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Don Smith is the executive director of the West Virginia Press Association. A 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry, he served as reporter, news editor, managing editor, advertising director and publisher. Smith has also served on numerous boards and committees for non-profits and other entities.



“Talking Dirty with the Public”

Presented at 10th Annual Brownfields Conference
Morgantown, W.Va. Sept. 15, 2015

Moderator: Jake Lynch, WV Community Development Hub

Engaging with the public and press is an important part of a successful redevelopment strategy. This session will illustrate how traditional and social media can be engaged to tell the story of your project and “sell” it to the broader community. Experts in economic development, downtown revitalization, and the media share tips on how to best highlight your project so your success makes headlines for all the right reasons.

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“Effective Communications and Media Relations”

With any organization, results are the key when analyzing your performance in terms of effective communications and media relations, according to Don Smith, executive director of the West Virginia Press Association.

“Sharing your message is always communicating, but are you effective? Effective communication really isn’t about the information you send out, it’s about the return your communication generates,” Smith said. “Too often, despite what you see as your best efforts, not enough media attend your events, your suggestions for great feature stories aren’t used, and your releases and articles don’t get published or shared.”

Has anyone experienced any of those issues? Of course.

While you can’t control all of those issues, your methods and preparation can improve your results.

Continued



At the West Virginia Press Association, we work with our newspapers and all the media covering events around West Virginia. The news editors at the newspaper, television station and radio station make the final coverage decisions, but the WVPA works to provide more of the positive stories about West Virginia and our communities.

We work to assist groups and organizations in dealing with the media.

In the case of the Brownfields Conference, our goal is to help you build a bridge that improves your access to the media.

Here's today's question: Can you be more successful getting your information and press releases used by the newspapers and media around the state?

Short answer: Yes.

Longer answer: In today's busy, short-staffed newsrooms, hundreds of press releases arrive daily by email, print and fax. How you present the information is just as important as the message.

In preparing this presentation, two members of the WVPA staff asked, "How can you say 'effective communication really isn't about the information you send out?' Effective communication is all about what you send out and how you present it!!!"

They questioned the statement, but my point was this: The greatest press release in the world is no better than scribbled notes on a bar napkin if it's not used by media. On the other hand, if giving the editor a scribbled note on a bar napkin at tonight's reception results in a follow-up call and a full-page feature on your project, that was effective communication.

As I said, "It's about the return your communication generates."

I've been asked to offer some quick tips that could improve your success rate with the media.

I have less than 15 minutes to talk today, so I can only touch on a few key issues. Normally, this would be several hours or our staff would work with you on the services. West Virginia Press has sharing networks, association membership benefit packages, press release services, advertising services and staff that works with clients on a regular basis. You can see more at wvpress.org.

I would be interested to hear your thoughts, but we're finding the need for media assistance is increasing and achieving success in your jobs is getting more difficult.

So here are some tips from our cheat sheet:

Remember: Editorial staffs work for the reader. Information they use must have reader interest and benefit. While there are several sections of the newspaper (and this applies to television, radio and social media) — events and business pages and briefs — that feature news about your company or your event, for the most part, news editors look for reader interest.

It's still always about the "Who, What, When, Where and Why" but success comes from properly defining the terms in relationship to your role as a communications person and modern news operations.

No. 1: Who is about remembering your target audience:

While you will always need to get the approval of the executive director and/or board of directors, don't confuse who signs your check with your target audience. You want the media to use your press release and the general public to read your press release. Both the media and the public care most about the "what."

To improve your odds of success, focus on the benefit of the information.

Example:

Good — Homeowners could save more than 25 percent on housing renovations by applying for West Virginia's new "Fix It Now!" housing program.

Continued

Bad — The West Virginia Example Organization announced today it has opened the application period for the WVEO’s “Fix It Now” initiative.

