

Nebraska FBLA Media Booklet

Nebraska Future Business Leaders of America

Newspapers

Newspapers are a great way to inform community members about FBLA activities. Depending on the size of the newspaper, it is also an easy way to have chapter news published. When writing a newspaper article, it is important to write interesting news that speaks directly to the readers. There are three types of newspaper articles: press releases, feature articles, and letters to the editor.

Press Releases. When a newsworthy event or achievement happens in the chapter, press releases are the best way to give media contacts enough information to write an article. Although it is discouraging to know that most press releases are trashed rather than printed, it should not prevent you from sending the press release to the paper. The best way to have an article published is through personal contact and targeting the correct people for your news.

There are many important tips to remember when preparing a press release.

- The press release should be short, accurate, objective, and informative.
- The physical appearance is important.
- A press release is printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper or letterhead.
- Identify the sender (organization or association) in the upper right-hand corner of the page by listing the name, address, and telephone number.
- Double space and in the upper left-hand corner include a contact person who can answer questions about the event by keying FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: (person's name and phone number).
- Double space and key FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE ON (give date).
- Triple space and then start writing the text.
- Double space the content.
- Keep the release to one page but no more than two pages. If the release is more than a page, never split paragraphs from one page to the next and place a headline and page number on each page after the first.
- After the press release is finished, triple space and in the center of the page, type three number signs (###) to indicate the end of the release.

What is written in the press release is more important than the format.

- Be certain to include the 5 Ws and H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How).
- The first sentence of the press release should answer all of these questions.
- The first sentence is called a lead and it will make the readers decide if they want to continue reading the article, so make sure it is exciting and catchy.
- Proofread the article at least three times to check for errors.

When the press release is ready to be sent, it is important to follow these steps.

- Double check the name and address of the appropriate media contact.
- Before the press release is mailed, call a few key contacts to let them know the release is on the way.
- A few days later call the contacts again to ensure they received the materials.

Press releases can also be sent to other types of media besides newspapers, such as local radio and TV stations, radio or TV talk shows, city officials, local magazines, and local civic groups.

Feature Articles. The purpose of a feature article is to interest, instruct, or entertain readers but still tell them about the FBLA association or events. Feature articles are excellent ways to generate publicity for the chapter and its activities. Usually, the feature article is a human-interest story. This type of article can cover how-to information, personalities, personal experiences or thoughts, and feelings. However, remember that the article must appeal to the general audience.

The format to a feature article is a little different from the format of a news release.

- Type the article double-spaced and leave the upper third of the first page blank.
- The margins must be one inch.
- When the article is finished, type “####” at the bottom of the last page.
- Remember the article must be accurate, organized, and contain a good lead.
- Identify the organization, name, phone number, and date on the upper-left corner of each page

A feature article can be sent to local and school newspapers, magazines, and local business and industry publications. Make sure the story is of interest to the media contact before spending time writing the article.

Important Addresses. In addition to your local newspaper, press releases and feature stories can be sent to:

FBLA-PBL National Publications
1912 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1591
communications@fbla.org

Nebraska Pledge
reporter@nebraskafbla.org

Letters to the Editor. The four most-read sections of any newspaper are sports, the front page, comics, and letters to the editor. Take advantage of the opportunity to write a letter to the editor. It is a great way to express your opinions, tell about a certain activity, and publicize FBLA.

Newsletters

A great way to keep members in your chapter informed is to start a local chapter newsletter. The newsletter should contain stories that are of interest to the members and highlight their efforts toward chapter projects. Include pictures in the newsletter and make it eye-catching to encourage members to read the important information. Distribute the newsletters at key points during the

year at local chapter meetings or hang the newsletter in their lockers. After the newsletter is completed, share it with school administrators or have the newsletter available for interested patrons at a sporting event.

Photographs

When reading the newspaper or other printed materials, one most often reads the article that entices him with a photograph. In order to take interesting photographs to send to print media, one must plan ahead. These few photography tips can make the photograph one of the best:

- Concentrate on only one subject
- Shoot at close range and from different angles
- Show action
- Doesn't look posed

When the photograph is submitted, a brief, stand-alone caption should be included. Identify the people in the photograph from left to right and front to back. Include the name, address, organization, and phone number.

Radio

Depending on the size of the radio station, radio can be a great way to publicize FBLA activities that are geared toward the community. There are several types of formats that radio stations can use to publicize the event:

- Live or recorded interviews
- Panel discussions
- One-time shows on a special topic
- Public service announcements (PSAs)
- Talk shows and personality spots
- Newscasts
- Community calendars or bulletin boards
- Editorials

To increase the chances of having the event publicized on the radio, personally call the station and find out whom you need to contact. Then personally call or visit the individual. Depending on the type of format being used, send a written copy of the information you want to have aired.

Public service announcements are a great way to highlight community service activities and they are free. FCC regulations state that stations must provide free airtime for PSAs. Many radio stations are receptive to 30-second PSAs; PSAs can be as short as 20 seconds or as long as 60 seconds. When writing a PSA, make it interesting so the radio station will want to air it. It is suggested to hand deliver the PSA to the station or editorial director. Most importantly, don't tell the director when or how to air the PSA.

The school PA system can be very helpful when recruiting new members or informing members of important events. Schedule a time with administrators when the PSA or message can be read across the system for all students to hear. Some of the best times to read the announcement are the beginning/end of the school day or during the scheduled time for announcements.

Example PSA

Below is an example of a 30-second PSA for National FBLA Week:

February 11-17 is National FBLA Week. FBLA stands for Future Business Leaders of America, an association of over 210,000 high school students enrolled in business programs. They are preparing for careers in the business world through studies in accounting, management, entrepreneurship, and many other areas. In addition to their classroom training, these students have the opportunity to develop strong, aggressive leadership qualities and civic responsibilities through the activities and projects of their FBLA chapter. Through practical experience and competition at the local, state, and national levels, the students in FBLA learn through active participation.

