

LODGE PUBLICITY TOOL KIT

INTRODUCTION

Publicity is an important component of a successful lodge. A successful publicity campaign can help inform your community of your existence, increase attendance at lodge events and increase membership in your lodge. Whether you are a lodge publicity director, or a member offering assistance, there are a number of tactics you can use to ensure a successful publicity campaign that will strengthen your lodge.

To assist you in accomplishing these things, this Lodge Publicity Toolkit will teach you everything you need to know about lodge publicity. The pages that follow will take you step-by-step through a publicity campaign. By the time you have finished reading this section you will have learned:

- the general responsibilities related to lodge publicity
- pertinent information about Sons of Norway
- which topics make for good publicity
- the advantages/disadvantages of different types of media
- how to write a news release
- how to increase your chances of success by creating a good media list
- how to pitch a story to your media contacts
- how to promote your lodge through posters and brochures

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Publicizing Your Lodge

Simply put, the main responsibility related to lodge publicity is to inform the public of your lodge-related news. You will work with internal media, like your lodge newsletter, to inform members of upcoming events. These include, but are not limited to membership drives, volunteerism, sports events and member publicity. A successful publicity campaign will also require you to work with external media, such as local newspapers, to keep your immediate community informed of public lodge events. This portion of your duties will require your focus to be on local, lodge oriented issues.

Publicizing Sons of Norway as an Organization

When publicizing your lodge you will not only represent the lodge, but the organization as a whole, within your community. Because Sons of Norway is such a large organization, with so many facets and areas of business, it is very unique and should be of interest to local media. Thus, it's important to keep the communities we serve informed. This second portion of your duties, though no less important than the first, will focus on issues that affect the entire organization on a regional, national or international level.

TOPICS OF PUBLICITY

The first step of a successful publicity campaign is deciding which topic you will focus on. To garner media attention, the rule of thumb is to always choose a topic that is easy to understand and will be of interest to your lodge and/or the surrounding community. Often, this is the simplest step because the topic is provided to you by your lodge. Be it a festival, a sporting event, or a celebration of a special Norwegian holiday, many topics can make for good publicity.

Lodge Publicity Ideas

While the aforementioned are all great topics, they don't occur everyday. That means there will be times when you may need to find a topic to publicize. Doing so is important because it keeps your lodge and Sons of Norway in the public eye on an ongoing basis. Luckily, your lodge has a lot of ready-made, interesting topics you can publicize.

The following topics are great publicity opportunities for your lodge:

- Lodge Anniversaries
- Presentations by well known personalities
- Participation in a local or national festival
- Sporting events sponsored by your lodge
- Members who have made significant accomplishments
- Cultural or heritage classes
- Lodge scholarship winners
- Volunteerism projects
- Visiting dignitaries

These are all great topics that members and your community would find interesting. But remember, this list isn't inclusive. There are a number of other lodge-related topics you could promote and the list above is designed to merely get your thought process started.

Sons of Norway Publicity Ideas

When it comes to publicizing Sons of Norway as an organization the same rules apply. Always choose a topic that is of interest to your lodge and community, while easy for the public to understand. Because Sons of Norway has so many facets to it, this should be easy to do. In order to help you get started, though, Sons of Norway has a few ideas for topics you can focus on.

The first issue worth publicizing is that **Sons of Norway is a leading fraternal benefit society**. In fact, Sons of Norway ranks 22nd out of the top 100 fraternal organizations in North America. Also, Sons of Norway is the largest Norwegian-American organization in the world and the only ethnic fraternal benefit society with lodges in its mother country. But do not forget that Sons of Norway is also an insurance provider for its members. Offering members a wide variety of products, ranging from Universal Life policies to IRA's to disability income, and with more than \$600 million of life insurance in force, insurance is a major component of Sons of Norway.

Or, you could publicize the fact that **Sons of Norway is a cultural resource for anyone with interest in Norway**. For example, Sons of Norway Headquarters' Fraternal Department is a premiere Norwegian cultural resource for North America. Similarly, Sons of Norway's Viking magazine is an established cultural resource as well. Every month its feature articles inform and educate on a number of topics, including a detailed look at Norwegian history, lifestyles, folk art, culture and modern industry in Norway. But it doesn't stop at the international level. Remember, various lodges and districts hold their own language camps and classes for members. Some even offer scholarships for members to attend heritage and educational programs.

Another issue worth promoting and publicizing is the fact that **Sons of Norway is a sports-related organization**, involved in a number of unique programs. For example, the Sons of Norway sponsored Barnebirkie is the largest Nordic ski event for children in North America. Beyond that, many Sons of Norway lodges also sponsor local and regional sporting events, like Baneløpets or golf tournaments. Last, but not least, Sons of Norway offers a comprehensive active lifestyle program, called the Sports Medal Program. Through its skiing, bicycling, walking and general sports categories, thousands maintain high levels of health and activity every year.