You certainly want to mention your organization but wait until the second or even third paragraph:

State homeowners could find as much as 25 percent savings on housing renovations by applying for West Virginia’s new “Fix It Now!” housing program.

The new housing renovation initiative, which includes more than \$1 million in grants, is open to all West Virginia homeowners and specifically targets low-income areas, according to West Virginia Example Organization.

“We hope homeowners will ‘Fix It Now,’” said Don Smith, executive director of the WVEO, during a press conference Tuesday at the Charleston Civic Center. Federal and state officials gathered at the Civic Center for the announcement.

No. 2: What is about the benefit, not the activity:

As noted in No. 1, your target audiences are the media and the general public. Both care most about the benefit. If you’re having a ribbon cutting for the cancer treatment center, the “what” is the cancer center, not the ribbon cutting.

Example:

Good — Thousands of Charleston residents will have easier access to chemo and other life-saving cancer treatments once the doors officially open today at the new \$100 million Example Cancer Center.

Bad — Federal, state and city officials are expected to join with cancer patients today at the Example Cancer Center for a ribbon-cutting to open the new \$100 million facility at Example City Hospital.

No. 3: When is about the date you distribute the release, not about the date of the event. Let the media know well in advance of events and send the press release and photos early. Emailing or calling the day before or the day of an event definitely hurts your chances of good coverage.

No. 4: Why is about the local importance of the news. It’s always about why the locals think there is an important benefit. It’s nice to quote your executive director, but the media and public would rather read what a local resident, patient or official has to say. If you’re making an announcement and only have quotes and comments from your staff and board, you have failed to prove the local importance.

No. 5: Where is about the market you’re trying to reach. The bigger the market, the bigger the effort needed. Learn about the media outlets in the market you’re targeting. How many are there? Newspaper, radio and TV? If the announcement is of local interest with very limited media, you can call or even make a personal visit to distribute the information in advance. For a larger region, you need an organized effort and more time. Always reach out personally to the media most important to your success — local newspapers, radio and possibly TV — but do include regional and statewide media for major announcements. You should know telephone numbers, email addresses, Twitter accounts, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, etc. Take advantage of all free media postings. Many television, radio and newspapers offer free posting services.

If you struggle with having enough time or keeping up with the changes, professional services such as the West Virginia Press Association can help distribute your information or handle your advertising. The WVPA is newspaper industry-

Continued



funded and operates a news-sharing network and advertising placement service. With one call or email, you can get your release distributed to all media or have your advertising placed in one newspaper or in newspapers across the state and nation.

Tip: **For the media: It's news once, afterward, it's advertising.** There always needs to be a marketing/advertising budget. It might be small, but it should exist. If, as communications director, you are asked to do all of the publicity, without the benefit of any marketing/advertising budget, you will soon lose your credibility and newsroom connections. The media will help your organization promote its event or activities, but all organizations and groups need help with promotion and marketing. You can't continually go back for more coverage. While there are tips for maximizing the coverage that is available, we don't have time for that here.

ExtraTip: **If anyone is still mailing or faxing releases, stop it now and move all delivery to email.** You save money and the media saves time. You can attach a formal press release to your email but always paste the entire message — in plain text — into the body of the email. Newsrooms can cut-and-paste your information without worrying about having the right program to open the release or other formatting issues.

Thank you. If you have questions or need additional information, give me a call at 304-342-1011, ext. 160, or visit wvpress.org

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Hello:

The **West Virginia Press Association** has served as the voice of the state's newspaper industry for nearly 150 years. A nonprofit trade association, the WVPA strives to strengthen and support the newspaper industry through staff development, industry representation and public outreach. Currently, the WVPA represents 77 West Virginia newspaper publications, including 22 daily and 55 weekly products.

With "**Today's WVPA News**" email newsletter, two websites — wvpress.org and wvlegals.com, and an annual membership directory, the WVPA serves as the primary informational source for the state's newspaper industry. The **WVPA Convention** is the largest gathering of newspaper industry professionals in the state, with training programs and opportunities for networking and idea sharing.

