

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MADERA COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION TEAM

Overview

The Public Information Team is a unique opportunity to 'tell the Madera County story' and openly communicate with stakeholders about County services, programs and events.

Challenge

Each year the County of Madera holds a Management Workshop that provides specialized training to the leadership team with an opportunity to discuss operational goals for the upcoming year. In early 2017, the vast majority of the leadership team expressed an interest in expanding communication outreach efforts. It was also determined (through informal and sometimes very vocal feedback from the public) that many individuals do not understand and/or trust the operations of County government. In response, the Madera County Board of Supervisors provided conceptual approval to establish the Public Information Team (*Team*).

Innovative Solution

In an era where social media and other online resources are how the majority of the population receives its news, Madera County developed a *Team* to improve transparency and the way in which we communicate and interact with the public and our constituents.

Officially adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2017, the *Team* began its work in June 2017, and members consist of the County Administrative Officer, the Deputy County Administrative Officer assigned to Human Resources/Operations, each of the five (5) Board Members' Chiefs of Staff, County Counsel, the Chief Information Officer and an internal representative from each County Department.

The *Team* worked diligently to develop the County's Communication Plan (attached as Exhibit A) and Social Media Policy (attached as Exhibit B). The Communication Plan sets forth 'the way' in which the *Team* is to communicate with and engage the public, and the Social Media Policy sets forth 'how' the communication is to occur. The *Team* primarily communicates through the County's various social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) and through press releases.

The County Administrative Officer provides general oversight of the *Team*, ensuring that the policies and directives of the Board of Supervisors are adhered to, and the Deputy County Administrative Officer serves as the team lead.

Each Monday morning, the Deputy County Administrative Officer meets with the District Chiefs of Staff to discuss any relevant posts, press releases, media outreach plans and departmental communication plans needed for the week. The Chiefs of Staff subsequently reach out to their assigned departmental representatives as needed for full communication execution.

Originality

Many public entities employ a single Public Information Officer; however, with a *Team* approach, our agency can engage individuals throughout the organization to help 'tell our story.' The *Team* approach fosters engagement, ownership and accountability of those who work diligently to serve the taxpayers of Madera County. The *Team* approach also helps ensure a consistent communication model when 'telling our story', which further supports our Madera County brand.

Cost Effectiveness

The estimated, fully-loaded annual cost (salary, salary related-benefits and health insurance) of employing a single Public Information Officer is \$125,000. By utilizing a *Team* approach, the County will save approximately \$50,000/year by providing the team lead, the Chiefs of Staff and the departmental representatives with monthly incentive payments.

Results

The results of our *Team* are both quantitative and socially inspirational. The County has had a Facebook Page for a few years, and from June 2017 – June 2018, our reach increased by 472% and our page likes increased by 45.9%. In addition, we receive acclamations and thanks from our followers for providing the information they find valuable about the County.

Public Information Team Contact Information

Adrienne Y. Calip, Deputy County Administrative Officer – HR/Operations; Mailing Address: 200 W. 4th Street – 4th Floor, Madera CA 93637; Telephone Number: 559-675-7705, ext 2308; E-mail Address: acalip@maderacounty.com