



NORTHERN LIGHTS COUNCIL NO. 429  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

301 SOUTH 7TH STREET, FARGO, ND 58103  
701/293-5011 Fax 701/293-8653

With offices also at 1701 Cherry St.  
Grand Forks, ND 58201  
Phone • 701-775-3189  
Fax • 701-775-0862

615 S. Broadway, Suite L7  
Minot, ND 58701  
Phone • 701-839-2280  
Fax • 701-839-3053

1720 Burnt Boat Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58503  
Phone • 701-223-7204  
Fax • 701-223-7205

October 27, 2004

Dear Unit Leader:

Positive publicity in the local media is one of the best ways to spread the word of Scouting and recognize Scouting Units, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturers, Explorers, volunteer leaders, donors and chartered partners for their achievements and good works. People naturally respond to recognition in a positive way. The more you recognize people and tell Scouting's story to your local public, the better will be the response to Scouting in your community.

Enclosed are materials to support your unit in promoting Scouting. Use these items to generate excitement and enthusiasm about Scouting in your community.

Thank you for all you do for Scouting. If you need additional information, please contact the Scout office nearest you.

Sincerely,

Connie J. Koehmstedt  
Marketing and Development Director

Enclosure

P.S. Don't forget to share your Scouting stories . . . clip and send your newspaper stories to the Council office in Fargo. **Plus, we** can always use photographs.



# Telling Scouting's Positive Story

through the local Media

- **Let the community know what Scouts are doing**
- **Generate new members**
- **Retain current members**
- **Recognize achievements**

**Inside this Booklet:**

- How to write News Releases
- How to send photos
- Sample News Releases/Letter to Editor
- Media Contact List



## Telling Scouting's Positive Story

*Scouting in the News*

### Why?

#### **Promote Goodwill**

Promoting your unit to the public can help recruit new members, retain current members and promote the positive message of Scouting in your community. As a volunteer organization, the Northern Lights Council relies on the goodwill and support of the community. By keeping the name and mission of Scouting out in front of the people, they are most likely to lend support for your activities in the community.

#### **Reinforce the Northern Lights Council Image**

Every favorable news story about Scouting reinforces the council's image as a positive force in the lives of young people. Any negative publicity works against the image we want.

#### **Promote Specific Events**

A fundraising event like a pancake and sausage breakfast will likely be better attended with a brief notice in the newspaper.

#### **Recognition**

Boys gain recognition for their achievements when they receive awards before their peers. You can spread that recognition throughout the community. There's nothing better for a kid than to hear an adult say, "I saw your picture in the paper," or "Congratulations on getting the Webelos badge." Whenever possible, recognize adult leaders and your charter organization as well.

**Start with a Plan**

- Identify all obvious publicity opportunities.
  - Advancements
  - Events (fundraisers, School Night for Scouting, Pinewood Derby, popcorn sales)
  - Activities (service projects, conservation efforts, Eagle projects)
- Identify a potential media contact at newspapers, radio stations, television stations, cable public access stations, and magazines.
- Prepare a Media Kit. Be sure to include the following pieces of information.
  - Cover letter
  - Facts and figures about your unit
  - Clips of past publicity
  - Leader biographies and contact information
  - Council/district national literature
  - Specific news item(s)

**Developing Relationships with the Media**

Get to know your local media representatives. Call the editors and tell them who you are, that you will be sending them information about your unit and that you will be in touch with an occasional story idea or news release. Follow up after you have sent something to make sure it got to the right place and to answer any questions.

The ideal situation to develop from this relationship is that you and your unit will become the source that reporters call for information and comments on all youth development stories. Let them know that you are knowledgeable.

**Where to send your news**

- Daily newspapers
  - Weekly newspapers
  - Church newsletter/bulletin
  - Community newsletter
  - School newspaper
  - School newsletter
  - Local magazine
  - Company/business newsletter
  - Community web site
  - School or church web site
  - Regional church publication
  - Broadcast community calendars
- Weekly newspapers may provide the most in-depth coverage for events and activities. School newspapers are good vehicles for drawing attention to student achievements. Company/business newsletters are oftentimes interested in employee/volunteer achievements. Broadcast community calendars are willing to announce upcoming events.

## Writing Your Story

Much of the information you might send to a newspaper or radio station will be in the form of a news release. These general rules and tips all have one goal: To make it as easy as possible for an editor to use your story. Give them a head start and they are halfway there!