Housed beneath the WVPA umbrella is **West Virginia Press Services**, the premier newspaper advertising placement service in the state, which manages advertising purchases and placement across numerous newspaper products both in West Virginia and across the United States. WVPS offers advertising consultation, complimentary design assistance, customer service access to the exclusive WVPS discounted programs and the lowest possible rates on all newspaper advertising: print, insert and online.

With one call to WVPS, our staff can place advertising in West Virginia newspapers or any newspaper across the U.S. In addition, WVPS can also place advertising on newspaper websites. After an ad runs, clients are provided documentation that the ad ran accordingly, and payment is simplified with only one bill.

Associate memberships and partnerships are available to any non-newspaper organization that wishes to affiliate closely with the industry. Benefits of an associate membership include access to newspaper industry events, consideration for event programming, a WVPA directory listing, discounts on our exclusive advertising programs and updates on lobbying activities.

For more information on the West Virginia Press Association, or to learn about additional networking or advertising opportunities, please contact the WVPA at 304-342-1011.

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Newspapers are good business in West Virginia



West Virginia Press Services
Advertising Network

Reach WV

- Display
- Online
- Classified
- Legal

one call for
statewide coverage



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Contact Samantha Smith

304-342-1011 800-235-6881

West Virginia Press Association 3422 Pennsylvania Avenue Charleston, WV 25301 wvpress.org



WVPS Advertising Network Reach West Virginia Plan

- Dailies**
 Bluefield Daily Telegraph
 Charleston Daily Mail
 The Charleston Gazette
 The Inter-Mountain
 The Journal
 Mineral Daily News-Tribune
 Parkersburg News & Sentinel
 The Register-Herald
 Times West Virginian
 Williamson Daily News
 WV Daily News
- Weeklies**
 Braxton Citizens' News
 Braxton Democrat-Central
 Brooke Review
 Calhoun Chronicle
 Clay County Free Press
 Fayette Tribune
 Gilbert Times
 Glenville Democrat
 Glenville Pathfinder
 Grant County Press
 Greenbrier Valley Ranger
 Hampshire Review
 Hinton News
 Hurricane Breeze
 Independent Herald
 Jackson Herald
 Jackson Star-News
 Keyser Echo (Weekender)
 Montgomery Herald
 Moorefield Examiner
 Morgan Messenger
 Parsons Advocate
 Pennsboro News
 Penny Saver-Times Record
 Pleasants County Leader
 Pocahontas Times
 Princeton Times
 Ritchie Gazette
 Roane County Reporter
 Shinnston News
 Spirit of Jefferson Advocate
 St. Mary's Oracle
 Star Herald
 The Weekender
 Grant County Press
 The Weekender
 Hampshire Review
 Times Record
 Today's Shopper
 Mineral Daily
 Tri State Shopper
 Wayne County
 Wayne News
 Webster Echo
 Webster Republican
 Wirt County Journal

In West Virginia, the most effective method of developing greater interest in your message is consistently reaching out to state residents. **The Reach West Virginia Plan** uses an affordable, high-frequency approach to building an audience. By generating a presence in newspapers and on websites across the state each week, **Reach West Virginia** is the perfect program to share your message and build brand awareness. It's also very effective for generating interest in an upcoming event or driving traffic to your website.

The price is determined by the size and length of the campaign, allowing you to control costs depending on your needs. An ongoing presence in multiple outlets ensures your message is reaching your target audience. The Reach West Virginia Plan is flexible, expandable and adaptable with other programs.

