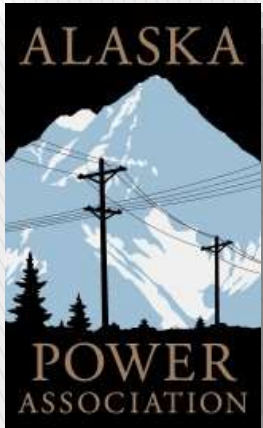


Utility Communications

The importance of information

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Alaska Power Association

Assist our members in accomplishing their goals of delivering electric energy and other services at the best value to their consumers.

What will be covered

- ▶ General Utility Communications
- ▶ Project Communications
- ▶ Outages and incidents
- ▶ Consumer relations



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative

- ▶ The electric utility is often the most visible institution in town/village
- ▶ Provides an essential service
- ▶ Impacts peoples lives daily
 - And their wallets
- ▶ Set the narrative, don't let others set it for you



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

- ▶ Social media
 - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- ▶ Some social media tips:
 - Have a consistent presence
 - Don't engage with trolls
 - Talk with, not to, people
 - Pictures, pictures, pictures!!!

Social media is cheap, easy and wide-ranging



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

- ▶ Some social media engagement tips
 - Use a person's first name when responding to them
 - Let other commenters handle the negativity
 - Never argue with commenters
 - Be brief (if possible)
 - 27-9-3 formula –
 - 27 words long
 - 9 seconds to say
 - Contains 3 main points



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

▶ Newsletters/old school paper

- There is still value in paper
- Great place to put an FAQ
- Bill Stuffer
 - Make them want to look at it
- Get creative
 - Highlight staff
 - How the plant works
 - Safety messages

Tell them what is important



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

▶ Press Releases

- Remember the 5 W's
 - Who
 - What
 - When
 - Where
 - Why
- All important information should be in the first paragraph
- Following paragraphs are back-up information
- Keep press releases to one page
- List all relevant contact information



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

Example:

ABC Electric Utility expects a two hour service interruption this Friday while crews work in the Smith Road area to replace a problem transformer that has caused power outages.

Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative Tools

- ▶ In-person
 - Board meetings, utility tours, consumer meetings, etc.
 - Consider conveying info. through an on-hold message
- ▶ If you can:
 - Set-up power plant tours
 - Urge participation in meetings
 - Get into the schools to explain operations
- ▶ Help the community understand what you do



Utility Communications – Setting the Narrative

The main message:

Let consumers know what they need to know. Any gaps in information will be filled by guessing, conjecture, or conspiracy.

Utility Communications: Notifications: Project Communications

- ▶ Start ***EARLY***
 - Some projects can disrupt service or be an eyesore
 - Getting info. out early helps consumers get used to the idea of the project
 - Let consumers know why the project is happening
- ▶ Ideas for outreach:
 - Create an easy to read FAQ
 - Host an open house
 - Create a project website
 - Provide status reports/updates



Utility Communications: Notifications: Project Communications

- ▶ Your employees are ambassadors
 - Ensure your employees know basic details
 - What is the project
 - Start and (estimated) end dates
 - Cost
 - Why and advantages
 - Informed and engaged employees can help with messaging



Utility Communications – Outages

- Inform the public immediately via social media, text alert, website, or other method
 - Let them know you are aware of the outage
 - Describe the area affected by the outage
 - Explain the process and progress dealing with the situation
 - Work close with your operations team to provide accurate updates
- Different places in Alaska have a different expectation of time: but try to alert consumers ASAP!



Utility Communications Consumer Relations

- ▶ Key accounts
 - Your largest demand consumers
 - Usually schools, gov't buildings, processors, etc.
 - Electricity means something different to them
 - These are your largest paying consumers
 - Significant stake in affairs of utility
 - Make regular visits
 - Check on service
 - Listen to concerns/questions



Thank you!

