



Medford Fire-Rescue Public Relations Campaign

Fall 2013, Winter 2014, Spring 2014

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Sustainable Cities Initiative

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge and thank all Medford Fire-Rescue staff for making this project possible. We would also like to thank specifically the following staff for their assistance and contributions that were instrumental to the completion of this report.

Gordon Sletmoe

Brian Fish

Justin Bates

About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

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About City of Medford

Medford, located in Jackson County in Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley, has a population of 75,920 within a metropolitan statistical area of 206,310 people, the 4th largest in the state. The City was founded in 1883 at its present site because of its proximity to Bear Creek and the Oregon and California Railroad, becoming the County seat in 1927.

The downtown is a National Historic District and it is flourishing today due to support from the City's Urban Renewal Agency in cooperation with business and property owners. New construction, building restorations, infrastructure improvements and community events are creating a forward-looking downtown grounded in its diverse past. Streets have been realigned and improved with with new pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Medford is the economic center for a region of over 460,000 people in Southern Oregon and Northern California. In the past, its economy was fueled by agriculture and lumber products. Although the lumber industry has declined, three lumber mills, Boise Cascade, Timber Products and Sierra Pine, remain. The area also is home to an expanding vineyard and wine industry that includes a large assortment of varietals and over 60 wineries. Lithia Motors, the 9th largest auto retailer in the U.S., has been headquartered in Medford since 1970.

The City is a regional hub for medical services. Two major medical centers employ over 7,000 people in the region. Medford is also a retirement destination, with senior housing, assisted living and other elder care services acting as an important part of the economy.

The Bear Creek Greenway extends from Ashland through central Medford and includes a 26-mile multi-use path, linking several cities and numerous parks. Roxy Ann Peak, one of Medford's most prominent landmarks, is a 3,573-foot dormant volcano located on the east side in Prescott Park, Medford's largest city park at 1,740 acres.

Course Participants

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This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the City of Medford. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.

Introduction

This report is the result of three terms of work by students in the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. During fall term 2013, students in Strategic Communications Research (J495) conducted primary and secondary research to learn more about issues related to Medford's Police and fire facilities, with the intent of addressing both Department's issues as a single project. At the beginning of winter term, it was determined that each Department would best be served by individual reports. In winter term 2014, students in Strategic Planning and Cases (J453) used the research conducted in J495 to identify strategic communications issues. In spring term 2014, Public Relations Campaigns (J454) students developed a public relations campaign designed to assist Medford Fire-Rescue in addressing identified communications issues.

Public Safety Facilities Research: Fall 2013

Background

The Medford Police and fire facilities are both undersized and likely unsafe in the event of an earthquake. In 1967, the Medford Police station was moved to a “temporary” location within the City Hall. The intention was that new facilities would need to be built when Medford’s population reached 40,000-50,000 people. Medford reached this population in 1990; however, the topic of building a new facility was forgotten, and the City Hall is still used today. Due to growth, employees and essential equipment cannot properly fit in the station. Furthermore, neither the Police nor fire stations meet seismic standards – the level that is considered safe against earthquakes – and most of the fire stations are not even safe from fire. This is highly unsafe for employees and anyone else in these buildings.

On Oct. 3, 2013, the Medford City Council voted to approve the addition of a Public Safety Surcharge to Medford’s monthly utility fees of \$2 per month to pay a \$32 million bond to build or remodel five new fire facilities and one new Police facility. Medford voters were not asked for their approval, but will have to pay the monthly surcharge, which led to many disgruntled citizens.

A telephone survey of 600 respondents was conducted in February 2012 by Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc. to gauge voter support on two bond measure proposals in Medford, including a Police Facility Bond Measure. A little more than half of the voters supported the Police Facility Bond Measure. Of this amount, only 3 in 10 are “very confident” that they will continue to support the measure in November 2012.” This means that although the bond measure was passed, most people are only temporarily OK with it, and they foresee being unhappy with the bond measure – most likely the financial aspect of it – in the future. If the public becomes unhappy with having to pay the surcharge, this will put a strain on the relationship with Medford Police and Fire-Rescue. So, even though the bond measure was passed, Medford Police and Fire-Rescue are asking for assistance in gauging public opinion on the surcharge. Medford Police and Fire-Rescue hope to better inform the electorate about the details and benefits of building these new facilities.

Situation Analysis

Prior to starting the research, the Police and Fire-Rescues understood the problem to be that the community of Medford is misinformed on the surcharge regarding what it is, why it is needed, and what it will do. According to interviews with the Police and Fire-Rescue Chiefs, one issue from the citizens of Medford is that they did not have a say in the passage of the surcharge. With these complaints arising, the Police and Fire-Rescues want to maintain a strong relationship with the community.

According to the fire and Police Chiefs, citizen complaints have included a lack of voter opinion in passing the fee, misinformation about the differences between a tax and a fee, and a lack of knowledge regarding the need for these renovations. The local news stations, newspaper, and radio stations presented numerous opportunities for Medford Police and Fire-Rescue to reach out to the citizens.

In the coming months, Medford Police and Fire-Rescue will have the opportunity to change the perception of this fee through strategic communication with the citizens of their community. There are numerous opportunities for Medford Police and Fire-Rescue to influence opinion in favor of new facilities.

Research Objective

The objective of our research is to gauge public opinion regarding the utility fee because this will influence the relationships between the Medford public and the Police and Fire-Rescues. Although the bond measure has been passed, the fire and Police Departments want the community to understand the urgency and necessity of rebuilding. We developed a research plan that would provide the fire and Police Departments with a better understanding of what the public thinks and how to communicate information that would inform citizens.

Secondary Research

In 2007, 15 libraries in Medford were shut down due to a lack of funding. It was during this time that Congress failed to reauthorize a \$400 million annual subsidy to 41 states. Oregon took the biggest hit; Jackson County lost \$23 million and had to make significant budget cuts. When the libraries were shut down due to a lack of funds, the public began to question tax allocation. “Medford residents voted down a property tax levy that would have generated \$9 million a year to keep the libraries open. This was the third time since 1984 that voters were asked to bolster the library budget, but this was the first time they said no.”

It may be that the Medford library shutdown created or increased distrust between Medford residents and city government, though the city was not responsible for the libraries being shut down. The people of Medford, however, are not always aware of how the government is spending tax dollars, utility fees, and other money. The lack of understanding can affect the level of concern that residents have regarding new fees – whatever they may be. It is evident that Medford residents need to be clearly informed about the purpose of the new utility fee surcharge.

The surcharge will increase the total average utility bill for Medford citizens to \$39.56 per month. According to an article in the Corvallis Gazette Times, Lebanon charges more than \$100 per month, while Albany is above \$80 per month. Medford has a very low utility fee rate, which includes the current street fee of \$2.82 that will expire in 2018. At this time, the utility fee will be increased

to \$4.28. This will generate an estimated \$2.5 million per year for the renovation projects.

Medford isn't the first Oregon city to use a surcharge to support upgrading Police and fire facilities. On February 1, 2013, Gresham implemented a temporary Police, Fire, and Parks fee to help maintain Police positions and keep fire stations open. This was a temporary monthly surcharge for Gresham households and businesses, and a one-time surcharge for large businesses. According to the City of Gresham's website, the fee and the surcharge are expected to raise \$4.7 million over 17 months. Of this, 95 percent is to be dedicated to the Gresham Police and Fire Departments and the remaining 5 percent dedicated to parks. Single-family households will pay \$7.50 per month on their utility bills, and businesses with more than 50 employees will pay a \$2 surcharge for every employee over the first 50. The Oregonian states, "The extra money wouldn't add services. Rather, it would relieve pressure from strained budgets, allowing those Departments to function as they currently do without further cuts." Some neighborhood association presidents in Gresham believed that the charge was a tax disguised as a fee because it was implemented without voter approval. In addition, Gresham community members expressed concern about, "the duration of the fee, whether businesses were paying their equal share, how low-income households would afford it, and the outsized impact on apartment buildings."

Medford's Police and Fire-Rescue Departments can learn how to improve its communication from the communication issues encountered in Gresham. Chief Tim George of the Medford Police Department told the research team that residents mainly consume news through television and the newspaper. Through these channels, Police and fire-rescue can convey the correct information regarding the surcharge. Police officials can also explain the value and details of the surcharge through television and newspaper interviews. The Medford Police Department also regularly uses Facebook to inform the public about current crime to receive the public's help in identifying criminals. Several residents have posted comments on Facebook expressing their admiration for this type of communication, which could be used to explain the surcharge. Additionally, the Police Department has a Twitter account, but has not posted anything since July 2013. The Police Department should take advantage of this media channel and continue its communication through tweeting. Lastly, Fire-Rescue does not have a Facebook page or Twitter account. Social media may be a helpful source of communication to build relationships and gain voter approval like the Police Department.

Primary Research

Based on our secondary research, we developed a hypothesis that the public is unclear on the difference between a tax and a utility fee, which likely contributes to a lack of support for the surcharge. To address our hypothesis, we created

an online survey using Qualtrics (See Appendix B). The survey included both closed-ended questions (quantitative) and open-ended questions (qualitative).

When this project was initiated, Tim George, the Chief of Police, and Gordon Sletmoe, the Deputy Chief of Fire-Rescue, were highly involved in the creation and distribution of the survey. George and Sletmoe promoted the survey link on both Departments' homepages and the Police Department's Facebook page. Additionally, they were able to feature the link on the City of Medford homepage. Sletmoe also issued a news release. Furthermore, communication with the Medford Mail Tribune permitted our link to be publicized on its website.

The link was distributed on many different media fronts because, as we learned from talking with George, the Medford population has diverse media consuming habits. Promoting the link on a newspaper's homepage, Facebook pages, and Departments' websites allowed us to attract a larger and broader audience in Medford. Online accessibility was more convenient, reliable, and sustainable for public participation than a printed survey.

Summary of Research Results

The Qualtrics survey link was open to the public for 11 days and garnered 158 completed surveys. This provided us with a wide sample of data to analyze, making our findings more accurate in relation to our hypothesis.

Distinguishing how Medford residents receive their news is essential for communication purposes. We asked respondents to rank their preferred news outlets; results were as follows: television, news websites, newspaper, Facebook and lastly, Twitter (see Appendix C for complete results).

On a 0-10 scale (0 being extremely poor; 10 being perfect condition), respondents were asked to rate the current physical conditions of the facilities. Survey participants rated the fire stations an average of 5.91 and the Police Department as an average of 6.04. This piece of data is essential because it proves that the public has a skewed perception of the state of the facilities. This could be the reason for the lack of support for the surcharge.

