issue - to reporters and editors in the news media.

A sample news release is included in this packet for your convenience.

The Basics All news releases begin with a headline designed to attract the reader's attention and encourage them to read the entire story. Remember, first impressions are key! If a headline is dull and uninteresting, the reader will assume the same of the release. Large numbers and visual language can make the difference between sparkling, attractive headline and one that is flat and lifeless. The most essential information in a news release should be listed in the first paragraph of the release. Include as many of who, what, when, where, why, and how elements as possible.



Don't Keep Scouting a Secret!

The main body of the news release should include significant details that relate to the lead, including quotations and succinct descriptions. Any related but nonessential information should appear toward the end of the release. Generally, the last paragraph provides overall information and statistics. In your stories, you might provide general information about your Unit (Troop, Pack, Crew), and the adult's name and phone number for those who would like more information.

- Who** did it?
- What** did they do?
- When** did they do it?
- Why** did they do it?
- How** did they do it?

Inside Story:

- How to write News Releases
- How to send photos.
- Sample News Releases/ Letter to Editor.
- Media Contact List.
- Patch Order Form.

General Rules for News Releases



- Always type a news release. Releases should be double-spaced and typed on one side only of 8-1/2-inch by 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Conciseness is the key. Try to limit releases to one or two pages. A news release should not exceed 500 words. A straightforward and concise writing style is the objective. Use short clearly written paragraphs.
- Never split a paragraph at the end of the page.
- Type "-more-" at the bottom of a page when the release is more than one page in length.
- If a release is more than one page in length, put an abbreviated headline and page number at the top of each page following page one.
- Type "###" to signify the end of the release.
- Clarity, accuracy, grammar, and neatness are vital. Verify all names, addresses, and facts before distributing the release. Make sure you do grammar/spell check on your document.
- When composing a story, use an individual's full name in the first reference. Thereafter, use only the last name. Use titles such as Scoutmaster, a person's hometown, and, perhaps age. Use full names for groups, along with a description. Properly capitalize and punctuate Scouting titles.
- If including a photograph with your release, make sure it will capture the interest of the reader. Every photograph should include a complete and correct caption that identifies each person and the action in the photograph. Get parent's permission to send the photo.
- Use quotes early in your story. Quotes may come from Scout leaders, professional Scouters, volunteers, or Scouts. Use their name—as they like it to appear—along with their age, hometown, and Scouting rank.

Earn Merit Badges

If a Scout has earned or is earning the Journalism or Communications merit badge, he might already be eligible for the News Reporter Patch. The requirements for both merit badges correlate with those for the News Reporter Program. Look for the similarities below and discover how easy it is to earn multiple awards at one



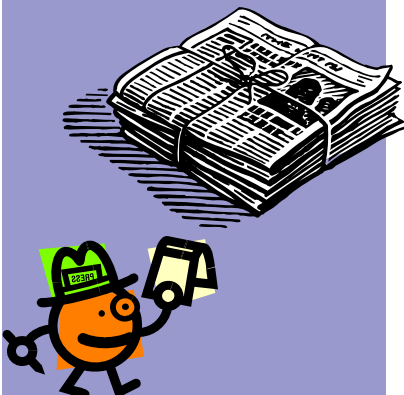
A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words – Send Photos

A photograph accompanying your story adds an interesting and eye-catching appeal to the article. Use the following tips to help you take photographs, write captions, and satisfy your news outlet's needs:

Each photo should have one main subject. Close-ups are better than wide panoramic shots. Look at the types of photo in newspapers, and ask your media contact about the types of photos the newspaper wants.

People want to see pictures of Scouts in action! Avoid, if at all possible, shots of Scouts just standing around.

A photography caption should fully explain the complete story. Include the who, what, when, where, why, and how, identify as many people in the photograph as possible. Check to ensure that names are spelled correctly.



Sample – Notice to Media

Boy Scout Troop 1234
Your Hometown, Illinois
Contact:
Joe Scoutmaster
Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212
Mobile (847) 555-1111

- Media Notice

Boy Scouts to help elderly attend Church

Who: Boy Scouts Troop 1234 from Hometown

Why: Many shut-ins and elderly want to attend church but are unable to do so because of physical imitations and needed assistance. Four times a year a special service is held for the elderly and shut-ins in the community.

How: St. Mary’s Church in Hometown will provide transportation for those who need assistance to attend church. Boy Scouts from Troop 1234 will assist by helping unload vehicles and walking them or pushing wheelchairs for those in need. The Scouts will help serve refreshments after the service then help load vehicles for their return home.

When: Sunday, December 24, 2007
11:00am

Where: St. Mary’s Church
987 Main Street
Hometown, Illinois



Sample – News ReleaseContact:

(Fill in with Pack's PR chair name)

Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212

Mobile (847) 555-1111

e-mail: joescoutmaster@aol.org

For Immediate Release

Cub Scouts on Mission for Local Food Pantries

On Saturday morning, (date) Cub Scouts in (Town) Pack (Number) will join hundreds of other Scouts as they visit neighborhoods on a critical mission to collect food needed to restock local food pantries. This is part of the annual Scouting for Food drive, which is a part of the Boy Scouts of America's Good Turn for America service initiative.

