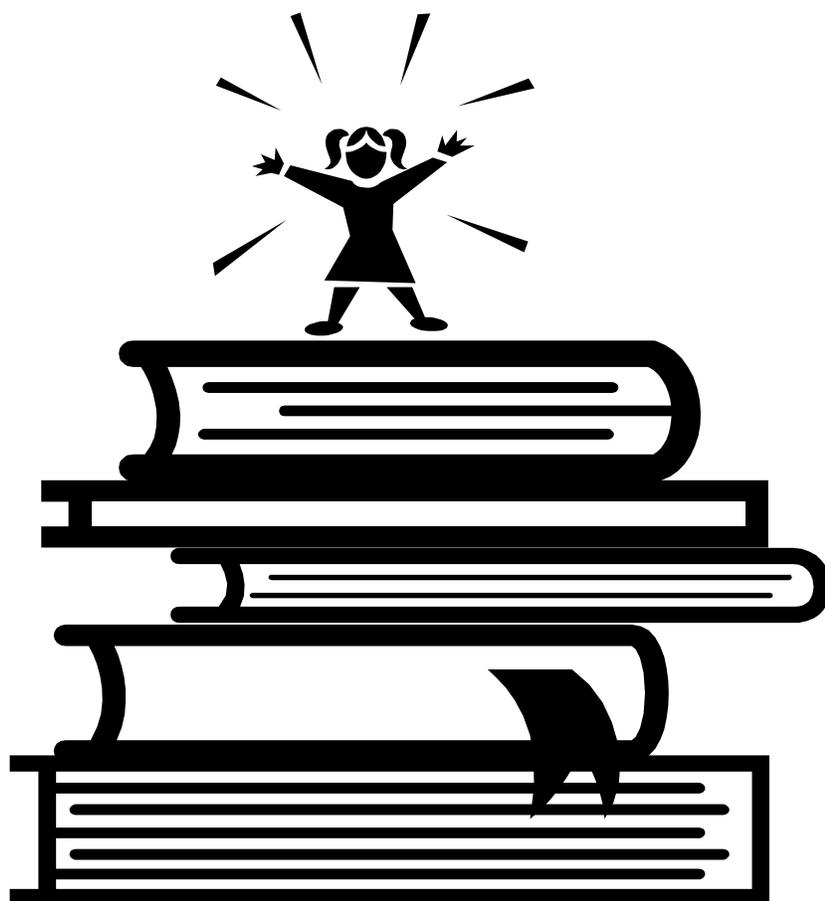


# Promoting Your Library (or how to motivate the media to work for YOU)!



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North Dakota State Library

## **Table Of Contents**

<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. You and the Media</b>	
a. Television coverage	2
b. Radio coverage	3
<b>III. Writing a Press Release</b>	
a. What to include	4
b. Sample press releases	5,6,7
<b>III. The Interview</b>	
a. What to wear to an interview	8
b. Television lingo	8
c. Controlling the interview	8
d. Helpful hints for the interview	9
<b>V. Press Kits</b>	
a. What to include	10
<b>VI. Story Ideas</b>	
a. Generating story ideas	11
b. Media Do's & Don'ts	12
<b>VII. Notes</b>	<b>13</b>

## **Introduction**

No matter how big or small your library is, you need to have a plan to market your library. Sometimes the thought is, “we simply do not have the resources.” The plain truth is, you cannot afford not to promote your library and its services. This includes print, radio or television. Advertising can be expensive, and most of us don’t have a marketing budget, but there are many things you can do to let people know about your services that cost little or nothing.



The media is one of your best tools for promoting your library and its services because it is the easiest and most inexpensive resource you have to get information out to the people in your community.

Here are some basics you should consider when putting together a marketing plan for your library.

1. What do we wish to accomplish?
2. What is the main focus of the media coverage?
3. Which media should be targeted?
4. What do you want to say about the subject?
5. Can you get the story across with a press release, or do you need to schedule an interview with a reporter?
6. Who is the most knowledgeable person about the subject matter?
7. Review your media plan often and make sure you are covering all of your bases.
8. Try to humanize the story as much as possible.

One question to ask yourself when considering media coverage is, would the viewers/readers be interested in this story.