When asked if they are aware of the new surcharge, 78 percent of respondents said yes. Then, respondents were asked to name the media outlet in which they heard about the utility fee in once sentence or less. The two most common types of media were the Mail Tribune and local news channels. These findings were consistent with how respondents ranked their use of media and emphasizes the most effective way to communicate to the public is through the local newspaper and news stations.

The Police and fire-rescue expressed concern that the public did not understand what the proposed utility fee was and why it was being implemented. We asked participants if they understood the difference between a tax and utility fee, followed by an open-ended question asking them to describe the difference.

From the results we collected, we saw that 65 percent of respondents believed they knew the difference between a tax and utility fee. In reality, after reading through the answers to the open-ended question, only 15 (less than 10%) of those respondents actually knew the difference. The majority of the responses were far from matching the definitions of a tax and utility fee. Examples of these responses include:

- “They are both the same. Utility bills should be for utilities only. Any ‘fees’ associated with the government entities should only be approved by taxpayers.”
- “Fixed city service cost vs. residential personal usage”
- “Utility fees are a monthly charge that is paid on the utility bill. While a tax would be added into those that are property owners.”

Feedback included angry comments from citizens who made it clear they were unhappy with the new utility charge. Part of this anger may have stemmed from their lack of representation, as they were not asked their opinion or allowed to vote on the implementation of the fee.

One question of our survey established public familiarity of the Police and fire Chiefs, to clarify the best public figure for communication. In the multiple-choice portion of the question, 82 percent said they would recognize the Chief of the Medford Police Department, and only 44 percent of the respondents said that they would recognize the Chief of Medford Fire-Rescue. In the open-ended portion, respondents said that they would prefer communication via a third-party public information officer. Respondents also valued the Medford city newsletter, including Police and fire-rescue news, which was delivered monthly to their house. However, respondents mentioned that they have stopped receiving this newsletter and would like to have it reinstated.

Recommendations

After completing secondary research, conducting a survey, and analyzing the results, we created several recommendations designed to increase support for the utility fee surcharge. First, clarifying the difference between a tax and a utility fee is essential because citizens don’t understand the difference. Informing citizens of the difference between a tax and a utility fee could lead to a positive change in opinion regarding the utility fee surcharge.

Our research found that the majority of people would not recognize the Chiefs, or if they did, they would prefer a third party, such as a public information officer, to communicate with them. An objective third party would not be invested in the financial aspects of the fee, and could be a more reliable, authentic source than the Police or fire-rescue.

The majority of respondents are unaware of the poor conditions of the facilities. A visual aid, such as a video package, would maximize communication efficiency and help residents see the poor conditions of the facilities. The video package should be shown on TV and posted to news websites because this is where the majority of respondents said they receive their information.

Respondents would like to again receive a monthly newsletter, and it might be beneficial to reinstate this newsletter as an e-newsletter. This could be an additional outlet for the Police and fire-rescue to build their relationship with the public.

Limitations

Throughout conducting our survey, we experienced a few limitations:

1. Use of the Internet

Using an online survey eliminated community members that do not use or have access to the Internet. In addition, we were limited by the fact that not everyone that saw the link would voluntarily participate in or complete our survey. By not being able to ensure a controlled environment, there was no way to guarantee respondents would complete the full survey without distractions.

2. Distribution

Our demographic was limited to those who are connected with Medford Police and Fire-Rescue online; this potentially produced biased results. While it was helpful for the Police Department to distribute our survey, we worked to broaden the demographic of possible respondents by reaching out to other sources such as the Mail Tribune, Medford's major newspaper. However, communication with this source took longer than expected, and the Mail Tribune posted the survey link online halfway through the period the survey was open. Unfortunately, by the time they published our link in the newspaper, we had already closed the survey.

3. Distance

Conducting research from a distance resulted in various limitations. Communication with our client was limited to email and phone calls. Beyond working with our client, conducting research for the city of Medford was challenging by distance, so our research methods were tailored around the fact that distance would be an issue during the term.

Strategic Plan: Winter 2014

Background

Medford Fire-Rescue (MFR) protects Southern Oregon residents in Jackson and Josephine counties. Its service include firefighting, paramedic emergency medical response, a regional hazardous materials team, heavy rescue, and life safety services for residents within the 55.77 square mile response area (Medford Fire-Rescue).

MFR serves nearly 90,000 people from five different fire stations located throughout the Medford area. The Department is made up of 82 personnel who respond to approximately 10,000 calls a year. Prevention is major focus of MFR, which includes inspecting buildings for hazards, reviewing plans for new construction, installing car seats for children, participating in the Safe Kids Coalition, providing fire station tours and ride-alongs on its fire engines (Medford Fire-Rescue).

In 2013, MFR responded to 9,058 emergency calls throughout its five stations. A majority of those calls were taken by Fire Stations #2 and #5, which are located in southeast and southwest Medford. Emergency medical service (EMS) calls make up 68.3% of calls that Medford Fire-Rescue receives. Of the 4,350 patients who needed EMS, the average age is 55 years old (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). Good intent calls, which is when a resident notices a particular event that may be a false alarm, but where there is reason to think that there is an actual emergency, make up 12.2% of the calls that MFR receives. Lastly, 6.1% of the calls that Medford Fire-Rescue receives are false alarm calls.

The City of Medford has a population of 76,462. Of those living in Medford, 13.8% identify as Hispanic, in comparison to the Oregon average of 12.2%. In comparison with the Oregon average of 15.5% of residents who live below the poverty line, 19.9% of Medford residents live below the poverty line (US Census).

Three years ago, a bond-consulting firm from Portland performed research to determine if the timing was right for a bond measure that would fund several construction and remodeling projects for the Medford Fire-Rescue, Police, and Parks Departments. The Medford City Council passed the measure unanimously, although select residents expressed frustration with the lack of public vote (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication).

The tactic of implementing bond measures as a means for funding public construction projects, particularly for local fire-rescue, has grown more popular in recent years. Medford Fire-Rescue's usage of a bond measure to fund construction has also been utilized by other American fire Departments, including Encinitas, Calif., and Toledo, OH. In July of 2011, the Encinitas City Council approved \$4,309,007 to be used to construct Encinitas Fire Station #2

(City of Encinitas). After the completion of Encinitas' new fire station on January 7, 2013, the Encinitas Fire Department celebrated with a community grand opening ceremony in February 2013 (City of Encinitas).

In Toledo, the City Council voted unanimously in favor of an additional \$2.1 million funding increase for the renovation of two fire stations (Toledo Blade). Similar to Medford's reconstruction efforts, the renovations for the Toledo Fire Department include updated living quarters, improving office spaces and building two new apparatus bays (Toledo Blade).

Funding for Medford Fire-Rescue's construction projects came from a residential and commercial utility fee, which increased \$2 per month (\$24 per year), and will increase to \$4 per month in the next five years. Medford's bond measure raised a total of \$38 million, of which MFR will receive \$10.2 million for its construction efforts. According to the American Enterprise Institute, a January 2013 Reason-Rupe survey reveals, "Americans think that 47 cents of every dollar paid in taxes is wasted" (AEI website). It is crucial that MFR explains how funding for construction from a bond measure and not taxation differ to reassure citizens that their contributions are not going to waste.

MFR needs new facilities for legitimate reasons. The Department requires additional space that is equipped with up-to-date technology. The current fire stations are not structurally up to code and are at extreme risk in the likely event of an earthquake or natural disaster (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). Increased space will help resolve the current issue of over-crowded stations. The facilities' current layouts are also problematic. Presently, visitors must walk directly through firefighter living areas, but after the remodels, stations will be better designed to suit firefighters and their daily needs (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). With money from the bond measure, MFR will be able to buy up-to-date technology, improve employee safety precautions, and allow for better communication through video monitoring and new call centers (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication).

Senior citizens are the largest user of emergency medical services offered by MFR, which is why communication efforts are largely targeted towards elderly residents. Communication with households that have children is also essential, due to the services that MFR can provide for families with children.

The core mission of Medford Fire-Rescue is to keep its citizens safe from fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials, and natural disasters. Through their communication practices, MFR wishes to improve its community engagement and relay the message that they are "your fire Department," and that the updated fire facilities will benefit the citizens of Medford (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). It's essential that citizens know where their money is going and how they will directly benefit. Additionally, it is important that the residents of Medford be informed throughout the construction process because transparent communication leads to greater community engagement and satisfaction.

Situational Analysis

MFR faces many challenges, including a lack of community knowledge regarding the bond measure and its purpose, as well as keeping citizens of Jackson and Josephine counties engaged throughout the entire construction process. Gaining public support during construction is important for MFR because the bond measure was not voted upon; therefore, some Medford citizens are outraged and desire to know exactly where the money from the bond measure is going (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). Along with public support, MFR must also communicate with Medford residents about the timeline for construction. However, the challenges resulting from the construction process provide an opportunity for MFR to build and maintain community engagement.

Strengths

- Improved fire safety through reconstruction
- Firefighters have positive reputation in the community
- New equipment and technology for fire stations through reconstruction
- Station improvements will cut down on pollution
- Current positive relationship with the local media
- Having five stations makes for wide range of coverage throughout Jackson and Josephine counties
- Response times are between 6.5 and 10 minutes depending on if the area is urban or rural (Medford Fire-Rescue)
- MFR's current facilities are outdated and unsafe; therefore, people will have better understanding for the rationale of the construction
- Media coverage through FlashAlert Newswire; most media outlets in Oregon subscribe to this service (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication)
- Employee benefits (health, retirement, sick leave)
- Involved in at least 246 public education events, reaching nearly 10,000 people (Fire Marshal Report)
- Rigorous hiring process, ensuring top-notch fire personnel
- Burn-to-Learn practices for abandoned buildings in Medford area
- Participation with Safe Kids Coalition

Weaknesses

- "Fire-Rescues consume tax dollars" (Fire Engineering website); thus, citizens pay for the Department and may be skeptical about how their money is being spent, possibly thinking that their money is wasted when they do not personally use the service
- Lack of communication between MFR and residents of Medford, evidenced in part by lack of information in their newsletter
- Residents will pay for construction regardless
- Long and ambiguous timeline for construction

- Surrounding areas will have to face noise of construction
- Bond measure not voted upon by residents
- Fire stations are located in residential neighborhoods
- Language barriers among residents
- Misunderstanding of how money is being used and negative public opinions about taxes and bond measures
- MFR website execution is poorly conducted and formatted
- No reconstruction efforts since the 1970s, thus, the Department may have difficulties in handling the situation, due to lack of recent experience
- Negative relationship with Medford Rural Fire District #2 (Mail Tribune)
- Current stations are unsafe for employees and volunteers
- Current stations do not meet seismic safety requirements (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication)
- Lack of social media presence

Opportunities

- Create more community outreach programs
- Increase media coverage on construction
- Hold open house and community events for MFR
- Passing out flyers with construction information for residents
- Update MFR website, improving content and formatting
- Creating and utilizing social media to communicate with residents
- Improving relationships with Medford Rural Fire District #2
- Doing more compliance inspections (Medford Fire Marshal Report)

Threats

- Lack of public support for the construction
- Little awareness about the construction and its benefits to the community
- Ambiguous construction dates
- Misunderstanding of the funding sources for projects
- Failing to engage the community during the construction process
- Residents don't know about MFR's services until they are in need
- Medford residents think that money for reconstruction comes from taxes (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication)
- Americans think 47 cents of every tax dollar is wasted (AEI website)
- Utility fee increasing again in next 5 years to fund more projects
- Increasing number of responses over the last 5 years (Medford Fire-Rescue)
- Medford has a higher percentage of residents living below the poverty line than the Oregon average; therefore, increasing the utility fee could present a financial burden for low-income residents, both now and in the future

Core Problem

MFR must inform its key publics of its role in the community, the utility fee's purpose, and the rationale for construction, while engaging them throughout the construction process. If it fails to describe financial arrangements and MFR's vital role in protecting Jackson and Josephine counties, then its reputation among key publics will be tarnished, resulting in little support for the current project and any future financial endeavors.