Reach West Virginia Plan options

	Price	Online impressions	Print display ads	Total print ads
One-month campaign	\$2,000	25,000	Two 2 col. by 2" ads	2
	\$4,500	50,000	Three 2 col. by 4" ads	3
	\$6,000	100,000	Four 2 col. by 6" ads	4
Three-month campaign	\$8,000	100,000	Two 2 col. by 2" ads	6
	\$12,000	150,000	Three 2 col. by 4" ads	9
	\$15,000	200,000	Four 2 col. by 6" ads	12
Six-month campaign	\$15,000	100,000	Two 2 col. by 2" ads	12
	\$22,000	150,000	Three 2 col. by 4" ads	18
	\$28,000	200,000	Four 2 col. by 6" ads	24
12-month campaign	\$28,000	100,000	Two 2 col. by 2" ads	24
	\$40,000	150,000	Three 2 col. by 4" ads	36
	\$50,000	200,000	Four 2 col. by 6" ads	48

Want to place an ad with our network? Questions?

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 800-235-6881

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WVPS Advertising Network Retail/Display

Dailies

Bluefield Daily Telegraph
Charleston Daily Mail
The Charleston Gazette
The Inter-Mountain
The Journal
Mineral Daily News-Tribune
Parkersburg News & Sentinel
The Register-Herald
Times West Virginian
Williamson Daily News
WV Daily News

Weeklies

Braxton Citizens' News
Braxton Democrat-Central
Brooke Review
Calhoun Chronicle
Clay County Free Press
Fayette Tribune
Gilbert Times
Glenville Democrat
Glenville Pathfinder
Grant County Press
Greenbrier Valley Ranger
Hampshire Review
Hinton News
Hurricane Breeze
Independent Herald
Jackson Herald
Jackson Star-News
Keyser Echo (Weekender)
Montgomery Herald
Moorefield Examiner
Morgan Messenger
Parsons Advocate
Pennsboro News
Penny Saver-Times Record
Pleasants County Leader
Pocahontas Times
Princeton Times
Ritchie Gazette
Roane County Reporter
Shinnston News
Spirit of Jefferson Advocate
St. Mary's Oracle
Star Herald
The Weekender-
Grant County Press
The Weekender-
Hampshire Review
Times Record
Today's Shopper-
Mineral Daily
Tri State Shopper-
Wayne County
Wayne News
Webster Echo
Webster Republican
Wirt County Journal

West Virginia Press Services offers two special advertising networks with the most affordable price possible for newspaper display and classified print advertising.

The small space display programs — ads no larger than 2 columns by 6 inches — reduce the cost of reaching hundreds of thousands of readers statewide to hundreds of dollars.

These programs were designed for nonprofits, start-up companies, fairs and festivals, public service campaigns, community activities and individuals with items of unique interest.

Combine with online advertising to create a total package or promote your website in print.

Here are the details for the newspaper display program

■ Choose the size that fits your needs:

2 column by 2 inch, 2 column by 4 inch or 2 column by 6 inch sizes are available.

■ Free quotes:

Call us for quotes on discounted ad opportunities.

■ Free ad design assistance:

If you're not comfortable creating your ad, we're ready to help.

■ WVPS makes placing ads a one step, one check process:

We'll handle the delivery of your ad to our newspapers and the billing.

You pay us — we accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, money orders and cashiers checks.

■ Your ad is guaranteed to be distributed to participating newspapers for publication on a "space-donated" basis:

Quarterly audits show 85-90 percent of the newspapers publish these ad sizes during a given week. The newspapers reserve the right to reject Statewide Display Network ads.

■ We'll provide tearsheets:

Clients will be provided a random sampling of two tearsheets as proof of publication.

■ Deadlines:

Noon Tuesday for publication the week beginning the following Sunday.