## You and the Media

To be successful with the media, it is important you make a continued effort to let them know about the programs and services you provide. Establishing a contact with someone at your local newspaper, radio station, or television station is as important as the information you would like to convey.

The beautiful thing about the local media, is you can usually get coverage for your library free of charge, but you need to know how to sell your idea. Remember **you** are providing them with something they need, they are not doing you a favor. Each medium has needs different from the other, so you need to be aware of what these differences are to provide them with the best opportunity to cover your story.

### Television Coverage



When asking a television station to cover an event, you need to make sure there is a video opportunity (something worthwhile taking video of) because without pictures a television story is not very effective. They also like events with sound they can use for their story.

#### **Examples of promoting your information to the television media:**

- A. Video of kids reading at your library
- B. Interviews with participants and the children's librarian
- C. Sound of children and librarians reading out loud
- D. Invite a prominent figure in your community to your library to promote your event, and invite the media to cover the special guest's appearance
- E. Invite someone from the media to be part of the event, (i.e. reading to children).
- F. Awards ceremony

### Special Collections at Your Library

- A. Video of the section in your library where the special collection is shelved
- B. Librarian shelving books, or checking books out
- C. Patron checking out books
- D. Rare items in your library that may be of interest to patrons

### Video and Photographic Opportunities

- A. People coming in and out of your library, children reading, parents
- B. Video or picture of the program in session
- C. Interviews with participants of the program
- D. Interview with the head librarian



## **Radio Coverage**

Radio coverage is one of the easiest to achieve, because the radio reporter doesn't physically have to come to your location. Radio reporters are notorious for not calling ahead of time to set up an interview, so make sure you are prepared for an impromptu interview before sending a release out to a radio station. You can always ask the reporter if you can call them back at a more convenient time, this will give you time to prepare what you would like to say. Remember you are doing them a favor by giving them a story!

- A. Have your press release near the phone, in case you need to refer to it during your interview.
- B. Have other pertinent information such as facts, or figures within arms reach, so you are ready if the radio station calls for an interview.
- C. Try to get your basic focus across early on, this gives less opportunity for the main focus of the story to be buried.
- D. Be aware of loud background noise and change locations if you must.

## **Examples of promoting your information to the radio media:**

### **Summer Reading Program**

- A. Give the reporter a statement about the theme of your summer program.
- B. Tell them how many kids are taking part in this year's program and how, if the numbers have gone up since last year.
- C. Suggest they interview one of the participants of the program. Make it easy for them and contact the person yourself to ask if they would be willing to do an interview. This adds a lot to a story, because who better to promote the program than a participant.
- D. Invite the reporter to come to your library for the interview while the program is in process.

### **Special Collections at Your Library**

- A. Give them facts and figures about any special collections you may have (i.e. how many, how old, rare materials, special interest).
- B. If you have something on audiotape that might be of interest, offer to get it ready for the reporter so they can stop by and pick it up.



## **Writing a Press Release**

A press release is your chance to inform others about your library or programming that is of interest to others. A press release can be a great way to promote your library. Make sure you include the most pertinent information in your release. Here are some tips to remember when writing a press release.

1. Who is your audience and what point would you like to make?
2. Make sure you send the release out in a timely manner so it will arrive in time for the media to meet their deadlines. Don't send them out too early or they may get forgotten.
3. News releases should be no longer than two-pages but one page is preferred (keep it short).
4. The first paragraph of your release should contain the key elements of your story and try to address who, what, when, where, why and how.
5. Don't give more information than needed.
6. Make sure you include contact information such as contact name and telephone number in case the reporter needs to contact someone. Also include the release date at the top of the page.
7. Press releases should be used sparingly.
8. The headline or title should be short, snappy and attention grabbing.
9. Double-check phone numbers, spelling, dates and times.

## **North Dakota Media Sites**

<http://www.gebbieinc.com/radio/nd.htm> (Radio Stations)

<http://www.gebbieinc.com/tv/nd.htm> (Television Stations)

<http://www.gebbieinc.com/daily/nd.htm> (Newspapers)

<http://www.state.nd.us/hist/newshome.htm#Divide> (Newspapers)

<http://128.121.17.158/stateline/?pa=state&sa=showStateInfo&id=ND> (Associated Press)

**(Sample Press Release Format)**

**For Immediate Release**  
**Date:**

**Contact: (Name)**  
**(Telephone Number)**

**(Headline About Event or Subject)**

First paragraph: (Lead of story, general description of event, date, place, and who is invited).

