

PUBLICITY AND RECRUITING HINTS

Some squadrons sign up most of their public boating course students as squadron members, other squadrons sign-up one or two; what's the difference?

Successful squadrons are enthusiastic about their squadron and about recruiting new members. They use aggressive publicity to get more students in their public classes and they have many members at each of the class sessions to talk with the students, answer their questions about squadron membership and talk about the fun they have in the squadron. And, they invite the students to join the squadron.

Come to think of it, why do YOU join a particular organization or group?

Newspapers, radio and TV compete for news So you must send the same release or announcement to all the media in your area. They compete for the attention of their readers and listeners and viewers. *They* stories or articles with human interest or about a person not an event so the release or the announcement you send to must attract the attention of the person that receives it. If it doesn't, it won't get printed or aired. So don't expect any results from a release or announcement that is as interesting as an IRS publication. Include a 'hook' or something that is of interest to the community.

Double space your release or announcement and include "Submitted by:" and your name, address, phone and email address at the bottom.

Always fax your releases or announcements to all media. Check the newspapers, their fax numbers normally are printed. Call the radio and TV stations and ask for their fax numbers. A computer with a modem and fax software is great for sending the same fax to all the media in your area.

Newspaper Publicity

Read the various sections of each newspaper and get a feel for the items each section runs. Select the one most likely to run your boating course publicity then fax it to the editor of that section. Their names are listed periodically in the paper or a phone call will get that information.

Normally the larger the newspaper, the least likely they are to run an announcement about a Boat Smart course but don't forget the Outdoor Editor or

the Sports Department. Smaller newspapers and those that serve a smaller community carry more 'local' or community events and many squadrons have more success with these.

Newspapers normally will NOT run a proclamation. Most DO have a web site and many include a "Community Events" segment and the squadron can list its Boating courses.

Radio Stations

Check the demographics of the stations market. If you're aiming at the 35 to 55 age group, contacting a top 40 station isn't effective. Their large listening group is age 17 to 24. The radio's Sales Department can give you this information.

If a radio station has a News Department, direct your fax to them but most stations do not. If they don't have a News Department contact them and ask if *they* have a community bulletin board or how do they handle news of local events.

Television Stations

Television is a visual media. They like ACTION so give it to them. The key is the producer of each local TV show, not the on-air personality. Which would be most interested in your squadron's activities and the events you want to publicize?

Follow up on a local boating accident with statistics on how having taken a boating course reduces boating accidents, injuries and fatalities. Set up a demonstration on the water but give them plenty of time, at least a month. Who in the community will be interested? How many boaters are in their viewing area? If your fax strikes a nerve, they call you. The best time to send a fax to a TV station is mid-morning or mid-afternoon. Ten minutes prior to the local news show is NOT a good time.