Last, but certainly not least, **Sons of Norway is a socially conscious organization**. It has a Foundation, which assists members through its Humanitarian Fund. In recent years the Foundation has provided relief following the tragedy of September 11 as well as recent natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

On a local level, Sons of Norway's social consciousness is thriving. Lodges across the nation work to improve their communities through numerous volunteer programs such as the Adopt A School program and Join Hands Day.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PUBLICITY

If you've reached this stage, you have determined which topic you are publicizing. It's now time to decide if you are going to publicize the event/issue internally or externally. Both offer a number of opportunities, which will be discussed here, but you need to make a decision about which is most appropriate.

Internal Publicity

The most logical place to start, when publicizing a lodge event/issue, is your lodge newsletter. Use it as a tool to keep lodge members informed of important information and entice them to attend lodge events. Using this vehicle for publicity is simple because it only requires that you write a fun, descriptive article, which is submitted to your lodge editor. Also, remember that you can use the lodge newsletter following an event. By writing a positive summary after an event, you can entice members to attend next time, increasing attendance in the future.

Another option is to utilize Sons of Norway's monthly publication, Viking magazine, which offers you a couple of different ways to publicize your lodge. First, remember that you are the link between your lodge and the District Happenings section of Viking magazine. The purpose of this section is to share news with all the other lodges throughout North America and Norway, while encouraging members to take part in lodge activities.

To get your news and photos placed in this section you will need to submit them to your district publicity director. In doing so, please remember to provide them with pertinent information. This includes:

- Lodge name, number, city and state.
- The name, phone number and e-mail address of a contact person.
- The circumstance of the photo
- Full names of individuals in the photo, from left to right.

Your other option for using Viking magazine is to submit a short article or feature story to the editor. If this is the option you choose, there are a few things that are important to remember. First, it's a good idea to contact Sons of Norway Headquarters, before you write anything, to discuss and refine your topic. Also, remember that your feature or article should be written on a general topic; one which is of interest to most or all Sons of Norway members. The final step would be to submit what you have written to Sons of Norway Headquarters for consideration.

External Publicity

There are two main channels you can use for publicizing your lodge and Sons of Norway, outside of the organization. These channels are print and broadcast media and, depending on the type of story you are publicizing, each has its own advantages.

Print Media

While there are a number of different types of print media, they all share a common advantage. In print, stories tend to be reported with more depth than in broadcast media. Thus, if your story is technical, or requires a moderate level of explanation, print media will be a better choice than broadcast.

But, individual categories of print media also have their own, unique advantages as well. For example, there are community newsletters, typically published by schools, churches and other local organizations. Their advantage is the ease of getting stories or events placed. Newsletters are usually very interested in

local topics and always looking for information to fill their pages.

The next category of print media is newspapers. Whether it is a daily, weekly or community newspaper, it will cover a wide variety of topics ranging in interest from local to international. While it can be more difficult to get stories placed in newspapers, their advantage is a heightened perception of importance from the reader.

The last type of print media is magazines. With the exception of national news publications, magazines usually constrain coverage to a single topic or subject area. Keep this in mind when creating your story because most magazines won't accept stories outside their subject area. The advantage to getting a story placed within this medium is that your story can reach far more readers than it would in a newspaper or newsletter.

Broadcast Media

Broadcast media includes radio, television and, depending on whom you ask, internet. As with print media, broadcast has some distinct advantages. Some are unique to individual categories of broadcast media, while others are shared amongst them all, but they are all important to know about.

The important, shared advantages to broadcast media involve the physical senses of sight and sound. These senses, when combined, can make for a very memorable, though brief, experience. Audiences tend to have a stronger reaction to messages that engage their senses, mentioned above.

There is a disadvantage to this type of media which you should be aware of. While the involvement of physical senses is an advantage, it does create the need for a trade-off. This trade-off lies in the length of a story, or the depth of coverage. Unlike print media, which can devote multiple paragraphs to a story, broadcast media typically devotes less than 60 seconds to a story.

Thus, if your story involves a lot of imagery, or requires the audience to see/hear certain elements, broadcast is your best bet.

DEVELOPING YOUR MEDIA LIST

At this point, you should be thinking, in specific terms, about which media outlets you want to contact when promoting your event. This is an important step because the success of all your work hinges on contacting the right people. Thus, your media list needs to contain editors or reporters who cover stories similar to the one you are publicizing.