Goals and Objectives

Goal:

MFR needs to increase awareness and raise support among its key publics of its role in the community, the utility fee's purpose, and the rationale for construction, all while engaging the public throughout the building process.

Objective #1

Raise awareness of MFR's role in the community to 35 percent among its key publics: 10 percent by three months, 25 percent by six months, and finally 35 percent within 12 months.

Objective #2

Raise understanding and support for the utility fee's purpose among key publics by 30 percent: 5 percent by three months, 15 percent by six months, and finally 30 percent within 12 months.

Objective #3

Increase support for MFR's construction efforts by 25 percent within 12 months: 10 percent by three months, 20 percent by six months, and finally 25 percent within 12 months.

Objective #4

Grow community engagement throughout construction by 20 percent within 12 months: 5 percent by three months, 10 percent by six months, and finally 20 percent within 12 months.

Rationale

It is important to discover and understand the opinions, motives, and assumptions of MFR's key publics. By developing a survey and distributing it to the same group of randomized individuals over a period of 12 months, measuring awareness and opinion will be achievable.

Awareness of both MFR's role within the community and the purposes for construction needs to be understood and considered to gain respect and trust

from Medford's publics. The objective is to increase awareness by 10 percent in three months, 25 percent by six months, and finally, 35 percent by 12 months. During this timeframe, MFR can collect data and track the key publics' perceptions of its role within the community.

For MFR, it's an essential initiative to increase understanding of the \$2 utility fee increase. The objective will contribute to a more transparent relationship with key publics, and create a clear understanding of the fee's purpose. An achievable goal would be a 5 percent increase by three months, 15 percent by six months, and a 30 percent within 12 months.

Community support for MFR's construction efforts is vital for the Department's current and long-term reputation. MFR can track key public's levels of support to gauge opinion throughout the construction process. The goal is to raise support for MFR's construction efforts by 10 percent within three months, 20 percent within six months, and 25 percent within 12 months.

A vital aspect of MFR's communication objectives is to increase community engagement during the construction process. Through MFR's events, appearances at community centers, social media presence, newsletters, and interactive website, "Medford, Moving Forward," community engagement will be achievable. The goal is to increase engagement by 5 percent within three months, 10 percent within six months, and finally 20 percent within 12 months.

Key Publics

MFR serves a wide age range of citizens; therefore, its communication efforts will be directed at two separate groups – senior citizens (65 and up) and parents with children in the household. Targeting both groups with unique strategies and tactics will ensure that the two publics receive tailored messaging designed to raise awareness and support for MFR's role in the community, the construction projects, and the utility fee's purpose. Senior citizens use MFR's emergency medical services most, making them a significantly sized public that will require more EMS-focused communication efforts. The second and largest public for MFR will be parents with children in the household. It is common for parents to care about finances and family safety; therefore, this public would be particularly concerned with the utility fee increase and MFR's role in the community. Additionally, since Latino citizens make up 13.8 percent of the Medford population, communication strategies for the two aforementioned publics will include bilingual materials to reach this growing demographic (US Census).

Senior Citizens

Senior citizens are a key public that make up 16.2 percent of Medford's total population (US Census 2010). This public in particular prioritizes its own and extended families' well-being. According to Today Seniors Network, "More seniors care about health than wealth: Nearly 7 out of 10 seniors (69%) expressed concerns about their health and well-being...spiritual well-being

(58%) and receiving adequate care in old age (56%).” MFR’s Deputy Chief, Gordon Sletmoe, says senior citizens are the second-largest group in the area. MFR serves 12,000 senior citizens, as cited from U.S. Census data (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). Seniors use MFR’s EMS more often than any other age group, because Sletmoe says, “Based on a three year EMS response study (4,350 patients) the average age was 55 years old” and 41% are older than 65 years old (Sletmoe and Phillips Communication). Therefore, seniors are aware of MFR’s role in the community and are in a dependent relationship with MFR’s service. Their motivating self-interests are that MFR’s improved facilities will benefit seniors by ensuring faster response times to emergencies. Extended family members are this key public’s third party influencers because, “nearly 90% of seniors surveyed feel revitalized when they spend time with families and 70% say they wish they saw their families more throughout the year” (NCOA). Seniors tend to be mentally dependent on their families and are influenced by them. Our objective for the senior demographic is to raise awareness of MFR’s role in the community, increase support for the utility fee and the construction project, and engage the public during the entire building process.

Primary Messages

1. MFR’s improved fire stations will benefit you because the updated facilities will ensure faster response times to medical emergencies.
2. Thanks to your utility fee, MFR will be able to build safer and more efficient fire stations that will better protect you from medical emergencies.
3. Come to MFR’s events to celebrate the community’s new fire facilities, which will better protect today’s citizens as well as future generations.

Secondary Messages

1. According to U.S. Fire Administration Topical Fire Research Series, “As a natural result of the aging process, older adults present unique challenges in the fields of fire protection, prevention, and safety. Changes associated with the aging process predispose older adults to ignite a fire yet, at the same time, reduce their chances of surviving it.” MFR’s updated facilities will enable firefighters to respond to emergencies faster and save seniors’ lives.
2. MFR’s new facilities will create higher levels of safety for seniors and increase response time to ensure immediate care. Both are important since, “at age 65, people are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires compared to the population at large.” (National Fire Protection Association)
3. The study from Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) found that elderly people in the U.S. who have an active social life may have a slower rate of memory decline” (Harvard School of Public Health, as cited from American Journal of Public Health). Come to our events to interact with your fellow community members!

Parents with Children in the Household

In Medford, parents normally pay their household's utility fee. Sletmoe explains that the fee is calculated per unit, meaning a fourplex would incur four fees. MFR collects from 32,607 units including 32,000 residents. Sletmoe estimates that the majority of the Medford population (75,920) is affected. Parents will want to know how the improvements will benefit them and their families because they helped fund the projects. In addition, parents tend to care about finances and family safety; thus, we need to target this public specifically with messaging regarding the role of MFR and the utility fee's purpose. Parents' motivating self-interests are that the new fire facilities will help keep their families safe and that MFR's events will serve free food and provide an opportunity to engage with the community. Parents with children in the household rely on MFR to protect their families' safety in the event of a fire emergency. Local media are this public's third party influencers. According to Sletmoe, MFR currently has a great relationship with local media, including MFR's three major network TV stations and the Medford Mail Tribune newspaper. Local media's portrayal of MFR will influence parents' opinions. For this public, our objective is to raise awareness of MFR's role in the community, increase support for the utility fee and the construction project, and engage parents and their families during the entire building process.

Primary Messages

1. MFR strives to protect your family from emergencies, and its new facilities will improve firefighters' abilities to fulfill their role within the community.
2. Thanks to your utility fee, MFR will be able to build safer and more efficient fire stations that will better protect your family from emergencies.
3. Bring your family to MFR's events to enjoy free food, interact with community members, and celebrate the opening of Medford's new fire facilities.

Secondary Messages

1. "More than 3,400 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 17,500 are injured" (U.S. Fire Administration). Our updated facilities will help firefighters save more lives.
2. "American homes suffer an unwanted fire every 10 seconds, and every 60 seconds they suffer a fire serious enough to call the fire Department...13,000 people are injured in home fires in a typical year" (U.S. Fire Administration). Our fire facilities will enable firefighters to better protect your home and reduce the likelihood of fire-related tragedies.
3. "Parents increase their interaction...with their children and are more responsive and sensitive to their children's social, emotional, and intellectual

developmental needs” (Education website). Attend MFR’s community events to spend time with your children and create lasting family memories.

4. “Watching too much television can change the structure of a child’s brain in a damaging way, according to a new study” (Daily Mail). Pull your kids away from the TV and come to MFR’s community events for entertainment and free food!

Strategies and Tactics

Parents with Children in the Household

Strategy #1: Improve and utilize MFR social media outlets to increase awareness and gain public support for the \$2 monthly increase to utility fees, in addition to keeping households engaged throughout the reconstruction process.

Tactics:

- Hire a social media intern
- Create a MFR Instagram account
- Create a MFR Twitter account to update followers about construction
- Create a MFR Facebook page
- Utilize a hashtag to create conversation around MFR
- Hire a local web design company to make and manage “Medford, Moving Forward” website
- Use social media sites (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Website) to invite key publics to community events
- Use the promotion tool on Facebook to boost views of MFR’s content
- Create a Facebook ad to target different audiences
- Use “Google Ad” to boost MFR searches (MFR, Medford, fire safety, construction, renovation, fire, firefighter, help, emergency, medical, Jackson County, Josephine County)
- Once a week, post a “sneak peek” on social media sites of upcoming events and projects that the team is working on
- Use live coverage to post photos and make it interactive with an Instagram Scavenger Hunt
- Work with local businesses to get gift cards and use those as an incentive to get people to participate in the scavenger hunt

Strategy #2: Engage families and their children through a philanthropy event of a walk, run, or bike event on July 4.

Tactics:

- Hand out fliers in both English and Spanish to local businesses and schools and include information on how households can sign up for the event
- Contact local businesses that might want to sponsor the event
- Reach out to local food trucks and carts to see if they want to be present at

the event

- Have T-shirts made for those who sign-up for the event
- Contact local bands to play at the event
- Reach out to local community service organizations that would be interested in volunteering at the event

Senior Citizens

Strategy #1: Educate senior citizens about MFR's vital role in the community and the reasoning behind reconstruction efforts.

Tactics:

- Have MFR visit retirement communities and assisted living facilities and give presentations about reasoning behind reconstruction
- Host CPR and first aid training for senior citizens so they know what to do in case of an emergency

Strategy #2: Create an understanding and support for the utility fee's purpose and MFR construction through print media.

