

PUBLICIZING YOUR EVENT

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacting individuals directly and inviting them to participate in your event is effective because it is personal, but you should also consider networking with other organizations to further the reach of the personal touch. Ask the members of your group/volunteers to contact other organizations they belong to or that they believe will be interested. Among friends and associates, it is easy to place a phone call with a friendly reminder as the event approaches.

FLYERS

In addition to mailing invitations to everyone involved in your particular organization, you should also consider creating a publicity flyer. A flyer is usually a single 8 1/2 x 11" sheet of paper which contains all of the pertinent information related to your event. It tells WHAT the event is, WHEN and WHERE it will take place, and so on. The flyer usually contains some illustrations related to your event and is printed on colorful paper to attract attention. This kind of basic advertising tool can be mass produced on any standard copy machine.

Develop a strategy for distributing your flyers that will give your event the best exposure. Flyers can be displayed in public places, in businesses, at schools, in libraries, and churches. Be sure to ask for permission to display your flyer and select locations that may be frequented by your potential audience. Share the job of distribution among other people in your organization. Give each member/volunteer a certain number of flyers and have them distribute the flyers personally to locations, organizations, and individual persons that they believe will be interested.

You must include on your flyer a statement crediting the Mississippi Humanities Council as a sponsor for your event. **THIS IS REQUIRED ON ALL PUBLICITY.**

PRESS RELEASES

A press release is a formalized announcement about your event which is sent to your local newspapers, TV, and radio stations. The press release has a title or headline and is usually composed of several short paragraphs. The paragraphs should be organized in the order of most important at the top to least important towards the end. The press release should be printed on letterhead, if possible.

Tips for Writing a Press Release:

- X Be factual. Make it newsworthy. Pinpoint what people need to know and write the press release from the perspective of the readers' benefits.
- X Create a headline that gets to the point and conveys immediately why your news is important.
- X Write a strong leading paragraph for your press release. Answer WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW. Write this paragraph as an abstract or summary for the press release.
- X Give details of the event so the editor understands why it's important to his/her readers. Any background information, quotes of note, and comparisons which illustrate the importance of your event should be included here.
- X Include any information about your organization that will help establish your expertise. Also mention your location, years of existence, etc., but keep it brief and to the point.
- X Include complete contact information: Contact person, organization name, full address, phone number, email address. The contact name should be someone who's available and capable of answering questions.
- X Keep it short. Maximum length should be one to two pages and no more than 500 words (some experts say no more than 300 words for a press release).
- X Include a statement which credits the Mississippi Humanities Council as a sponsor for your event. **THIS IS REQUIRED ON ALL PUBLICITY.**

Tips for Sending a Press Release:

- X Contact your local newspapers, TV and radio stations to find out how they prefer to receive a press release. Is it by U.S. mail, email or FAX? To whom should it be addressed?
- X Know the editor's deadlines. Don't expect an editor to cover your event if you contact him the week before it is scheduled. Find out when you should send your press release for the best timing.