“The food pantries tell us that the need is the greatest a few months after the holidays, when donations to the pantries slow down,” said (Name), Cubmaster of Pack (Number). “For the most part, all the food stays local and helps those in the area”.

Last weekend the Scouts distributed empty grocery bags for this weekend's drive. Residents who received bags are asked to fill the bags with nonperishable foods and place them by their front door by 9AM on Saturday. The Scouts will collect the bags and transport them to (Location). From there the donated food will be sorted by other volunteers for distribution to the local food pantries.

(Cubmaster's Last Name) said the Scouts managed to get bags passed out to nearly everyone in the (name area), but those who did not receive the bags and want to contribute should contact their local food pantries.

Good Turn for America is a national service initiative by the Boy Scouts of America and other nonprofit organizations to address the issues of hunger, inadequate housing, healthy living, and disaster recovery in our nation.

For more information on Cub Scout Pack, contact Cubmaster (Name) at (Phone number) or visit their website at [www. \(Web address\)](#). You can also get information about the Boy Scout of America's Good Turn for America service initiative on the web at [www.goodturnforamerica.org](#).

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Sample – News Release

Boy Scout Troop 1234
Your Hometown, Illinois

Contact:

Joe Scoutmaster

Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212

Mobile (847) 555-1111

For Immediate Release

Local Boy Scouts get ready for a Summer Adventure

Boy Scout Troop (Number) from (Town) is gearing up for a summer of fun and adventure. (Number of Scouts) Scouts and (Number of Leaders) leaders are making plans to attend summer camp at Camp Lowden in Oregon, Illinois where they will spend a challenging week backpacking, rappelling, swimming, and hiking. Boy Scout summer camp offers boys multi-activity, personal choice, skill-building programs such as Environmental Science, Soil and Water Conservation, fishing and Wilderness Survival. Celebrating its 67th year, Camp Lowden is operated by the Boy Scouts of America's Blackhawk Area Council where over 2000 boys will attend camp this summer.

Scoutmaster (Name) is looking forward to the summer camp experience for his boys. "One week of summer camp brings to life all the things we have been working on all winter long," stated Mr. (Name).

With more than four million youth members, the Boy Scouts of America is one of America's most popular youth organizations. Boys join Scouting for one primary reason – to have fun!

Boy Scouting is a challenging, achievement-oriented program for boys ages 11-17 that uses outdoor activities in small, self-managed groups to develop leadership skills, character and self-confidence. For more information on how to join Scout Troop (number) call (name) at (Phone Number). For more information on the Boy Scout programs visit the Boy Scouts of America's Blackhawk Area Council's website at www.blackhawkscouting.org

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Sample – News Release

Boy Scout Troop 1234
Your Hometown, Illinois

Contact:

Joe Scoutmaster

Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212

Mobile (847) 555-1111

For Immediate Release

Local Boy Scouts Help Central Illinois Flood Victims

Boy Scout Troop 164 of Highland Park, Illinois, delivered toys, household supplies and gifts to flood victims in Central Illinois, his past weekend. Instead of their normal camping trip to work on Scout activities the Troop members wanted to help victims of last month's flood. The Scouts had worked for weeks to collect gifts and donations from local communities. They altered their camping trip to Bloomington, Illinois to include driving the 20 miles to McLean, Illinois to deliver the gifts. The Scout service project is part of the Boy Scouts of America's Good Turn for America service initiative.

The Scouts of Troop 164 personally delivered toys to more than 60 McLean County children at the McLean High School on Saturday evening. The event was hosted by the McLean County's Family in Need Program. Earlier in the day the Scouts delivered needed household supplies to over 80 senior citizens who were hit hard the floodwaters. "It took a lot of time to collect the items, but it makes me feel good knowing I helped some kids who lost all their toys in the flood" said Tom Oakton a 14 year old Scout who attends Half Day High School.

Good Turn for America is a national service initiative by the Boy Scouts of America and other nonprofit organizations to address the issues of hunger, inadequate housing, healthy living, and disaster recovery in our nation.

For more information, about the Boy Scouts of America, visit their website www.Scouting.org

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Sample – News Release

Cub Scout Pack 1234
Your Hometown, Illinois
Contact:
Joe Cub Master
Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212
Mobile (847) 555-1111

For Immediate Release

Cub Scouts Kick-off Program Year with Fall Outdoor Fun Day

More than (No.) Cub Scouts and their families from (Your Town) Pack (Number) gathered this past Saturday for fun-filled outdoor activities at (location) for their traditional Fall Outdoor Fun Day.

Cub Scouts, leaders, and parents braved plummeting temperatures to participate in activities that started with a cookout lunch of hot dogs and hamburgers and ended with campfire and signing songs before heading home that evening.

During the day Cub Scouts and their parents the opportunity to participate in a series of events that included team games, Frisbee golf, Nature hikes, Archery and building a birdhouse. Other activities included an outdoor obstacle course, timed knot-tying competition, and mother/son fishing derby.