Tactics:

- Create an ad for local bi-monthly newspapers
- Send out bi-monthly newsletters in English and Spanish that include updates of the construction efforts
- Leave fliers available in English and Spanish at assisted living homes, American Legion, Elks Lodge, Moose Lodge, and Rotary that include reasoning behind the bond measure
- Include links to MFR website, "Medford, Moving Forward" and include handles to social media outlets (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) for senior citizens who are utilizing social media

Parents with Children in the Household and Senior Citizens

Strategy #1: Establish a personal relationship among MFR, senior citizens, and parents with children in the household through community events to keep them engaged throughout the construction process.

Tactics:

- Host a community health and safety fair
- Invite the Medford Police Department, local hospitals, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to participate
- Show promotion video about what MFR does in the community
- Bring calendar of upcoming events for visitors to see
- Host games and interactive activities for children to play and learn more

about fire safety

- Offer sign-ups for CPR and First Aid classes
- Hand out fliers in English and Spanish with information about the construction process
- Host community barbecue events at the North and South Medford fire stations
- Hire entertainment to be present at both community station barbecues
- Have barbecue catered by Costco and include hamburgers, hot dogs, fruit, salads, side dishes, and beverages
- Offer fire station tours
- Provide layouts of reconstruction and improvements being made
- Host summer move nights in Medford and preview promotional video about MFR's role in the community and why reconstruction is necessary
- Supply snacks and beverages for guests who attend
- Have firefighters and volunteers attend along with their families and friends
- Use social media to have people vote upon which movie will be played for the event
- Participate in "Fliers for Fire," an event available in both English and Spanish on the first Friday of June and July
- Have firefighters pass out fliers in English and Spanish with updates on construction and also include community event dates
- Have firefighters and volunteers at busy intersections around Medford to pass out fliers in English and Spanish to communicate with local residents. Attend local Medford community events as sponsors
- Attend the Pear Blossom Festival to increase MFR relationship with the community
- Attend community philanthropy events

Strategy #2: Establish media relations with local radio and television stations to highlight and promote the remodel and construction process in Medford, in particular to spread awareness of upcoming events.

Tactics:

- Reach out to local television stations (KOBI, KSYS, KTVL, KDRV, KMVU-DT)
- Contact local radio stations (KBOY – classic rock, KDOV – Christian, KEZX – Sports talk, KLDZ – Classic Hits, KMED – News and Talk, KRTA – Regional Mexican, KTMT – Contemporary hits: Top 40; KLDR – Hot AC)
- Send media outlets MFR promotional video to play during commercial breaks
- Make a radio spot
- Buy mobile billboards to be driven around the Medford area
- Buy stationary billboards in the Medford area

Strategy #3: Reinforce the recognition for the money raised for the bond measure through public thanks.

Tactics:

- Thank you cards written and signed by Deputy Chief Sletmoe
- Invite key publics to community events through thank you cards
- Recognition at community events to those who paid
- Create a plaque for each fire station that thanks Medford residents for paying for renovations
- Recognize at community events that plaques are going to be displayed at fire station locations and have speech ready for reasoning behind plaque
- Pitch plaque recognition to the local media

Evaluation

The success of this communication plan will be measured from the results of surveys distributed online, in utility bills, and at MFR events. There will be four rounds of surveys. The first round will be the benchmark for the following three rounds and will be administered prior to the implementation of any communication tactics. The second round of surveys will be distributed at three months, the third round at six months, and the fourth round at twelve months.

Objective 1: Raise awareness of MFR's role**Tools:** Distribute Survey

For round two, MFR must achieve 10 percent awareness among key publics (3 months). For round three, MFR must achieve 25 percent awareness (6 months). Finally, for round four, MFR must achieve 35 percent awareness (12 months).

Objective 2: Raise understanding and support for the utility fee's purpose**Tools:** Distribute Survey

For round two, MFR must achieve 5 percent understanding and support among key publics (3 months). For round three, MFR must achieve 15 percent understanding and support among key publics (6 months). For round four, MFR must achieve 30 percent understanding and support among key publics (12 months).

Objective 3: Increase support for MFR's construction efforts**Tools:** Distribute Survey

For round two, MFR must achieve 10 percent support among key publics (3 months). For round three, MFR must achieve 20 percent support among key publics (6 months). For round four, MFR must achieve 25 percent support among key publics (12 months).

Objective 4: Grow community engagement

Tools: Distribute Survey

For round two, MFR must achieve 10 percent support among key publics (3 months). For round three, MFR must achieve 20 percent support among key publics (6 months). For round four, MFR must achieve 25 percent support among key publics (12 months).

Strategic Public Relations Plan: Spring 2014

Introduction

Medford Fire-Rescue needs new fire facilities and immediate reconstruction to ensure Medford's public safety. Four of the city's current fire stations were built in the 1950s, and no longer meet current health and safety standards. Since these fire stations were constructed, the Department has taken on additional duties, but didn't have a process in place to improve its stations as their duties increased. Medford Fire-Rescue will move Fire Station 2 to a new location in hopes of improving response times. This money is specifically aimed to create adequate housing and living quarters for firefighters and paramedics as well as providing expanded space to store several fire engines in their garages.

Situation Analysis

In our best practices research, we found similarities in three different cities' approaches to remodeling their fire stations. Early communication and consistent communication played a key role in gaining the public's support for the reconstruction. Keeping the public informed throughout the entire reconstruction process by posting information online and inviting the public to get involved contributed to the overall success of the projects.

Challenges

- Medford Fire-Rescue needs to convey to the public what the reconstruction of the new fire stations will provide the average citizen
- The community is concerned with the use of the money that is going into the reconstruction
- The community surrounding Medford Fire-Rescue stations lacks knowledge on what the fire stations do for them on an everyday basis

Opportunities

- To engage the public about the fire stations and all of the services that they provide for the community to keep citizens safe
- Let the public become a part of the reconstruction process by engaging them through the entire remodeling process
- Through education, show the importance of the firefighters and the reconstruction of the fire stations

Target Audience

Media

The media are an intervening audience who need to be addressed to create a positive relationship with their own specific audiences.

Utility Payers

This audience was specified because the utility payers didn't get a vote to approve construction; creating a positive relationship with them will lessen the potential backlash.

Primary and Secondary Messages for Media

Primary Message: News coverage of the reconstruction of Medford Fire-Rescue's new fire stations will fulfill your obligation to produce PSAs.

Secondary Message:

- We provide the time, date and place for each story
- We will write the story for you

Primary and Secondary Messages for Utility Payers

Primary Message: Medford Fire-Rescue serves and educates the community in many ways.

Secondary Message:

- Did you know that your Medford Fire-Rescue answers your 911 calls and responds in emergencies?
- Medford Fire-Rescue protects nearly 90,000 from only five fire stations around the clock in Medford.
- On average, every two weeks, our Medford Fire-Rescue paramedics successfully restart a failed heart to return a citizen to their family
- Prevention is the primary focus of Medford Fire-Rescue. Some examples include, inspecting building for hazards, reviewing plans for new construction, installing car seats for children, participating in 14 initiatives to prevent accidents to children and young adults through our Safe Kids Coalition, providing fire station tours, and ride-alongs on fire engines

Primary Message: Medford Fire-Rescue's newly remodeled stations will enhance the firefighters' overall abilities to do their job in your community.

Secondary Message:

- A fire station in your own neighborhood will be remodeled to enhance its capabilities
- This is your building; we are living in it to serve you

Objectives

Objective 1: Increase the number of communication channels to engage utility payers from today to the completion of construction.

Objective 2: Generate one news media placement in Medford print and broadcast media twice a month until the beginning of construction.

Media

Strategy 1

Use traditional media sources to inform the community about Medford Fire-Rescue by reaching out to contacts already utilized by Medford Fire-Rescue.

Tactics

- Reach out to the news directors at the three network stations, city editor at the Mail Tribune and editorial staff at the Mail Tribune
- Create 'Firehouse Fridays' where the news covers an individual firefighter or a specific fire station. This will contribute to their obligation to air PSAs
- What to provide to the media: schedule for every Friday, fact sheets, story ideas, interview contacts, and images

Future Tactics

- Bring in a survivor who was saved by a firefighter or an individual personally affected by Fire-Rescue to be covered by local news station. Pitch to the fire station as potential stories

Utility Payers

Strategy 1

Engage the public throughout the construction process by creating interactive tools so that the public will feel a part of the process.

Future Tactics

- Video tour of current conditions and a potential virtual tour of proposed facilities
- Post the plans of the new facilities and a timeline on website
- Post pictures on website throughout the entire construction process
- Host events at the old firehouse and explain what changes will be made with the new firehouse and increase one-on-one communication with the community
- Create a Medford Fire-Rescue Facebook page and post weekly updates (pictures, videos, construction related stories, etc.) to help MFR's digital audience feel engaged and informed
- Create a MFR YouTube channel and post videos of the construction, in addition to clips of any media coverage gained on local TV stations

Strategy 2

Educate the public on all aspects of Medford Fire-Rescue so that they are aware how their safety is ensured by the number of things Medford Fire-Rescue does for its community.

Future Tactics

- Host events at the old firehouses that teach the public safety
- Create a calendar of events that the community can get involved in
- Visit schools in the immediate area surrounding fire houses to teach students about all the aspects of Medford Fire-Rescue
- Place signs in front of fire stations, letting the public know that they can stop in and have the firefighters help them with certain duties

Evaluation

- Measure the amount of interactions and website visits through website analytics
- Measure the amount of impressions created through traditional media placements
- Create surveys to distribute throughout the community both before, at the start of construction, and after construction ends to gauge community awareness of Medford Fire-Rescue's role in the community and awareness of construction

Best Practices Research for Medford Fire-Rescue

Introduction

Our best practices report analyzes three different organizations that have had similar issues and experiences to those of Medford Fire-Rescue. These organizations have successfully communicated with the public surrounding the implementation of additional fees and or the reconstruction process of building new facilities for public benefit. By looking at these organizations, we can provide Medford Fire-Rescue with a detailed plan that they can use when dealing with similar issues.

First, we looked at Amazon and how it approached raising membership fees for its subscribers. This company tailored its communication efforts to a specific audience and successfully achieved its goal of informing the public about upcoming changes being made to membership fees, by raising awareness of the charges well in advance of its implementation. This applies to Medford because it has increased Medford's utility fee surcharge and is seeking suggestions for how to successfully communicate with the public and ease backlash.

