

## PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAT #7 – JUNE 26, 2024 ON ZOOM

### TOPIC – COMMUNITY VISIBILITY, INVOLVEMENT, AND ENGAGEMENT

#### **Visibility, involvement, and engagement**

- Visibility – simply being seen in the community wearing clearly branded garments. Shows that we are a part of the community
- Involvement – taking active roles in community events, volunteering to assist community efforts, and showing we are much more than an organization that focuses its time and energy on veterans' issues. Shows that we care about the community
- Engagement – attaining recognition as an integral and important part of the community

#### **Building recognition in your community – Getting started**

- Use your best communicators to create a dedicated and energized group of individuals who will, as ambassadors of your Unit or Local Legion Family, go out and engage with people.
- Word of mouth, especially when it's passionate, is still one of the most effective ways to get folks interested and involved in just about anything
- Being seen on a regular basis will lead to people talking to you, and hopefully providing leads for new Unit and Legion Family members
  - Regularly attend community events, school sports, concerts, etc. with several Unit members while wearing ALA attire or emblem. Some examples:
    - School sports and events
    - Parks and rec games and sports
    - Scouting and 4H events
    - College events if one is local

## **Community activities and PR efforts**

- If you have a Unit/Post facility, consider making and displaying a board or poster that lists all donations and community involvement of your members for the year.
  - Visitors can see what you do, and the info can also be used to create Unit brochures for marketing, membership, and internal communications
  - If you don't have a home facility, create tri-folds or handouts with the information
- Take photos of community visibility and involvement activities and post on social media
- Include some of these in your annual PR report

## **Use community involvement to educate the public on our missions and purposes**

- If members volunteer in the community, include their volunteerism in newsletter, publicity flyers, and social media. Show the community your members are involved.
- Your visibility also shows that you care about the community.
- Many people see veterans' organizations as just working with veterans. They have little or no idea about our "Community, state, and nation" focus, and all the programs we have aimed at youth, children, Americanism, community involvement, first responder support, etc.

## **Building engagement**

- Target community leaders and influencers -- an insider recommendation will always carry more weight. Keep the local "movers and shakers" informed on what you are doing and your plans for the future.
- Give first before asking! Your Unit and its members must show that they are willing to help the community succeed in its activities and programs. Volunteer your time, energy, and if possible, with financial support

- Start by providing value to the leaders and community members. Once you show you are there to do good things, these leaders can become your strong advocates, and community members are much more likely to respond to your communications and outreach

### **Engagement efforts**

1. Community Events and Programs: Organize events, workshops, and programs that involve community members.

- Seek community inputs on how the Unit can better support them

2. Constituent Engagement: Integrate the voice of community advocates you're your activities and programs.

- Get your strong local supporters involved in building yearly plans and activities. Seek their advice.

3. Collaboration with Local Businesses: Partner with local businesses to create content, hashtags, and online campaigns.

- This increases your online impact and fosters wider community awareness and participation.

### **Engagement building activities**

- Host events to match the needs of the community, your members, prospective members, and prospective financial supporters. Try at least one of each annually, some as joint events with your Post or SAL

- Member centered events – celebrate and thank your members
- Veteran centered events – focus on non-Legion Family members
- Family centered events – large event or smaller events through the year focused on select groups
- Children centered events - if kids come, their parents will be with them
- Community centered events – show appreciation for your home town and all community members

## **Wrap-Up**

This was our final PR Chat for this membership year. We will return in the Fall with more chats based on inputs we receive from around the Department. PR Committee members hope to see you and speak with you at Convention and at your Fall District Conferences. We want to provide you with information and ideas that will help you become more known and understood in your communities.