Awards for the top three Cub Scouts and their mothers were presented at the campfire. Winners included (names of Cub Scouts and their mothers)

“Sitting around the campfire and roasting marshmallows with the other Scouts and my family was great,” Said Cub Scout (full name), “ but the best part of the campout was winning the fishing Derby with my mom. She’s the best.”

The Boy Scouts of American’s Cub Scouting program is for boys who are in the first through the fifth grade. They participate in family-centered activities, group activities, learning, and having fun. If you would like more information on Cub Scout Pack (Number), contact Cubmaster (Name) at (Phone number) or visit our web site at www. (Web address).

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Sample – News Release

Venture Unit 1234
Your Hometown, Illinois
Contact:
Joe Advisor
Daytime phone: (847) 555-1212
Mobile (847) 555-1111

For Immediate Release

Local Youth Group Elects 2007 Officers

Members of Venture Crew (Number) Chartered by (name organization) in (town) elected their 2007 officers at their annual planning meeting on November 10, 2006.

(Name) who attends (name) High School will serve as president, (name), working closely with her will be Vice-President (name), he attends (name) High school. The officers include Secretary (name) who attends (school) and Treasurer (name) who attends (name) High School.

Venturing is a program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) through 20 years of age. Crew (number) is part of the Blackhawk Area Council, Boy Scouts of America and their special interest is High Adventure. Scuba Diving, Snow Boarding, and Climbing are just some of the many exciting activities members participate in. During previous summers, Crewmembers have traveled to Canada, Florida, and New Mexico for their super summer event.

Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults as they participate in exciting and meaningful activities.

For more information or to join this unique group, call the advisor, (name) at (phone number) or check out their web site at www._____

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SAMPLE – Letter to the

Dear Editor:

When you ask a Scout what he likes about Scouting, he probably answers, “It’s fun!” What he doesn’t realize is that along with the fun are training and activities that help him develop desirable qualities like character, citizenship, and fitness. That’s what Scouting is all about.

Scouting’s founders began a tradition of service by establishing the slogan “Do a Good Turn Daily.” A Good Turn is anything a Scout does to help someone in need without expecting anything in return. Rank advancement requires Scouts to complete a number of service projects and recognize their responsibility to their community. Scouts realize that service is not a one-time job. It is an ongoing duty.

For 96 years, Scouting has made a real impact on the lives of young people. No other youth development organization has the support of more than 4.5 million members who understand the value of connecting youth with communities and families.

Scouting is an educational program that teaches youth about building character, faith traditions, mentoring, serving others, healthy living, and lifelong learning. The community organizations that use the Scouting program and the (council name) Council do their share to see that young people receive the benefits of the program.

Scouting is still needed today; its educational program is essential for our youth—the faces of the future.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Your Town

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Media Contact List can be found on our website soon at www.blackhawkscouting.org

Developing Relationships with the Media

Get to know your media representatives. Call the editors and tell them who you are, that you will be sending them information about your unit and that you will be in touch with an occasional story idea or news release. Follow up after you have sent something to make sure it got to the right place and to answer any questions.

The ideal situation to develop from this relationship is that you and your unit will become the source that reporters call for information and comments on all youth development stories. Let them know that you are knowledgeable.

Where to send your news

- Daily newspapers
- Weekly newspapers
- Church newsletter/bulletin
- Community newsletter
- School newspaper
- School newsletter
- Local magazine
- Company/ business newsletter
- Community web site
- School or church web site
- Regional church publication
- Broadcast community calendars

Weekly newspapers may provide the most in-depth coverage for events and activities. School newspapers are good vehicles for drawing attention to student achievements. Company/business newsletters are often interested in employee/ volunteer achievements. Broadcast community calendars are willing to announce upcoming events.

Here are some of the general newspapers around Blackhawk Area Council:

[Northwest Herald](http://www.nwherald.com) www.nwherald.com

[Countryside Newspaper](http://www.pioneerlocal.com/index.html) www.pioneerlocal.com/index.html

[Daily Herald](http://www.dailyherald.com/news/illinois.asp) www.dailyherald.com/news/illinois.asp



Earn this *Scout News Reporter* Patch

Scout News Reporter program recognizes those individuals who contact a news media or send them a news release, which in turn gets a positive Scouting story or photo published in an approved publication as listed below.

News Reporter Guidebooks can be downloaded from: www.blackhawkscouting.org

Please Print:

Name _____ Unit Type (check one) Pack Troop Crew

Address _____ Unit Number _____

Town _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

District (check one)

Arrowhead Sycamore Wanchanagi Wetassa White Eagle

Youth (Rank _____)

Adult

Below are the approved publications (please check one):

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church/Synagogue Bulletin | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> Scouting Magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company/Business Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Boys Life |

Name of Publication _____ Date of Publication _____

Tell us who your Scoutmaster, Cub Master or Crew Advisor is:

Name _____ Address _____ Town _____ Zip _____

Return this form along with the article/photo from the actual printed publication to:

Blackhawk Area Council BSA
Scout News Reporter Submission
1800 7th Ave.,
Rockford, IL 61104

- Submitted publications will not be returned.
- One patch per order form.
- Allow 2-4 weeks.