Second, we focused on Portland Fire and Rescue and the ways that it engages with the public on the Station 21 reconstruction, as well as all of the other ways it educates the public. Portland Fire and Rescue mainly focuses on its website to provide information, but it is the same type of information Medford Fire-Rescue needs to provide its community through traditional media. PF&R provides detail on the reconstruction, so that the public can follow the process step-by-step. PF&R also lists and gives detail on all the other tasks that they do on a daily basis. The takeaway from this organization for Medford Fire-Rescue is to openly and effectively communicate with the public to get their message across.

Thirdly, we looked at Atlanta's fire station #19 and how it communicated with the public about upcoming renovations to its oldest fire station. Everything about the plans, donating, and the station's history is available to the public via their website and through multiple news stories. Fire station #19 has its own website specific to the renovation plans which the public can visit for updates on the plans and events they can attend to meet the firefighters. The takeaway from Atlanta's fire station #19 is to be completely transparent with the public about the renovations process.

Amazon.com

Overview

Amazon strives to be the world's most customer-centric company where people can find virtually anything they want to buy. By giving customers more of what they want - low prices, vast selection, and convenience - Amazon.com continues to grow and evolve. Founded by Jeff Bezos, the Amazon.com website started in 1995 as a place to buy books because of the unique customer experience the Web could offer book lovers. During the first 30 days of business, Amazon.com fulfilled orders for customers in 50 states and 45 countries - all shipped from a Seattle-area garage. Today, more than two million small businesses, world-class retail brands, and individual sellers increase their sales and reach new customers by leveraging the power of the Amazon.com e-commerce platform.

This year Amazon was looking to increase its Prime membership fee from \$79 to \$99. The challenge the company faced was the need to provide a solid communication plan to inform its customer base of the new price change. We chose Amazon as a good example of how to communicate well with a target audience prior to a price change going into effect. Although this may not help Medford Fire-Rescue now that its price change has already gone into effect, it may be able to utilize some of the tactics Amazon incorporated into its communication plan for future actions.

Best Practices

Amazon claims the 25% increase was needed to counteract growing delivery and content-acquisition costs. The \$99 price took effect for new members on March 20, 2014. Existing Prime members will pay the higher rate upon renewal of their membership.

In an effort to communicate openly with its members, Amazon did a number of things to keep their customers in its good graces, despite its rising prices. First, the company announced its price increase a full 247 days early to its existing

Dear Jim Schuchart, We are writing to provide you advance notice that the price of your Prime membership will be increasing. The annual rate will be \$99 when your membership renews on November 15, 2014. Even as fuel and transportation costs have increased, the price of Prime has remained the same for nine years. Since 2005, the number of items eligible for unlimited free Two-Day Shipping has grown from one million to over 20 million. We also added unlimited access to over 40,000 movies and TV episodes with Prime Instant Video and a selection of over 500,000 books to borrow from the Kindle Owners' Lending Library.

For more information about your Prime membership, visit our [Prime membership page](#).

Sincerely,

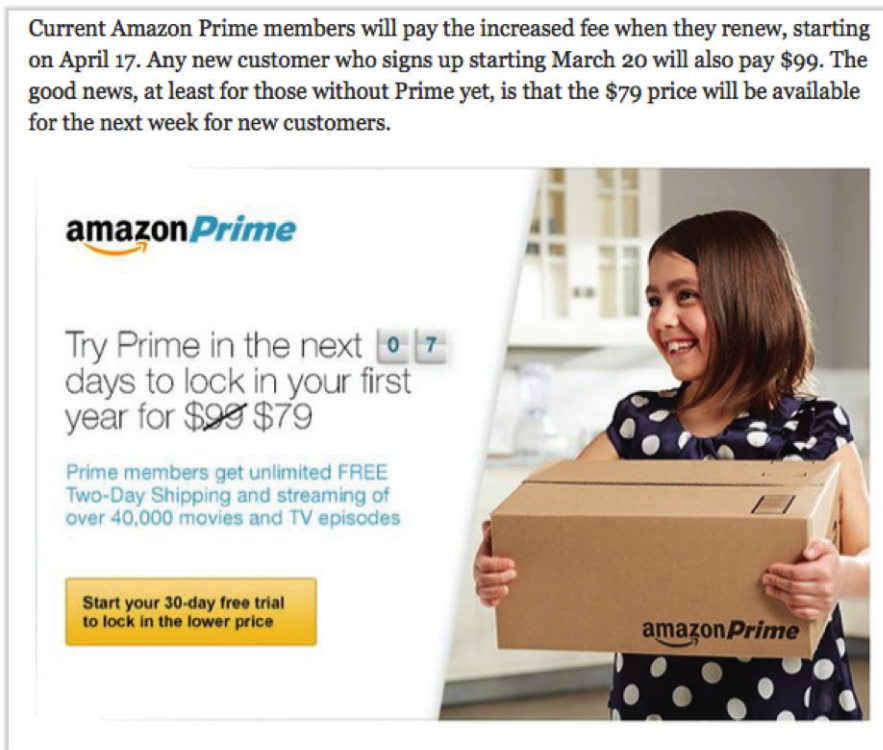
The Amazon Prime Team

customers in the form of an email. One of Amazon's current Prime members, Jim Schuchart, was very pleased with the way in which Amazon stayed in contact with him throughout the process of this transition.

From this email, Amazon revealed several things to Schuchart. First, Amazon communicated the news a full 247 days before any action was needed on the customer side (renew or churn). Next, they offer a brief explanation of cost increases. Finally, Amazon gave Schuchart some reasons why their Prime service is so great. It's a short reminder of all of the great value that he is getting from his membership.

Another thing that Amazon did well is posting a countdown clock on its website showing the remaining time potential new members had to lock in the \$79 membership fee, following the company's public announcement. The clock would continue to countdown on Amazon.com until March 20 when the new

Current Amazon Prime members will pay the increased fee when they renew, starting on April 17. Any new customer who signs up starting March 20 will also pay \$99. The good news, at least for those without Prime yet, is that the \$79 price will be available for the next week for new customers.



The image shows a promotional banner for Amazon Prime. On the left, the Amazon Prime logo is at the top. Below it, the text reads: "Try Prime in the next 07 days to lock in your first year for ~~\$99~~ \$79". Underneath that, it says "Prime members get unlimited FREE Two-Day Shipping and streaming of over 40,000 movies and TV episodes". At the bottom left, there is a yellow button that says "Start your 30-day free trial to lock in the lower price". On the right side of the banner, a young girl with brown hair, wearing a dark blue dress with white polka dots, is smiling and holding a large cardboard box. The box has the Amazon Prime logo on it. The background behind her is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a kitchen.

\$99 price would go into effect. This was a wonderful communication strategy, because it allowed everyone who had access to the website to view how much time they had left to sign up to become a member.

The company continues to send out email reminders of this change to current Prime members alerting them of this change and giving them plenty of time to decide if they would like to continue their membership as an Amazon Prime member.

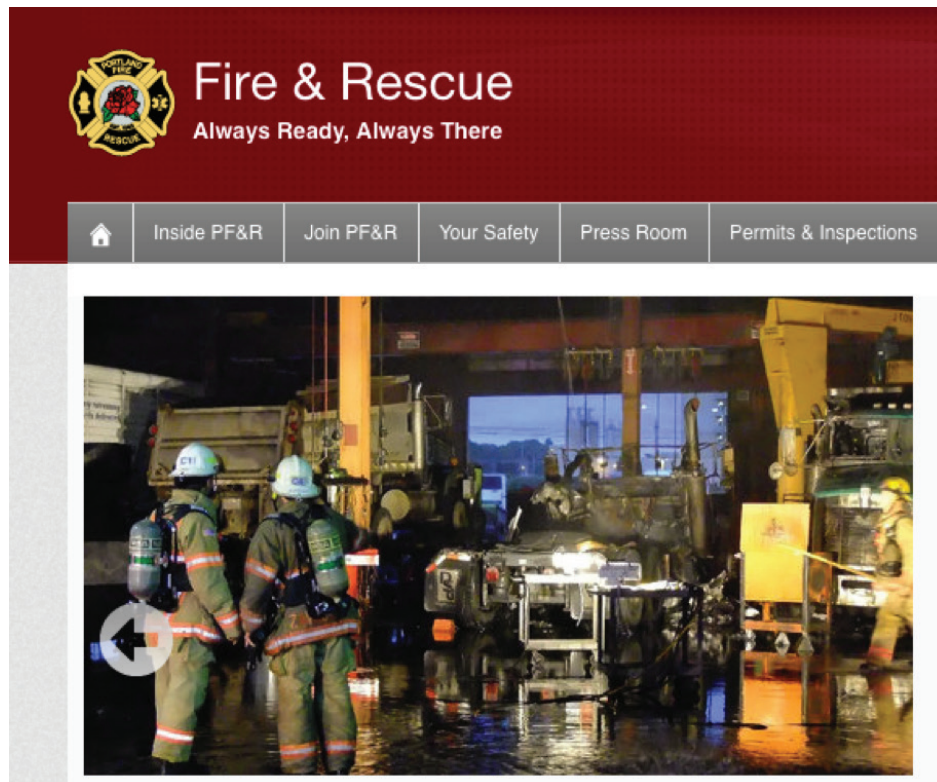
Lessons Learned

While Medford Fire-Rescue has already put these fees into effect, it can still learn from Amazon's communication plan. Medford Fire-Rescue should create a communication plan for future changes that will provide information to its publics (via emails, news releases, Facebook posts, etc.) well in advance about changes occurring in the community before such adjustments go into effect. This open interaction will allow MFR to stay in the good graces of the community, as Amazon did with its customers, through a solid communication plan and offer the public a sense of relief in the form of information.

Portland Fire and Rescue

Overview

Portland Fire and Rescue is made up of 756 employees with an operating budget of around \$90 million. Portland Fire and Rescue provides more than 580,000 citizens in a 150-square-mile area with emergency services. Currently, PF&R has 30 fire stations throughout the city of Portland, 30 engine companies,



9 truck companies, 1 heavy rescue company, and 2 fireboats. PF&R also has several specialty teams that are staffed 24/7 including water, dive, trench, confined space, high angle rope, HazMat, Marine, fire investigation, and SERT rescue teams.