- Keep it simple. Short, concise sentences. Simple words. Avoid the use of clichés, jargon and fancy phrases.
- Provide the details that are needed and little more. No preaching or editorializing or excessive praise for a specific person. Don't use flowing tributes, flowery descriptions or overly complicated sentences. Present facts, not opinions.
- Opinions should be presented in quotes. Quotes add life to any story and should be used whenever possible. Make sure they are attributed.
- Type your news release double-spaced on one side of an 8.5 x 11 page of white paper. If your story continues on a second page, place the word **-more-** at the bottom to indicate that more follows. Number subsequent pages. Type ##### to indicate the end of the release.
- NEVER submit a handwritten news release. The harder it is for the editor or reporter to use your information, the less likely it is to get used.
- E-mail your news release *if* the media have a specific person or address. Don't just send news releases to the Editor. Follow up with a phone call to answer any questions.
- Include contact information (name, phone number and email address) in case the reporter needs to contact you to ask a question.
- Write NEWS RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE (DATE) at the top of the release.
- If fax news releases are accepted, include a cover sheet directing it to a specific person.
- Check for correct spelling of names. Use spell check and read carefully.
- Use first and last name on first reference, then just last name after that. Example: Scoutmaster Tom Jones when he is first mentioned, then Jones thereafter. Always identify who an individual is and their position in the unit.
- If including a photograph with your release, make sure it will capture the interest of the reader. Every photograph should include a complete and correct caption that identifies each person and the action in the photograph.
- A news release should communicate key information the who, what, when, where, and how of an event or issue to reporters and editors in the news media.
- Sample news releases are included in this packet for your convenience.

## The Basics

All news releases begin with a lead designated to attract the reader's attention and encourage them to read the entire story. This is the most important part of a news story. It must be clear, concise and answer the following questions:

**Who** did it?  
**What** did they do?  
**When** did they do it?  
**Where** did they do it?  
**Why** did they do it?  
**How** did they do it?

First impressions are key! If a lead is dull and uninteresting, the reader will assume the same of the release.

**Flat:** The Cub Scouts from Pack 528 in Bottineau will be selling popcorn at Pamida on Saturday.

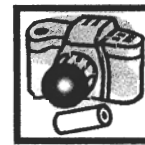
**Interesting:** Delicious Trails End popcorn will be on sale at Pamida from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Boys from Cub Scout Pack 528, Bottineau, will be conducting the annual sale to raise funds for the coming year of Scouting.

The main body of the news release should include significant details that relate to the lead, including quotations and succinct descriptions. Any related but nonessential information should appear toward the end of the release. Generally, the last paragraph provides overall information and statistics. In your stories, you might provide general information about your Unit (Pack, Troop, Crew), and the adult's name and phone number for those who would like more information.

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

A photograph accompanying your story adds an interesting and eye-catching appeal to the article. Use the following tips to help you take photographs, write captions, and satisfy your news outlet's needs:

- Each photo should have one main subject. Close-ups are better than wide panoramic shots. Look at the photos in newspapers, and ask your media contact about the types of photos the newspaper wants.
- People want to see pictures of Scouts in action! Avoid, if at all possible, shots of Scouts just standing around.
- A photo caption should fully explain the complete story. Include the who, what, when, where, why, and how, identify as many people in the photograph as possible. Check to ensure that names are spelled correctly.
- Be sensitive to Scouts, leaders and others who do not wish to be photographed.
- If you want your photo returned, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



# **SAMPLE - Notice to Media**

- **Media Notice**                      **Boy Scout Troop 1234**
- **Photo Opportunity**              **Your Hometown, State**

Contact:

Name  
Scout Position  
Daytime phone #  
Mobile phone #  
E-mail

## **Boy Scouts to Help Elderly Attend Church**

**Who:** Boy Scouts Troop 1234 from Hometown

**Why:** Many shut-ins and elderly want to attend church but are unable to do so because of physical limitations and the need for assistance. Four times a year a special service is held for the elderly and shut-ins in the community.

**How:** St. Mary's Church in Hometown will provide transportation for those who need assistance to attend church. Boy Scouts from Troop 1234 will assist by helping unload vehicles and walking participants or pushing wheelchairs for those in need. The Scouts will help serve refreshments after the service then help load vehicles for their return home.

**When:** **Sunday, May 16, 2004**  
11:00 a.m.

**Where:** **St. Mary's Church**  
123 Main Street  
Hometown, State

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**SAMPLE - News Release****For Immediate Release**Contact:

Joe Scoutmaster  
Daytime phone #  
Mobile phone #  
E-mail

**Local Scout Named National Eagle Scout Association  
Scholarship Recipient**

(Hometown, ND, December 3, 2004)-Joe Scout, a 2003 Hometown High School graduate and Eagle Scout was recently named a 2003 National Eagle Scout Association Scholarship Recipient. Joe Scout will receive \$3,000 to apply towards his college tuition. Scout, 19, is a freshman at the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks, where he is studying actuarial science. Scout enjoys playing tennis and golfing, and he is actively involved in campus ministry programs such as BASIC (Brothers and Sisters in Christ).