Tools

There are a number of tools available to you for assembling your list of media contacts. First, you can consult your local telephone directory, or conduct a web search for a listing of print and broadcast media outlets. These will provide you with some free, general information and help you get started with your media list.

Another set of resources are Bacon's media directories. These are a set of books that supply detailed information about every media outlet, reporter and editor in North America. Often, these directories can be found and used at your local library, free of charge.

A final resource is the All-In-One, published by Gebbie Press. This directory is similar to Bacon's, in that it provides detailed information about many media outlets. Unfortunately this publication is typically only available through purchase.

Verification

If you are unsure as to the accuracy of your media list, it is always best to call and verify your information. Simply call the main number of the media outlet you are researching and say, "I'm calling to verify that (reporter/editor's name) is still the (position/title) and can be reached at (phone #).

Format

It's a good idea to format your list in a way that allows you to easily extract information at a moments notice. An example of this would be:

Outlet name: Star Tribune
Address: 425 Portland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55488
Contact person: Martha Allen
Title/Beat: Charities/Philanthropy
Deadlines: Submit news release 7 days prior to event
Preferred form of contact: E-mail
Phone #: 612-555-1455
E-mail: mlallen@strib.com

WRITING YOUR NEWS RELEASE

Now that you have picked your story and which types of media are going to be the best suited for it, you need to write your news release. The purpose of a good news release is to inform an editor or reporter of something they might find newsworthy, while keeping it brief and exciting. The great thing about news releases is that it only takes a few minutes to learn the basics of writing one.

Content

First you need to come up with a catchy title that will draw attention to your story. While it should be brief, it should also be descriptive. This is important because media outlets receive many news releases every day, but they only have so much space, or time, to commit to news items they receive. Thus, the better the headline you have, the better your chances are of getting coverage.

Once you've created the headline, it's time to write the content, or body, of the news release. It should be brief and should get to the point quickly. But, it should also provide enough information to explain your story and its importance. A good rule of thumb is to make sure your news release answers the following five questions:

- Who is doing something?
- What is happening?
- When is it happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Why is it happening?

There is one more question to answer, which can be a little harder to describe. It's referred to as the "so what?" question. To answer this question in your news release, you need to determine why it is important, or why it deserves coverage. This is often the most fun part of writing your release. Some examples of answers to this question are:

- It's unique because it's never happened before.
- It's an anniversary commemorating an important event.
- It's of interest to a large number of people.

Once you have the answers to the important questions, you can begin writing your release. It's best to try and briefly address all six questions in a general manner during the first paragraph or two and expand on them by writing more specifically in the paragraphs that follow.

These paragraphs should be short and concise, using active, lively language. For example you should write that something is happening, rather than it will be happening. You should also try to get some quotes from people involved in the event/story, because they add a human-interest angle to your story.

The final paragraph should be something called a "boilerplate statement." Typically this is a statement about the organization that is involved with the story. For your purposes, it will likely be a Sons of Norway event. So, it's important to use the Sons of Norway boilerplate statement, which is *Sons of Norway was organized as a fraternal benefit society by 18 Norwegian immigrants in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on January 16, 1895. The purposes and goals of the founding fathers were to protect members and their families from financial hardships experienced during times of sickness or death. Since then, the mission of Sons of Norway has expanded to include the preservation of Norwegian heritage and culture.*

Format

There are a few simple formatting issues, which you should be aware of because they are industry standards. They are important to know because they can help you in two ways. The formatting of your release can increase the readability of your news release and it can increase your chances of success.

First, always type the words "NEWS RELEASE" in all caps at the top of your release. This gives indication to reporters or editors of what you are sending. Opposite from this, you should type "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" because it indicates that your event or story is happening soon and people should know about it as soon as possible.

Next, you will want to include contact information, so you can be reached in case a media outlet has any questions about your story. This information should include your name, phone number, e-mail address and lodge name/number.

You should try to keep your news release to a single page, preferably three to five paragraphs in length. This will increase your chances of a media outlet considering your story. But if your story requires a second page, always indicate this clearly. An easy way to do this is to write the words "more" or "over" at the bottom of the first page. Doing so lets the reader know that there is more, pertinent information to be read on a second page.

At the end of your news release, after the boilerplate statement, use three pound signs as your closing (###). Place this by itself, centered on its own line. This will signify that it is the last page of the release and the reader need not look for further pages.

Now that you've finished writing your news release, it's time to take the send it out to the contacts on your media list. This should be done 10-14 days prior to your event, in order to give the media enough time to decide whether they will cover your story.