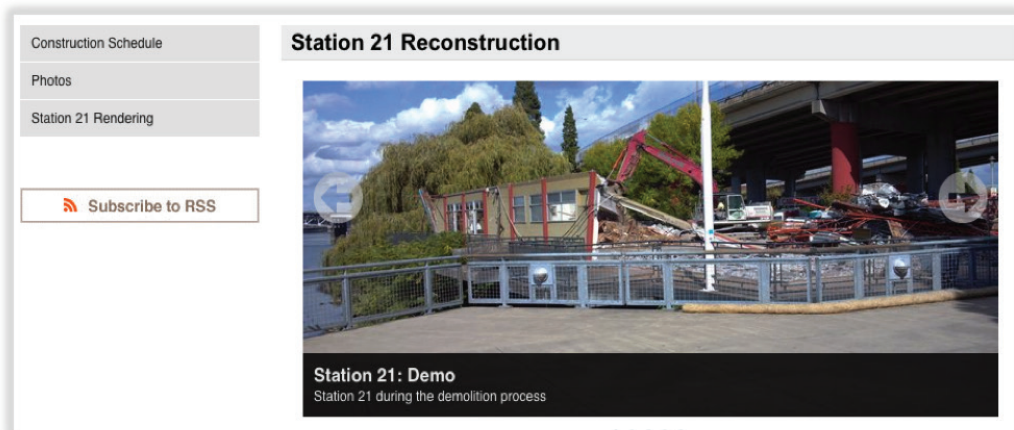
Portland Fire and Rescue's mission is to aggressively and safely protect life, property, and the environment. Their vision is that the community they serve is safe from fires and other emergencies because of our leadership, preparedness, and responsiveness.

There are many ways that PF&R helps in the community. They offer public education and information in many areas. Some of the areas include bike and pedestrian safety, child safety seats, chimney and wood stove safety, fire and burn prevention, high-rise safety, ice and cold-water safety and so much more.

Best Practices

Portland Fire and Rescue is dealing with reconstruction on one of their stations. Station 21 is being remodeled to update many of its features, including the community meeting room, boathouse sheltering for two PF&R water craft, ADA accessibility, LEED Gold Status, photo voltaic solar panels, and public art coordinated by the Regional Arts and Culture Council.

The citizens of Portland, to provide funding for the reconstruction, approved funding for reconstruction in 2010. The public can get updates on the



reconstruction by going to the website. There are multiple pages dedicated to the reconstruction of station 21.

Lessons Learned

While Medford Fire-Rescue has a webpage, Portland Fire and Rescue can serve as a model on how to present certain topics on the web. The project budget and timeline, the virtual rendering and the photos of the process are all important aspects that the public is interested in seeing. Medford Fire-Rescue should highlight all of the actions that they do for the community. That can be done on the website but also through signage in front of all the



stations to inform the public about what firefighters can do for them on a daily basis.



Atlanta Fire Station 19

Overview

The Atlanta Fire Rescue was created on February 2, 1848 when the Atlanta City Council formed a committee to investigate a fire problem in the brand new town. Atlanta's Fire Rescue now has 35 fire stations with over 1,000 employees.

Atlanta Fire Station 19

See the damage

See the plans

DONATE
Donate now!

Donate to Help Renovate and Restore Atlanta's Oldest Fire Station

Fire Station #19 has been serving Virginia Highland since 1925 and has started a fundraising campaign to restore and renovate this landmark of Atlanta's history. They plan to update many of the features of the building that make it so iconic. Fire Station #19 is raising \$500,000 through contributions from the public using souvenir sales, T-shirt sales and open houses.

Best Practices

The fire station has its own website dedicated to the renovation. One can find news stories that cover the renovations, which also include videos and pictures of the current state of the station, but also why these renovations are necessary.

They also have posted the plans for the renovated fire station so visitors to the site can interact. This website is also a great place to find events that are happening at the firehouse: specifically how the firehouse is open every day for visitors and where visitors of the site can buy merchandise.



Fire Station 19 Renovation
1063 N Highland Ave



Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy

Lessons Learned



There are a few things we can take away from Atlanta Fire Station #19 and apply to MFR. It would be useful to post the plans for the Fire-Rescue once they are finalized. Whether that be posting the plans on the website or sending them to the media to be publicized, it's important for the public to feel involved in the process of construction. The Atlanta Fire Rescue teaches us that being completely transparent is important to keep the public perception positive.

Seattle Fire Department

Overview

Founded in 1894, the Seattle Fire Department has provided the residents of Seattle with fire suppression and emergency medical services for many years. Almost 1,000 Seattle Fire employees provide services for the 634,535 citizens of Seattle in a land area of 83.9 square miles. Currently, Seattle Fire has 34 fire stations, 33 engines, 12 ladder trucks, 4 aid units, 7 medic units, 2 air trucks, 4 fireboats, and 2 hose wagons.

Seattle Fire developed a five-year Strategic Plan in 2012, which is used to identify priorities to deliver the best fire, rescue, prevention, and emergency medical services into the future. It is determined to make Seattle the most prepared city in America.

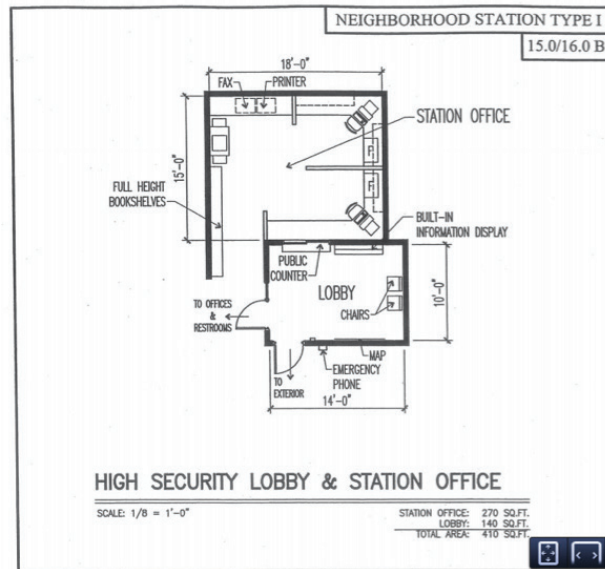
Seattle Fire has a number of public education outreach services that can all be found on its website. The most popular services include preschool programs, Seattle school programs, home fire safety, business fire safety, apartment safety, and a smoke alarm program. People also have the opportunity to sign up for quarterly e-newsletters from the Seattle Fire Department.

Best Practices

In 2003, a Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy was passed by 69 percent of Seattle voters. The program used funding to:

- upgrade and renovate 32 neighborhood fire stations;
- build a new training facility and Fire Alarm Center;

- establish new emergency preparedness facilities and disaster response equipment; and
- build a large fire boat, a small fire boat, and renovate the Chief Seattle fireboat.



The public was informed of all upcoming events on <http://seattle.gov>. Here they could find a page of frequently asked questions and links to all of the press releases sent out before, during, and after construction. The planning documents, status reports, and consultant information were posted on the website as well. There was press coverage at every groundbreaking and grand opening for the new fire stations. Open houses were held for the newly remodeled fire stations where the community was invited to check out their new and completed station.

Lessons Learned

Medford Fire-Rescue has a website, but it lacks some information that would be helpful for the public. A FAQs page would help address any questions or concerns community members may have about the utility fee, the status of the fire stations, and the construction process. Sending out a press release when something significant happens such as groundbreaking, or announcing updates will keep the community informed and make them feel like they are a

part of the entire process. MFR needs to improve their positive relationship with the community by keeping them informed of every step of the reconstruction process and providing them with the documents and reports they need to see where the money is going.

Conclusion

We found that the best practices we encountered had similar approaches: early and consistent communication. We believe these examples will serve Medford Fire-Rescue as resources to refer to while it moves forward into the construction process of the new fire facilities and beyond.

Media Kit

Cover Letter Example

City of Medford Fire-Rescue
200 S Ivy St, Medford, OR 97501
Contact: Justin Bates
Email: justin.bates@cityofmedford.org
Phone: (541) 774-2300

Name
Title
Media Outlet
Email
Phone Number

Date

Dear _____,

Medford Fire-Rescue serves the 90,000 citizens who live within the City of Medford and the Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2 covering 55.77 square miles. The Department consists of five fire stations and a team of 83 dedicated personnel.

Medford Fire-Rescue's goal is to educate the citizens of Medford about everything the Fire-Rescue does for their specific neighborhoods. Firehouse Fridays will highlight all that the firefighters accomplish on any given day.

In this media kit you will find a fact sheet outlining Medford Fire-Rescue's mission and duties; and a news release explaining Firehouse Fridays.

A Firehouse Fridays media spot in the _____ will help raise awareness about Medford Fire-Rescue's accomplishments that the general public is unaware of. These media spots will better inform its public of all of its services.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding Firehouse Fridays.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Bates

News Release

200 S Ivy St, Medford, OR 97501

Contact: Justin Bates

Email: justin.bates@cityofmedford.org

Phone: (541) 774-2300

MEDFORD FIRE-RESCUE UNVEILS 'FIREHOUSE FRIDAYS' TO LOCAL MEDIA

MEDFORD, Ore. -- City of Medford Fire-Rescue will expand its outreach by appealing to local media for bi-monthly media spots highlighting all that the firefighters accomplish on any given day. It will pitch ideas of 'Firehouse Fridays' to media to inform its public of all of its services that they may be unaware of.

Medford Fire-Rescue wants the city to know that they are more than just firefighters that only fight fires. The Department includes firefighters, paramedics, EMT's, inspectors, administration and support staff who all provide full-time fire-fighting, paramedic emergency medical response, hazardous materials response, heavy rescue, and life safety services.

The media spots could potentially include survivor stories, tours of the multiple stations around the city, introductions to local firefighters, firehouse events and feature the renovations of the stations. The goal is to educate the citizens of Medford about all the Fire-Rescue does for their specific neighborhoods.

Medford Fire-Rescue consists of five fire stations and a team of 83 dedicated personnel. The Department serves the 90,000 citizens who live within the City of Medford and the Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2 covering 55.77 square miles.

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Fact Sheet

City of Medford Fire-Rescue

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Mission



Our mission is to provide the highest quality life-saving response, emergency preparation, and prevention to the citizens of the City of Medford and Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2. We take our mission very seriously. Serving, educating, and protecting our citizens is our top priority.

It is our honor to serve the citizens of Medford, Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2 as well as all the visitors to our community. We are dedicated to using the best trained, best equipped and most professional personnel possible to meet our goal of providing a safe community for our citizens and visitors.

Who We Are

Medford Fire-Rescue consists of five fire stations and a team of 83 dedicated personnel.

Who We Serve

Medford Fire-Rescue serves the 90,000 citizens who live within the City of Medford and the Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2 covering 55.77 square miles.