(Second paragraph and succeeding paragraphs: explains who cares; the address of the event, and the time it will happen. You can include a quote to give the release a personal touch. More description of the event, and background information).

(Final paragraph) For more information about the event contact (media contact name or and telephone number).

Double spaced and no more than two pages.

**(Sample Press Release)**

**For Immediate Release**  
**Today's Date 2003**

**Contact: (Your Name)**  
**(Your phone number)**

**Access to information available 24 hours a day**

Citizens of (your city or county here), now have access to hundreds of resources at their fingertips. Magazines, journals, and well-known newspapers are available to you day or night via the Internet. You can download full-text articles regarding business, current events, scholarly journals, national newspapers, and reference materials from your home computer or (your local library-insert your library's name here).

Access to expanded library resources have been made possible through the statewide database Library access North Dakota (LaND) and other library homepages throughout the state.

You can now download original articles in their entirety for research, topics of human-interest, medical issues, and biographical information through online resources. You are also able to send these articles by e-mail for later use. Electronic Books (eBooks) with photos and illustrations are also available to view or borrow, and they even return themselves without a trip to your local library.

Many informational barriers have been overcome with the availability of these online resources. It is one of the most exciting technological advancements for library patrons everywhere to be able to access all of this information at their fingertips.

**For Immediate Release**  
May 6, 2004

**Contact: Dave Anderson**  
(701) 328-4189

### **“Letters About Literature Winners Honored”**

An awards ceremony honoring the winners of the 2004 Letters About Literature essay contest was held April 16, 2004 at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck. Over 600 students from across the state took part in this year’s contest.

Students from Fargo definitely proved their excellent writing skills in this years essay contest. Janci Jeannotte (Agassiz Middle School), Fargo took second place honors in the Level 1 (grades 4-6) competition, and Mia Barnett (Carl Ben Eielson Elementary School) took second place honors. Each of them received a plaque and gift certificate to Barnes and Noble for their accomplishments.

Morgan Wiedmeier (Aggazzis Middle School), Kyle Roesler (Aggazzis Middle School), Katie Slusher (Carl Ben Eielson Elementary), Shannon Rud (Carl Ben Eielson Elementary), Emerald Weisz (Carl Ben Eielson Elementary) were presented with honorable mention awards for their essays in the level I competition.

Fargo students were strongest in the level III competition (grades 9-12) taking the top two honors. Nicole Penas (Fargo South High School) took first place honors in the level III competition, and Stephanie Simonson (Fargo North High School) took second place honors. Penas received a plaque and \$50 gift card from Target Stores, and Simonson was awarded a plaque and certificate to Barnes and Noble. Other students from Fargo recognized with honorable mention awards in level III were; Sara Kram, Alissa McCourt, Anna Kummer, Fang Qiu, Peter Martin and Yash Srivastava (Fargo North High School).

Readers in grades 4 through 12 were encouraged to enter the essay contest by writing a personal letter to author, living or dead, from any genre; fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic, explaining how that author’s work changed the student’s way of thinking about the world or themselves.

Dr. Wayne Sanstead Superintendent of Public Instruction presented the awards. The contest was co-sponsored by the North Dakota State Library, North Dakota Center for the Book, Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, Target Stores, and Weekly Reader Corporation.

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 25, 2004**

**Contact: Terri Wilhelm**  
**(701) 328-4656**

### **Governor Proclaims June 1 Summer Reading Kick-Off @ Your Library**

Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed Tuesday, June 1, 2004, Summer Reading Kick-Off @ Your Library in support of summer reading programs across North Dakota. The proclamation is an effort to encourage children to visit their public library, and take part in the wonderful programs offered by libraries across the state.

Summer reading programs encourage reading for pleasure, and help students maintain and improve their reading skills. Please take time this summer to find out what programs are being offered in your community.

State Librarian Doris Ott says libraries play a crucial role in shaping the future of the young people in our communities. "Summer reading programs are a great way for students to develop life-long learning skills or read just for the fun of it."

Please contact your local library to find out about the special programming they have scheduled in your community this summer.