During this time there is one last step to a successful publicity campaign. This step will often increase your chances of success and help you build relationships with media contacts in your area. Within the industry it's called "pitching a story," but all it really means is calling your media contact to discuss the importance of your story/event.

PITCHING A NEWS STORY

To be successful, this step requires you to be excited about the story and very convincing. It can be a bit nerve wracking, because you are trying to convince a media outlet of your story's newsworthiness so they will cover your event or print your story. To make this step easier, Sons of Norway will provide you with an outline of an easily adaptable script, which you can use for most stories.

Step One: Begin your pitch.

-This can be done with a simple greeting of *"Hello Mr./Mrs. (insert last name), my name is (insert full name) and I'm with Sons of Norway here in (insert location). I was calling to follow up with you about a news release I sent you regarding (event name/story title). Have you received it yet?"*

-If they have, begin your pitch.

-If they haven't, offer to send them a new copy and call back after they receive it.

Step Two: Discussing your story idea.

-Remember that publicity pitches are meant to be short while intriguing to the editor. This means you don't have to speak about everything there is to know about your story. Instead, cover the most important/interesting two or three points. A good way to do this is by opening with a question like, *"Mr./Ms. X, what would you say if I told you that the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States Knut Vollebæk is coming to Mankato?"* Then follow that up with a brief explanation of why this is happening.

Step Three: Be prepared with extra information

-Have extra talking points ready if the reporter asks for more information. This will help them decide if the story is something they want to cover. Make sure the information is both compelling and newsworthy.

Step Four: Make a formal invitation.

A good way to get a reporter or photographer to attend your event/cover your story is to invite them to see it for themselves. If there is a ticket price, it is expected that you waive their fee. Doing so will encourage them to come see the event.

Step Five: Closing the pitch.

It's always a good idea to do two things when closing your pitch. First, thank your contact for their time. This shows you recognize they are busy and you appreciate their time. Second, provide them with your contact information in case they have any further questions. This will make it easier for them to follow up with you later.

PUBLICIZE YOUR LODGE WITH A BROCHURE OR POSTER

Brochures

In order for your lodge to recruit new members, the people in your community need to know about you. They need to know who you are, where you meet and, most importantly, what you do. The Sons of Norway Headquarters can help you in this respect by creating a brochure for your lodge. This brochure is easy to obtain and will contain general information about Sons of Norway and specific information about your lodge.

Obtaining a lodge brochure from Sons of Norway is simple. All you have to do is complete a Lodge Brochure Fact Sheet. In this form you supply Sons of Norway with a description of your lodge in short paragraphs. Include specific information about your lodge (number of members, when it was instituted, where it's located) and its major annual social events. Then submit the form to Sons of Norway International Headquarters with the required payment.

Posters

A poster for a Sons of Norway sponsored event can generate publicity throughout your town or city. Posters can generally be placed at community centers, churches, grocery stores, libraries and schools.

The poster should contain all of the pertinent information about your event. This includes the time, date, location and ticket price (if any). If you create your own poster, it's a good idea to use some interesting graphics, be they clip-art or photographs, to draw attention to the poster and your event. You may also order general event posters from Sons of Norway by contacting Supply at x645.

LODGE WEBSITE

A lodge website is a great way for prospective members to learn about your lodge and for current members to keep up with news and events. Sons of Norway encourages all of its lodges to create and maintain a website. Not only are they inexpensive, costing very little to create and maintain, but they reach a much wider audience than a brochure, poster or news release.

To encourage lodges, Sons of Norway offers help in the Members Only section of its own website, www.sonsofnorwy.com. In the Lodge Resources section of the website you will find a lot of help, including templates for you to use, a step-by-step guide and web graphics.

Once you are ready to create your website, keep a few things in mind. First, make sure that your website contains important information that would be of interest to most visitors. This includes information about your lodge's location, meeting times and dates, special events and information about Sons of Norway as an organization.

Second, it's a good idea to link your website to other, related websites. These links can include your local chamber of commerce, other lodges in your area, the website for your district and Sons of Norway's international website. Other links could include sites that are of interest to anyone wanting information about Scandinavian countries, culture, history or heritage.

RELATED INFORMATION

Photo Guidelines

Whether submitting a photo to be used in Viking magazine, or for publication in a local newspaper, there are a few simple guidelines to follow.

First, always send a glossy, traditional film print, or high resolution (300dpi) color photo. These reproduce the best in most instances.

The ideal photo is one that can stand alone, telling a story and needing only a brief caption to accompany it.

There should be no more than five subjects in any one photo.

Always include a typewritten photo caption that identifies all the people in the photo. Names should go in the order of left to right, or clockwise.