What We Do

- The Firefighters, Paramedics, EMT's, Inspectors, Administration and Support Staff of Medford Fire-Rescue provide professional, full-time fire-fighting, paramedic emergency medical response, hazardous materials response, heavy rescue, and life safety services
- Medford Fire-Rescue specialists and resources regularly provide services through mutual aid agreements to neighboring communities
- In 2013, the Operations division provided advanced life support for cardiac arrest victims resulting in the successful return on pulse in 17 citizens
- Last year the Fire-Rescue trained 642 community citizens on CPR
- Over 246 educational events were held last year, reaching nearly 10,000 adults and children

Reconstruction

- The city's four current fire stations were built back in the 1950s and no longer meet current health and safety Department standards
- Medford City Council unanimously voted to fund the projects for Medford Fire-Rescue by implementing a \$2 fee on residents' utility bill
- All locations will be remodeled and Station 2 moved so that the firefighters can improve response times
- This will create adequate housing and living quarters for firefighters and paramedics as well as, providing expanded space to store several fire engines in their garages

Potential Story Ideas

- Take advantage of 246 events Medford Fire-Rescue held to educate over 10,000 adults and children about fire safety
- Interview past firefighters from 80s and earlier
- Revisit iconic fires in the Medford area



- Fire-Rescue brings in any survivor of heart attack/fire to the station so he/she can meet the firefighter who saved his/her life
- Cover any fires in the area after the fact and interview the firefighters involved
- Interview individual firefighters on the day-to-day tasks he/she accomplishes
- Tour the current and the future fire stations so that the public can see the stations
- Interview firefighters to explore what it takes to become a Medford Fire-Rescue employee

Media List

Radio: Station	Contact Name	Email Address	Phone Number	Title	Preferred Contact Method
KBOY-FM	Casey Baker	cbaker@radiomedford.com	541-779-1550 ext. 342	Program Director	Phone
KRTA-AM	Oscar Bonilla	oscar@opusradio.com	541-772-0322	Program Director	Phone or email
KZZE-FM	Don Hurley	donhurley@bicoastalmedia.com	541-494-4191		
KCNA-FM	Jodie Kramer	jodie@opusradio.com	541-772-0322		
News: Publication	Contact Name	Email Address	Phone Number	Title	Preferred Contact Method
Mail Tribune	Robert Galvin	rgalvin@mailtribune.com	541-776-4462	News Editor	
Upper Rogue Independent	Ralph McKechnie	urindependent@wave.net	541-826-1013		
Mail Tribune	Sanne Specht	sspecht@mailtribune.com	541-776-4497	Community News Reporter	
TV: Station	Contact Name	Email Address	Phone Number	Title	Preferred Contact Method
KTVL-TV	Mike Gantenbein	mgantenbein@sbgnet.com	541-245-5627	Creative Services Director	
KDRV, KOHD, KEZI	Bryan Johnson	bjohnson@kohd.com	541-485-5611 ext. 2020	Creative Services Director	
KOBI-TV	Laryl Noble	lnoble@kobis.com	541-779-5502	Assignment Editor	Email
KSYS, KFTS	Jesseu Riley	jriley@scoptv.org	541-779-0808 ext. 226	Public Service Director	

Social Media Audit

Purpose

This social media audit was conducted to investigate and analyze other fire Department's strengths and weaknesses in running various social media channels and provide recommendations for possible future social media expansion. During our meeting, Medford Fire-Rescue expressed a particular

interest in exploring Facebook and Twitter as two new possible modes of communication. In this audit, we will research these channels, as well as identify helpful social media dos and don'ts for Medford Fire-Rescue to review prior to the implementation of a new social media platform.

Method

Since Medford Fire-Rescue currently does not have any running social media channels, our team compared and analyzed the communication techniques of other fire-rescues from around the country. To condense our search for the social media audit, we measured the level of interaction on the organization's social media sites over the span of four months, from January 25 - May 25, 2014.

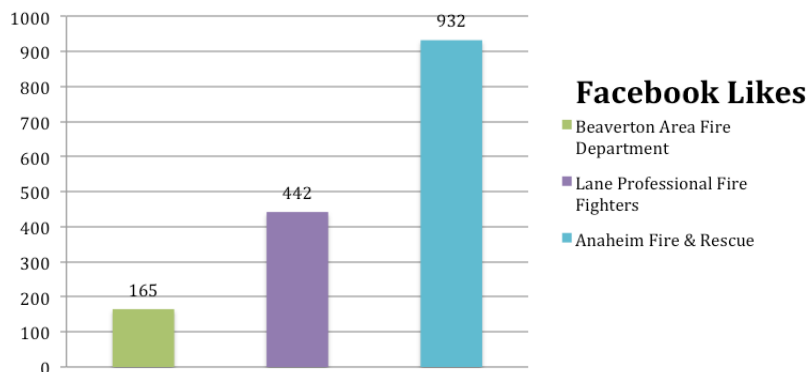
We defined Facebook interactions by the number of likes, shares and comments received. To analyze Twitter interactions, we calculated the number of followers, retweets and tweets to measure the organization's overall interaction with the public.

Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004, and has since skyrocketed to become the top social networking service in the world. With roughly 1,310,000,000 active Facebook users, Medford Fire-Rescue should seriously consider launching a Facebook page as its first social media channel to gain a larger number of followers and gauge the channel's effectiveness prior to the implementation of any other form of social media (Statistic Brain).

For this social media audit, our team chose to analyze Lane Professional Fire Fighters, Beaverton, MI Fire Department, and Anaheim, CA Fire & Rescue. All of these organizations have a different style when running their Facebook page; however, some styles are distinctly more effective than others.

One of the easiest ways to tell how well an organization is using its social media is to view how many people "like" or subscribe to them on Facebook. The graph on the following page is a visual comparison of how many users follows each fire station on their Facebook page.



Universal Logo

In Figure 1, a screenshot of Anaheim Fire & Rescue's Facebook page, we can see that the profile picture contains an easily identifiable logo. Anaheim Fire & Rescue's logo has also been displayed across all forms of its social media (as you can see in Figure 2, a screenshot of Anaheim's Twitter page). This visual practice is key when trying to gain followers on social media, so that visitors know when he or she is on the correct page for the organization



Figure 1: Anaheim Fire & Rescue Facebook page

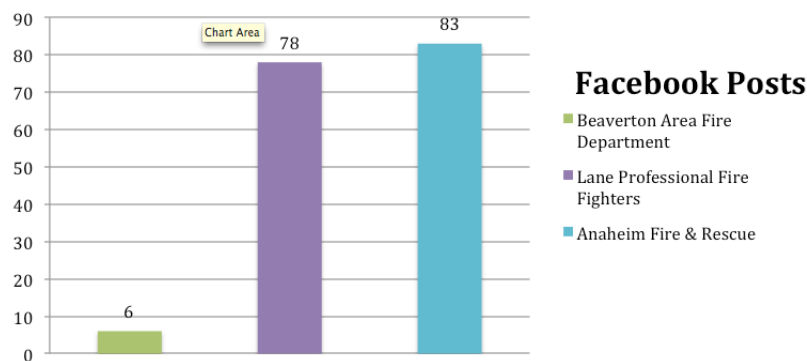


Figure 2: Anaheim Fire & Rescue Twitter page

Consistent Content

Consistency is key to staying engaged. Anytime an organization launches a new social media platform, it must be prepared to maintain and update content on the page frequently. Both Anaheim Fire & Rescue and Lane Professional Fire Fighters do a good job of this. As you can see in the graph below, Anaheim Fire & Rescue and Lane Professional Fire Fighters have posted consistent content on their Facebook wall over the past four months.

The Beaverton Area Fire Department, however, has posted only six times since January and only 10 times in total since the creation of their page in February 2012. Posts can be defined as an addition of a status, photo, video, or link to the Facebook wall. While the main goal of having a social media site is to keep the public engaged with what is happening in an organization, you also do not want to overwhelm visitors by spamming their notifications with a wave of multiple posts at a time. Our suggestion to avoid this issue is to post once or twice a week with meaningful updates on what is happening in Medford Fire-Rescue.



Meaningful Content

Much like consistent content, Facebook posts should include information that is both relevant to the work that Medford Fire-Rescue does as well as meaningful to its audience to keep them interested in what Medford Fire-Rescue does to gain more viewers. Below are a few sample screenshots of recent examples that posted relevant and meaningful content that received a great response. The first, Figure 3, is from the Lane Professional Fire Fighters in celebration of EMS Appreciation Week, which received 9 likes. Another easy way to connect with the public is to think about messages they want to see. In Figure 4, for example, Anaheim Fire & Rescue posted a video on May 11th of this year wishing all the moms in the city a happy mother's day from all of the fire fighters at the station, receiving 15 likes on Facebook.



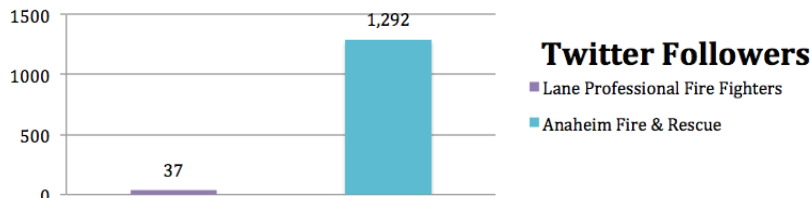
Figure 3: Lane Professional Fire Fighters Facebook post



Figure 4: Anaheim Fire & Rescue Facebook post

Twitter

Twitter is another online social networking and microblogging service that is characterized by enabling users to send and receive 140-character messages, called “tweets.” The graph below highlights the number of followers the Lane Professional Fire Fighters has in comparison to Anaheim Fire & Rescue. The Beaverton Area Fire Department does not have a Twitter account.



Shorten URLs

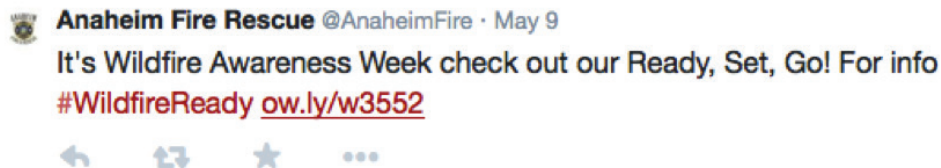


Figure 5: Anaheim Fire Rescue post utilizing a shortened URL

Eliminate Unnecessary Tweets

Sometimes Twitter will automatically sync with other forms of social media that an organization uses. This can result in unnecessary tweets being sent out automatically. For example, if you add a photo to your Facebook account, your Twitter account will automatically send out a tweet to your followers letting them know of new updates you've made to your page. As you can see in Figure 6, adding multiple new photos to a Facebook account can quickly overload a Twitter account. To avoid this issue, turn off the Facebook connection in the Twitter account settings.



Figure 6: Facebook notifications overload the Lane Fire Fighters' Twitter account

Utilizing Hashtags

Hashtags categorize your tweets so they are in a more specific conversation and easy to find when searching on Twitter. If Medford Fire-Rescue were to launch a Twitter account, it would be helpful for followers if it attached some sort of hashtag to its posts, such as #MFR.

Links and Accessibility

Linking all media platforms together will help increase the number of social media fans as well as enhance the quality of conversation about the organization, since online users like to be able to access all information about an organization from one location. As you can see in Figure 7, by adding links to an organization's corresponding social media platforms, users don't have to search through pages of unrelated websites themselves and are more satisfied with their online experience with your organization as a result.