Scout first joined Scouts as a Tiger Cub and he worked his way up the ranks to Eagle Scout. The fact that a young man is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well maintained over the years. Scout's Eagle Scout project benefited the Hometown Church in Hometown, ND where he is a member. Scout repaired chairs and tables, and cleaned gutters to help the church prepare for a new ministry center.

Joe's parents are Patty and Bill Scout of Hometown, ND. Both Patty and Bill are also active in Scouts. Bill serves as Scoutmaster for Troop #1234 and Patty is Cubmaster for Pack #1234. Scout has one younger brother also involved in Scouts. He is the Patrol Leader for Troop #1234.

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**SAMPLE - News Release****For Immediate Release**

Contact:  
Joe Cubmaster  
Daytime phone #  
Mobile #  
E mail

**Cub Scouts Participate in End of Summer Campout**

More than 100 Cub Scouts and their families from Home Pack 1234 gathered last weekend for two days of fun-filled camping at Hometown Camp for their traditional end-of-summer campout.

Cub Scouts, leaders and parents pitched their tents and braved plummeting temperatures to participate in the last camping rite of the summer. Activities started with a cookout dinner Friday night and ended with parents and leaders cooking breakfast on Sunday morning before breaking camp.

During the day, Cub Scouts and their parents had the opportunity to participate in a series of events that included team games, Frisbee golf, nature hikes, archery, and building a birdhouse. Other campout activities included an outdoor obstacle course, timed knot-tying competition and mother/son fishing derby. Awards for the top three Cub Scouts and their mothers were presented at the Sunday breakfast. Winners included Mark and Sherri Webelos (first place), Joe and Patty Scout (second place) and Ryan and Linda Venturer (third place).

“Sitting around the campfire and roasting marshmallows with the other Scouts and my family was great,” said Cub Scout Brad Webelos, age 8. “But the best part of the campout was winning the fishing derby with my mom. She’s the best!”

The Boy Scouts of America’s Cub Scouting program is for boys who are in the first through fifth grade. They participate in family-centered activities, group activities, learning, and having fun. If you would like more information on Cub Scout Pack 1234, contact Joe Cubmaster at 701-123-4567 or visit our web site at [www.pack1234.org](http://www.pack1234.org).

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# **SAMPLE - News Release**

## **For Immediate Release**

Contact:  
Joe Advisor  
Daytime phone #  
Mobile #  
E-mail

### **Local Youth Group Elects 2004 Officers**

Members of Venture Crew 1234, Chartered by Hometown Club in Hometown elected their 2004 officers at their annual meeting on May 14, 2004.

Peggy Sue, a senior at Hometown High School will serve as president. Working closely with her will be Vice-President John Johnson, a junior at Hometown High School. Officers include Secretary Sara Smith, a sophomore at Hometown High School and Treasurer Mark Matthews, also a sophomore at Hometown High School.

Venturing is a program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) through 20 years of age. Crew 1234 is part of the Northern Lights Council, Boy Scouts of America. Scuba diving, snow boarding and climbing are just some of the many exciting activities members participate in. During previous summers, Crew members have traveled to Canada, Florida and New Mexico.

Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults as they participate in exciting and meaningful activities.

For further information or to join this unique group, call the Advisor, Connie Cooper at 701-765-4321 or check out their web site at [www.crew1234.org](http://www.crew1234.org).

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# **SAMPLE - Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

When you ask a Scout what he likes about Scouting, he probably answers. "It's fun!" What he doesn't realize is that along with the fun are training and activities that help him develop desirable qualities like character, citizenship and fitness. That's what Scouting is all about.

Scouting's founders began a tradition of service by establishing the slogan "Do a Good Turn Daily." A Good Turn is anything a Scout does to help someone in need without expecting anything in return. Rank advancement requires Scouts to complete a number of service projects and recognize their responsibility to their community. Scouts realize that service is not a one-time job. It is an ongoing duty.

For 94 years, Scouting has made a real impact on the lives of young people. No other youth development organization has the support of more than 4.5 million members who understand the value of connecting youth with communities and families.

Scouting is an educational program that teaches youth about building character, faith traditions, mentoring, serving others, healthy living, and lifelong learning. The community organizations that use the Scouting program and the Northern Lights Council do their share to see that young people receive the benefits of the program.

Scouting is still needed today; its educational program is essential for our youth---the faces of the future.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Your Town