

Responding to media needs is key to publicity success

St. Paul/Smoky Lake Business & Community Development Corporation

By understanding news values, responding immediately to media requests and being accessible, the St. Paul/Smoky Lake Business Development & Community Development Corporation has created a relationship of mutual respect with local media. Reporters and news directors routinely contact the office when they want a comment about local issues on a variety of topics.

For example, Edmonton-based ITV News did a story on doctor recruitment and contacted George Rife, the CFDC Manager, on a Friday afternoon for comment (the district had recently attracted two new doctors). George not only provided the reporter with a local comment, he set up a meeting with the new doctors and the reporter for the following Sunday morning. George routinely provides media with his home phone number and feels it contributes to a positive relationship based on trust.

In another incident, a local dairy that employed 50 people went bankrupt just a few days before Christmas and media were keenly interested in the story but unable to contact the dairy owners. They phoned the Community Development office, where George was able to connect with the family who owned the dairy. He relayed the media's question, provided the owners with guidance on dealing with the media and passed their responses back to the media. He was able to convince the media to delay the story until after Christmas, when the family was better prepared to deal with the situation.

Source: Western Economic Diversification Canada's Promotions Toolbox