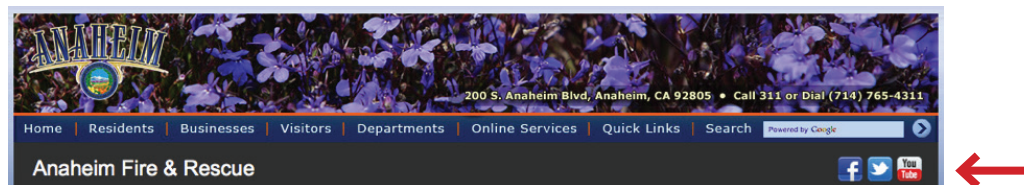


Figure 7: Anaheim's Fire & Rescue website includes links to their socialmedia platforms

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video content. This could be another helpful addition to Medford Fire-Rescue that users can view real footage of their hometown fire fighters at work, play or even on the news. This social media channel simply provides a location for all of these video records to be stored for the Department in one place, as well as viewed and admired by active members in the community.



Figure 8

Recommendations

There is a lot of opportunity for Medford Fire-Rescue to improve their communication with the public through the use of social media.

We recommend that if MFR should choose to implement a new social media channel that they follow this content checklist before posting. Is the content:

1. Findable

i. Can the user find the content easily?

1. Links to related content
2. At least 2 hashtags
3. Tags for images or videos

2. Understandable

i. Can the user understand the content?

1. Respect for audience reading level
2. Articulate old ideas in a new way
3. Use bullet points or numbered lists

3. Actionable

i. Will the user want to take action?

1. A place to comment
2. Links related to content
3. A direct summary of what to do

4. Shareable

i. Will the user share the content?

1. Provide a reason to share
2. Ask to share
3. Don't be afraid to respond if users want to comment. Stay engaged and talk back!

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- "Lane Professional Fire Fighters IAFF-851." Lane Professional Fire Fighters IAFF-851. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 May 2014. <http://www.iaff851.org/>
- Facebook accounts:
<https://www.facebook.com/iaff851?ref=hl>
<https://www.facebook.com/AnaheimFireRescue>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Beaverton-Area-Fire-Department/105419546248723>

Twitter accounts:

<https://twitter.com/AnaheimFire>

<https://twitter.com/IAFF851>

You Tube account

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0XF7prkR7E&list=PLB6D08D5E440937CB>

Appendix A: Medford Police and Fire-Rescue's SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Currently hold a strong relationship with Medford community
- Quick emergency response time for both police and Fire-Rescues
- Fire-Rescue has a good Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating
- Active on social media

Opportunities:

- Placing fire trucks and firefighters where they are needed, rather than based on fire station constraints
- Faster response times for fire and police department to emergencies
- Police could have separation between victims and criminals
- Have fire stations be up to fire codes
- Have buildings be more sustainable in the event of a natural disaster
- Could employ more with more space
- Keep both fire and police employees safe
- Reach a better ISO rating, which would reduce fire station insurance costs

Weaknesses:

- Voters upset they did not have a vote
- Fire stations are not up to fire code
- Witnesses, victims, and employees do not feel safe at the police station
- Current fire building layout is not optimal for quick response
- Transporting criminals through the police station is not efficient or safe
- Fire truck exhaust destructive to the employees and clothing inside fire station

Threats:

- Tax increases occurring
- The average voter lumps fees and taxes by the government together, so when they go up people get mad
- Chance a citizen could bring up a referendum vote
- With enough signatures the citizens could have the fee overturned

Appendix B: Qualtrics Survey

Link: https://s.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3yjeDGcs1zLPmU5&Preview=Survey&BrandID=qtrial

Q1 Are you a Medford resident?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q2 Please rank how often you use the following to get news

- _____ Television (1)
- _____ News websites (2)
- _____ Facebook (3)
- _____ Twitter (4)
- _____ Newspaper (5)

Q3 How would you rate the current physical condition of the Medford facilities?
(0 being extremely poor condition and 100 being perfect condition)

- _____ Medford Police buildings (1)
- _____ Medford Fire buildings (2)

Q4 If you are a Medford resident, are you aware of the new charge you will pay to fund the reconstruction of the Medford fire stations and police stations?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Somewhat (3)
- Not applicable (4)

Q5 If you said yes for the previous question, where did you hear about the surcharge? (open-ended question)

Q6 Would you say you understand the difference between a tax and utility fee?

- Yes (1)

Somewhat (2)

No (3)

Q7 Please explain the difference between a tax and utility fee to the best of your ability. (open-ended question)

Q8 Would you recognize the Chief of the Medford Police Department if you saw him on TV?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Not sure (3)

Q9 Would you recognize the Chief of Medford Fire-Rescue if you saw him on TV?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Not sure (3)

Q10 How would you rate your experience with the following Medford departments? (0 being very negative and 100 being very positive)

_____ Medford Police Department (1)

_____ Medford Fire-Rescue (2)

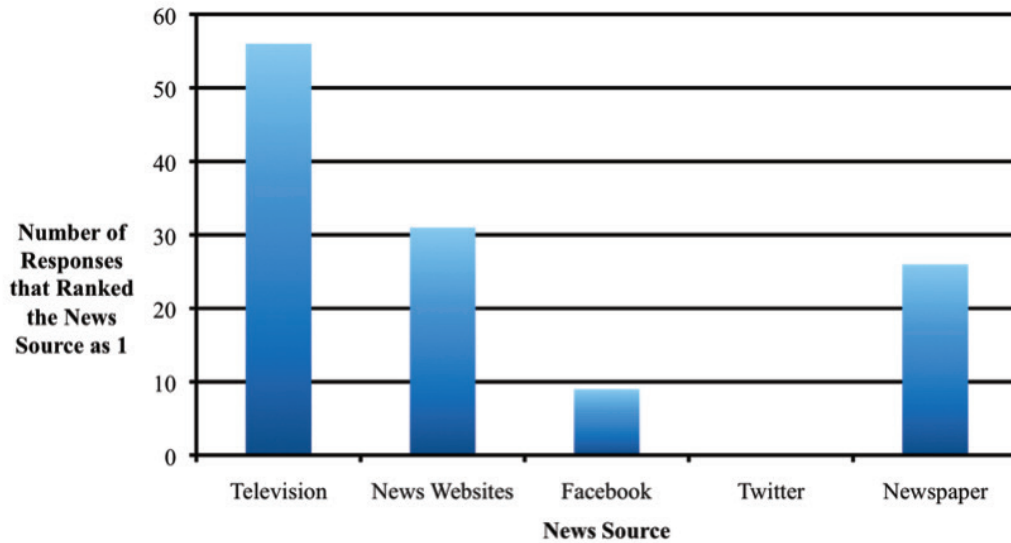
Q11 If you rated 5 or below for either department in the previous question, please explain your reasoning. (open-ended question)

Q12 In at least one sentence, describe how the Medford Police Department could improve its communication. For example, how would you like to receive news updates from the police department? (open-ended question)

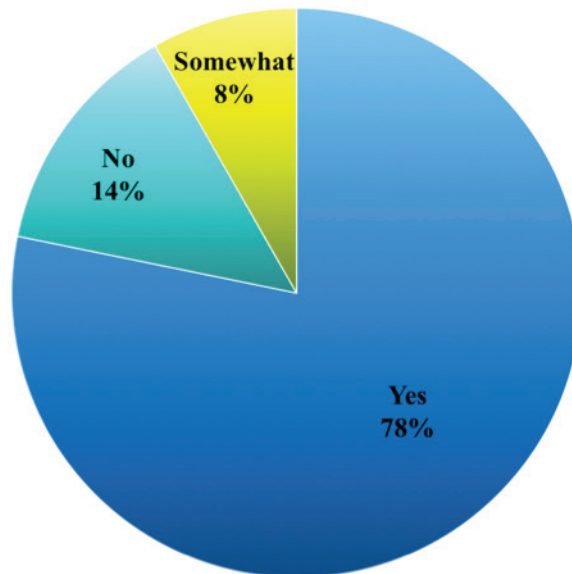
Q13 In at least one sentence, describe how Medford Fire-Rescue could improve its communication. For example, how would you like to receive news updates from the Fire-Rescue? (open-ended question)

Appendix C: Survey Results

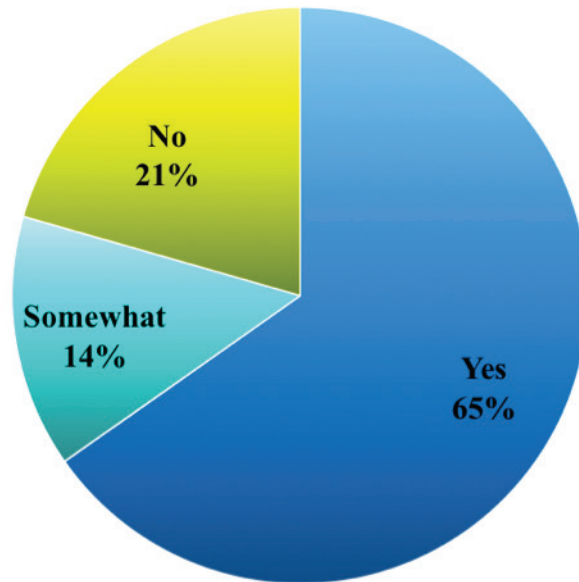
Please rank how often you use the following to get news.



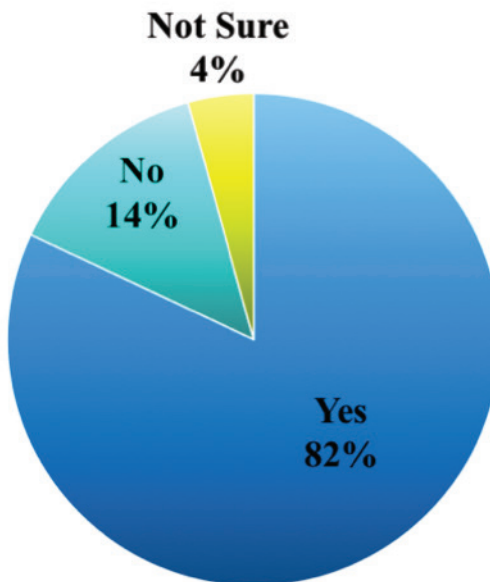
If you are a Medford resident, are you aware of the new charge you will pay to fund the reconstruction of the Medford fire stations and police stations?



Would you say you understand the difference between a tax and utility fee?



Would you recognize the Chief of the Medford Police Department if you saw him on TV?



Would you recognize the Chief of Medford Fire-Rescue if you saw him on TV?