Never write on the photo itself. Also, never staple the photo to its caption or a release. Instead, use a paperclip so as not to damage the photo.

Logo Usage

The official Sons of Norway logo is available for promotional use by lodges and members.

Please note, all lodges and members are advised that the Sons of Norway logo, as well as the name “Sons of Norway” is trademarked. Thus, no person, member or lodge has the right to use the name or logo in connection with any merchandizing of products for personal use or commercial enterprise without first obtaining consent from Sons of Norway International Headquarters.

News Release Sample #1

For Immediate Release

Contact: Erik Evans
612-821-4623
800-877-4299
eevans@sofn.com

Emery Awarded Sons of Norway Foundation's Myrtle Beinhauer Scholarship

Minneapolis, June 14, 2005 – Melissa Emery of Rio Rancho, NM., was awarded a Sons of Norway Foundation Myrtle Beinhauer Scholarship, given to Sons of Norway members and their families. Emery is pursuing a degree in Aeronautical and Astronomical Engineering at the University of Washington. She is a member of Sons of Norway's Spirit of the New Century lodge.

Myrtle Beinhauer remembered Sons of Norway youth with a special bequest in her will to the Sons of Norway Foundation. The Sons of Norway Foundation established the Myrtle Beinhauer Scholarship in 1998.

Sons of Norway Foundation Director Cindy Olson said, “The Sons of Norway Foundation has proudly awarded educational scholarships since 1966. Astrid Cates and Myrtle Beinhauer, Sons of Norway members, left the Foundation bequests to be used to further improve our communities through education. The Foundation believes in providing these opportunities to strengthen our communities and help us protect Norwegian heritage and culture for future generations. The 2006 recipient Melissa Emery embodies these goals.”

The Sons of Norway Foundation celebrates culture and expands the horizons of our members by awarding scholarships and grants to promote the heritage and culture of Norway, and provides assistance to our members, lodges and their communities. Since 1966 we have awarded over 2,000 scholarships and almost 400 grants totaling over \$900,000. For more information on this scholarship and the Sons of Norway Foundation, visit <http://www.sonsofnorway.com/foundation>.

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News Release Sample #2

For Immediate Release

Contact: Erik Evans
612-821-4623
800-877-4299
eevans@sofn.com

Governor Pawlenty to Speak at Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast

Governor Tim Pawlenty, joined by Dr Todd Nichol, Linda Mona and Master of Ceremonies Kiki Rosatti are the speakers featured at the 20th annual Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast. This Sons of Norway sponsored event, which is being held at the Sheraton Bloomington on November 23rd 2004, will begin seating at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast and programming starting at 7 a.m. Ticket prices are \$15 per person or \$140 per table. All donations collected at the event will be given to the Marie Sandvik Center.

The purpose of the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast is two-fold. It brings together people of Nordic heritage to offer thanks for the privileges of freedom, faith, family and friends. The breakfast is also an opportunity for the Nordic community to support the Marie Sandvik Center while honoring its namesake, a Norwegian immigrant who made a great contribution to her adopted country by providing assistance to the poor and needy of Minneapolis. Financial support comes through donations made at the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast, which is then used by the Marie Sandvik Center to support a program that provides new school shoes for children of the Phillips neighborhood.

Master of Ceremonies Kiki Rosatti will open the breakfast by welcoming all the attendees, then introduce honorary guest speakers Governor Pawlenty, Dr. Todd Nichol and Linda Mona. They will respectively speak on the subjects of freedom, faith and family & friends.

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Kiki Rosatti, Communications Director for WCCO-TV, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the Minneapolis/St. Paul market. Her position focuses mainly on communications, with a heavy emphasis in the branding and marketing of the station, connecting with the community and the internal culture.

Tim Pawlenty was elected Governor of Minnesota in 2002. In addition to balancing the budget, he fought for and passed an overhaul of the state's education standards, significant welfare reform, lawsuit reform, and passed the largest transportation package in modern history.

Todd W. Nichol currently teaches Scandinavian-American Studies at St. Olaf College and is a professor in Church History at Luther Seminary.

Linda Mona's career is a blend of successful ideas and volunteerism. She is the founder of Creative Environments Design Group, an interior design service based in Eden Prairie and co-chair of the Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum.

Sons of Norway was organized as a fraternal benefit society by 18 Norwegian immigrants in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on January 16, 1895. The purposes and goals of the Founding Fathers were to protect members of Sons of Norway and their families from the financial hardships experienced during times of sickness or death in the family. Over time, the mission of Sons of Norway was expanded to include the preservation of Norwegian heritage and culture in our Society. We have grown since our beginning and are now the largest Norwegian-American organization in the world.