Television

If the opportunity arises, television appearances are an excellent way to publicize FBLA events. Not only do viewers learn about the purpose of FBLA, but it also gives them the opportunity to see the members in action. Local TV stations have news programs, talk shows, and community affairs programming where FBLA members could promote an activity or event.

If the need for publicity on television arises, cable TV is one of the best sources to contact. Many cable TV stations are eager to fill programming voids. Some stations may offer to tape and air your events.

Another way to publicize your event is to take advantage of the community calendars that many news stations and cable stations offer. In order to make the most of this media opportunity, contact the local television and cable stations to learn more about how to receive air time or submit information about the community calendar. Public service TV time is most often available during late spring and in the few weeks after Christmas.

Web Pages and Social Media

Websites and social media provide an effective way to publicize the local chapter and its events. When developing a web page, it is important to remember these few tips in order to keep the members safe, yet make the site enjoyable for others.

- Receive permission to post student pictures on the site
- Never list names of students with pictures
- Only use first names or initials when names are placed on student work
- Make the web page attractive and informative
- Design the page so it looks attractive through various web browsers
- Have quality content
- Be certain that all material is proofread and acceptable

Posters

This form of publicity adds an artistic or graphic touch to media forms. The purpose of a poster is to attract patrons or members to an event rather than inform. Posters should contain key information like a simple caption in order to give enough information about the event, but they don't need to go into detail like a press release. Remember, people glance at a poster; they don't read it. An attractive poster needs to grab a person's attention by having simple graphics or designs on it. Where the poster is displayed is almost as important as the design of the poster. Posters need to be placed where the target audience lives, works, shops, or "hangs out" so they can become aware of the event.

Some locations where posters can be placed are:

- Schools
- Churches
- Libraries
- Malls
- Store or restaurant windows
- Company bulletin boards

When hanging the posters around the community always:

- Get permission before posting them.
- Remove the posters after the event is over.
- Thank the organization that donated the space.

Media Do's And Don'ts

When preparing all types of media formats for publicity of a local chapter, it is essential that these simple Do's and Don'ts are followed. This will increase the chances of your event being publicized.

Do:

- Do keep submission deadlines in mind.
- Do use the proper format for materials submitted.
- Do be professional and businesslike in dealing with contacts.
- Do meet with and call contacts on a regular basis.
- Do record promptly any contact name, address, and phone number changes.
- Do ask questions. Find out specific procedures, deadlines, requirements, submission criteria, etc.
- Do make your submissions accurate, timely, informative, and complete.
- Do include a chapter contact name and phone number with every submission.
- Do match your submission to the media. Be sure to send something they can use.
- Do be sure to have a newsworthy story to tell.
- Do look for the local angle in telling your story.

Don't:

- Don't bully, threaten, or beg for media attention.
- Don't ask for clippings or for the final review.
- Don't complain if the material sent isn't used. Don't be a pest to your contacts.
- Don't send a publicity photo to a radio station or a PSA to a newspaper.
- Don't send the same submission to more than one contact within a given media organization.
- Don't waste contact's time and resources.
- Don't tell old news.
- Don't disguise publicity seeking as news.
- Don't confuse an announcement of an event with reporting on it.

FBLA Media Examples:

The following pages include examples of press releases, feature stories, and letters to the editor.

Elmwood-Murdock FBLA
Mr. Fred FBL
(123) 555-7890
February 28, 20XX

One goal of Elmwood-Murdock Future Business Leaders of America is to preserve the past and to remember their hometown author, Bess Streeter Aldrich. This year the Elmwood-Murdock chapter has served as an advocate for the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation. With FBLA's helpful hand, the Aldrich Foundation flourished.

One of the main projects this year was to paint a mural on a wall of the Elmwood Grocery Store. FBLA commissioned artists Geoff and Echo Easton to paint the mural (60 ft. by 10 ft.). The mural includes a prairie scene, early buildings of Elmwood, and Mrs. Aldrich's portrait. The FBLA chapter organized a campaign to raise \$1,800 in order to fund the project. The mural was sectioned off into one-foot squares and sold for \$3/square. FBLA found businesses or individuals that were interested in sponsoring a section of the mural. Names of all donors were posted on a plaque inside the grocery store.

FBLA has also helped the Aldrich Foundation in many other ways. Other projects that the chapter has completed this year to assist the Aldrich Foundation include: marching in the Rim of the Prairie parade, soliciting an antique bookcase, maintaining the Aldrich sign, producing a video of the upstairs of the house, making a walking-tour brochure that highlights Mrs. Aldrich's homes and other important landmarks in Elmwood, promoting membership in the Foundation, and creating a virtual reality web page of the house.

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November 3, 20XX

Editor
c/o Anytown Journal
410 Main Anytown, NE 68048

Dear Editor

In all the holiday shopping rush we sometimes forget how lucky we are to be able to shop where we please. We often take for granted the freedom to shop from store to store to purchase gifts or other items. This freedom of choice is American Free Enterprise.

On November 15, we celebrate the right to America's free enterprise. Every day we are faced with choices—what to drive, where to eat, what to purchase, and where to shop; free enterprise is what makes this possible. Entrepreneurs are able to start their own businesses because of the American free enterprise system.

Since free enterprise is such an important part of our lives, it seems fitting to have a day designated to celebrate this freedom. So let's be thankful for free enterprise and be sure to celebrate American Free Enterprise Day on November 15!

Sincerely

John Doe
Reporter
Anytown FBLA