###

**For Immediate Release**  
July 12, 2004

**Contact: Terri Wilhelm**  
**(701) 328-4656**

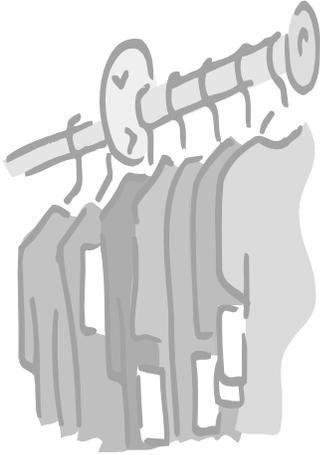
### **North Dakota Libraries Receive Project Grants**

Eight North Dakota libraries have been awarded funding to assist in automating their libraries. Thanks to grant awards totaling over \$250,000 from the North Dakota State Library and the North Dakota Library Coordinating Council, these libraries are one step closer to providing enhanced library services to their communities.

Grant recipients include Beulah Public School Libraries, Cavalier Public School Library, Heart of America Library (Rugby), Larimore Public School Library, Minot Public Schools Libraries, Napoleon Public School Library, Northwood Public School Library, and Underwood Public Library.

Libraries will use the funding to add their records to the statewide library catalog, Library Access North Dakota (LaND), and allow patrons to see what is in their local library catalogs. Once added, librarians and patrons will be able to access these library catalogs electronically twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week from any Internet site.

The grants are funded through the Federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and Library Vision 2010 (LV 2010), which is a long-range plan created by libraries across the state to facilitate resource sharing.



## What to Wear for Your Interview

- A. Try not to wear stripes and polka dots or checkered clothing for your interview; they are not very appealing on television.
- A. Solid colors are the best, choose the color that best suits you.
- C. Wear conservative clothing.
- D. Don't wear any loud jewelry or overwhelming scarves.
- E. Don't wear sunglasses or photosensitive glasses

## Television Lingo

**B Roll**-Non interview footage used for cover shots on a story for television.

**Sound bite**- A short catchy sentence the reporter uses in a news story.

**Off the Record**-This means something you say and do not want the reporter to use in the story. This is risky, because some reporters will not honor this if it makes the story better.

**No Comment**-No comment means you do not want to answer a question. Instead of saying no comment, explain why you cannot answer a question instead of using this phrase if possible. No comment can give the impression you are hiding something.

**PSA**-This is a Public Service Announcement and is a promotional tool sent to the media to give information to the public. There is no charge for this and cannot be used to advertise a product, or reader.

## Controlling the Interview

You can steer the direction of the interview effectively by using transitional phrases like:

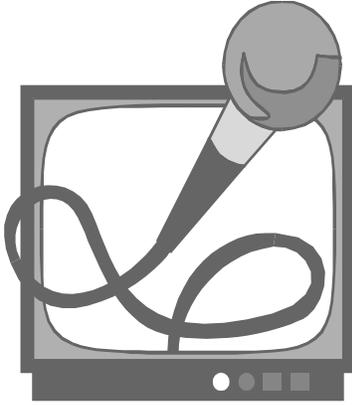
"That's a good question, but what is really important is....."

"I'd like to make this point before I continue....."

"Let me give you the latest information on....."

You can then shift the direction of the interview and make one of your points.

You should pick out the place where you would like to be interviewed, void of loud noises and a suitable background as well as adequate lighting.



## **Helpful Hints for the Interview**

- A. Make sure you know the answers to the five W's: who, what, when, where, why and how.
- B. Make sure you address the most important point right up front in case the reporter is in a hurry. They will most likely use the first few good sound bites you give them, instead of wading through the whole interview.
- C. Think about what you are going to say before the reporter shows up for the interview.
- D. Only talk about pertinent information, too many numbers and trivial facts are confusing. These can be given the reporter in a press kit.
- E. Answer in short, concise sentences, if possible 30 seconds or less.
- F. Look at the interviewer not the camera.
- G. Do not schedule the interview too late in the day for a reporter to make their deadline. mid-morning and early afternoons are good times to schedule interviews or story coverage.
- H. Try to schedule press conferences when you will have the least amount of conflicts in your community, i.e. (preferably not during local or national elections, holidays, during other important community events).
- I. Give the reporter a press packet including a typed information sheet with important facts and figures so the reporter has these in writing and they don't have to rely on their own notes.
- J. Speak in your normal voice and don't use words you are not comfortable using in everyday language.
- K. You do not have to answer every question the reporter asks, if you do not know the answer don't bluff your way through.
- L. Jackets and suits look professional, and are a good choice.
- M. Come up with the main three to five points you would like to cover and write them down before your interview.
- N. Select the best person to do the interview. If the story is about children's programming, the children's librarian may be the best person in this instance. (Passion about a subject is worth a lot because it really shows in an interview.)
- O. Correct any misinformation which is stated by the reporter right up front.
- P. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know the answer to that questions, but I will find out."



