

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

PROMOTING YOUR ACTIVITIES AND WRITING PRESS RELEASES

The Mazamas is expanding our relationship with the community in a number of ways. One way is to build relationships with other outdoor organizations and to implement our Community Outreach Program. Another way is through building a stronger information program and writing an increased number of press releases to get our stories out to the community.

Committees promote their activities to the public in order to build public awareness and increase enrollment and revenue. To support these efforts, here are ways the staff and Community Relations Committee (CRC) can help you promote your activities or report a story of interest via listings and press releases.

SMALL MEDIA HITS

Calendars and lists

Some activities don't require a full press release because they will simply be posted on calendars and lists. CRC can help you disseminate brief informational listings about activities (hikes/climbs/rambles/programs, etc.) to the media on a regular basis. If you have an activity that does not require a full press release you may choose to consider this abbreviated option.

PRESS RELEASES

What is public relations?

Think of it as public education and information: communicating our identifying stories and achievements to the public; promoting events to target audiences; educating the public about our organization; building a "brand" and disseminating information to the community.

What are the benefits?

Build awareness, brand image and credibility. Motivate. Increase revenue. Educate. Promote. Inform.

What is Mazamas' goal?

Our goal is to have an article or mention in the *Oregonian*, *Tribune* or community newspaper monthly. Maybe your committee is involved in a project that might make a good human-interest or adventure story or promote an activity or program. Your story can be simple and informative and doesn't need to be front-page news!

Things we are doing to educate the public and enhancing our public information efforts:

- Helping committee chairs and members write press releases
- Supplying a press release template to committee chairs
- Searching for story ideas
- Studying the paper for similar articles
- Identifying staff writers who write about our kind of activities
- Building a media list and relationships with media contacts
- Archiving all Mazamas' stories which appear in the media
- Using our Style Guide and Branding Guide for proper use of logo, fonts, colors, verbiage, etc.
- Selling Mazamas' merchandise in the Mazamas Mercantile

Some Ideas for press releases:

Grants awarded by the Conservation or Research Committees
Trail tending and the many volunteers and hours devoted to it
The adventures of students in BCEP
AYM activities
Old-timer's activities
Outings
Particularly interesting hikes or climbs
Community-service activities
Mazamas Expeditions
Getting fit for a climb
Unique programs and/or individual (Mazamas) accomplishments (climbs, rescues, etc.).

Points to consider in creating your message:

What do you want to tell the readers?

To whom do you want to tell your story? (Your target audience - new climbers, travelers, seniors, women, 20-somethings, community at large, etc.)

Why do you want to tell it? (educate, promote, human-interest)

Some press release tips and terms:

- Never second guess the editor – write your article and allow them to determine if an article is of interest. You never know!
- Be ready with more info if an editor or Peggie should call you.
- Use the word “Mazamas” or “organization”, rather than “we” or “club.”
- Use “Mazama Mountaineering Center” rather than “clubrooms.”
- Remember, writers may not care about Mazamas all of the time, but may be interested occasionally, so don't give up.

Steps in writing your press release:

1. Download the template from the website and use it to write your press release.
2. Determine your target audience.
3. Follow the steps on the template and feel free to ask for help from CRC or the office in writing your press release.
4. Confirm that the person listed as the contact, if other than the writer, is comfortable with being contacted.
5. E-mail your press release to the CRC Chair. She/he will check for continuity and consistency in the message and make sure we avoid redundant press releases, then he/she forward to Peggie.
6. Peggie and the chair may recommend changes, if necessary.
7. After making the changes, email the final press release back to the chair. CRC will distribute it to the appropriate media contact(s). Peggie or CRC will follow-up with specific writers and email a “thank you” if an article is printed.

Executive Council has asked that Peggie see all press releases, fliers, posters, internal and external notices before they are distributed to membership or made public.