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Bluefield Daily Telegraph
Charleston Daily Mail
The Charleston Gazette
The Inter-Mountain
The Journal
Mineral Daily News-Tribune
Moundsville Daily Echo
Parkersburg News & Sentinel
The Register-Herald
Times West Virginian
Weirton Daily Times
Williamson Daily News
WV Daily News

Weeklies
Braxton Citizens' News
Braxton Democrat-Central
Brooke Review
Calhoun Chronicle
Clay County Free Press
Fayette Tribune
Gilbert Times
Glenville Democrat
Glenville Pathfinder
Grant County Press
Greenbrier Valley Ranger
Hampshire Review
Hancock County Courier
Herald Record
Hinton News
Hurricane Breeze
Independent Herald
Jackson Herald
Jackson Star-News
Keyser Echo (Weekender)
Lincoln Journal
Lincoln News Sentinel
Montgomery Herald
Moorefield Examiner
Morgan Messenger
Nicholas Chronicle
Parsons Advocate
Pennsboro News
Penny Saver-Times Record
Pleasants County Leader
Pocahontas Times
Princeton Times
Ritchie Gazette
Roane County Reporter
Shinnston News/Journal
Spirit of Jefferson Advocate
St. Mary's Oracle
Star Herald
The Weekender
Grant County Press
Times Record
Today's Shopper
Mineral Daily
Tri State Shopper
Wayne County

West Virginia Press Services classified line programs reduce the cost of reaching hundreds of thousands of readers statewide to hundreds of dollars.

Here are the details for the classified print program

- **\$250 for the first 25 words:**

\$7 per word thereafter. Telephone numbers, including area code, count as one word. Street address (number and street) count as two words. City, state and zip code count as one word each. Web addresses count as one word.

- **All advertising is prepaid:**

We'll handle the delivery of your ad to our newspapers and the billing. You pay us — we accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, money orders and cashiers checks.

- **Your ad is guaranteed to be distributed to participating newspapers for publication on a "space-donated" basis:**

In the event the advertisement is declined by WVPS or any other state, the amount paid or portion thereof with be refunded. Any cancellation of part or all of a scheduled buy must be made at least 48 hour prior to publication deadlines of the state(s) involved. Earlier cancellation deadlines may apply to holidays.

All disputes over amounts paid or charged must be brought to the attention of WV Press Services within 30 days of the original ad order. All business opportunity ads must state up front investment cost, if any.

- **Deadlines are noon Wednesday before publication week:**

Publication weeks start on Sunday. Holiday deadlines may vary.

- **We'll provide tear-sheets:**

Clients will be provided two randomly selected tearsheets as proof of publication.

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West Virginia Press Association Associate Membership

In addition to its general memberships for West Virginia's newspapers, the West Virginia Press Association offers an Associate Membership.

Associate Memberships are available to individuals, companies or organizations that don't work directly for a newspaper, but depend on the newspaper industry for advertising and communications.

Associate Membership benefits include:

- Logo, contact info and link on Associate Member page of the website.
- Listing in the WVPA Directory, published annually and distributed to more than 1,000 leaders in government, the legislature, member newspapers, associations and the business community.
- "Today's News," an exclusive e-publication of the WVPA highlighting feature stories from across the state, sent daily to more than 1,000 business, government, professional and associations leaders in West Virginia.
- One full registration at the Annual Convention, scheduled for August 4-6, 2016 in Morgantown.
- One registration at the Legislative Breakfast, held annually in Charleston.

Access to media

- Convenient, efficient media buying on a statewide, regional or national basis ... by newspaper, by market. One placement, one invoice, lowest available rates.
- One-stop earned media distribution of press releases and news content, statewide or by region/market. This includes a cover release by the WVPA and inclusion in "Today's News."

For more information
about the WVPS
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Program, contact:

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West Virginia Press Services Corporate Partner Program

WV Press Services is a for-profit division that provides services to members and the companies, ad agencies, professional firms and organizations that depend on the newspaper industry for advertising and communications. The WVPS Corporate Partner Program is an initiative designed to add value to those relationships.

Each corporate partnership is custom-designed to meet the marketing/communications objectives and budget of the partner. Partnerships are available on an annual or multi-year basis and range from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per year, depending on the partner's activation and use of the components.

For more information
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