## **Press Kits**

Reporters like press kits (or packets) because you are making their job easier! The kit is a folder of information that will help you and the reporter. A press kit contains the information needed to produce an accurate story. It also saves you time during the interview, because instead of spending time on facts and figures, you can get to the most pertinent information. When they have it in black and white, there is less chance of mistakes concerning facts and figures.

Give kits to the media before a press conference starts or before the interview, this way the reporter does not have to spend time getting the background information during the interview.

### **Press kits should include**

1. A schedule of events, press releases, brochures or handouts that are pertinent to the story.
2. A brief history of your organization.
3. The event coordinator's name and phone number.
4. Names and phone numbers for other people who are willing to be interviewed or supply information.
5. Print ready photos if available.



## Quick Tips for Generating Story Ideas!

A book has been banned in a school in another city, find the book in your collection and have the media do a story on your communities reaction to that book.

Write a monthly tip sheet and send it to the local media with your story ideas, every reporter has a slow news day and appreciates some ideas from which to generate stories.

Ask the people in your community which the stories they would like to see covered in the local paper.

If you like to write, ask your local paper if they would mind if you submit articles from time to time on topics related to your library.

Is someone who works or volunteers at your library a story themselves? Have they worked or volunteered at the library for a great number of years, or do they have a special talent to share? Human interest stories are a great way to get positive coverage for you library!

Have a brainstorming session with your staff and come up with story ideas to pitch to your local media.

Offer your expertise if there is something you are knowledgeable about, (i.e. holiday customs, research on the Internet, authors, children's programming).

Think like a journalist, is there a story you would be interested in seeing in the local paper, if so pitch them the idea.

Plan an event and then invite the press.

## When to Send a Press Release

*Unusual events*  
*New information*  
*Breakthroughs*  
*Unique Collections*  
*Special Guests*

*Heartwarming stories*  
*Catastrophes*  
*Large Donations*  
*New Location*  
*Holiday Stories*



## **Media Do's & Don'ts**

### **Media Don'ts**

**Don't** expect the media to come every time you call.

**Don't** take it personally if the media does not cover your event.

**Don't** send out meaningless press releases.

**Don't** call a press conference unless you have something important to announce.

**Don't** use inappropriate language or jargon during an interview.

**Don't** scold a reporter for being late, it is unfortunate but be ready to make necessary arrangements to help them get the story.

**Don't** call reporters to see if they will be using your release, they will cover your event if they think it is worthy.

**Don't** say things like, you should have been here earlier or yesterday.

### **Media Do's**

**Do** send your press releases out on your library letterhead if available.

**Do** keep press releases short and punchy.

**Do** send thank you notes to the reporter(s) or their news directors for their effort.

**Do** send out press releases when your library has a special event.

**Do** invite local media to your library for training and other services without asking them to do a story.

# Notes

## **North Dakota State Library**

Administration ..... (701) 328-2492  
Information Requests ..... (701) 328-4622  
    Toll-Free ..... 1-800-472-2104  
Disability Services ..... (701) 328-1408  
    Toll-Free ..... 1-800-843-9948  
DRIS ..... (701) 328-4189  
TDD (local) ..... (701) 328-4923  
TDD (Toll-Free) ..... 1-800-892-8622  
Fax ..... (701) 328-2040  
NDSL Web Page: <http://ndsl.lib.state.nd.us>

**Open Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Tours are available upon request**



**Doris Ott  
State Librarian**

A division of the North Dakota  
Department of Public Instruction  
Wayne G. Sanstead, Superintendent

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