WRITING A MEDIA ALERT AND NEWS RELEASE

A **media alert** or **news release** is the best way to get information about your local organization's event or issue to your community newspapers, TV and radio.

A **media alert** informs the media of an upcoming event, activity or press conference, and includes basic information. A **news release** provides information about your event as well as background information on news items. A news release also has quotations from authority figures to add authenticity and legitimacy to your news.

When writing an alert or news release, use the following guidelines to make it easy for the media to see what it is you are contacting them about.
- Use letterhead or include your organization's logo at the top
- Always include a contact name and phone number, so the media can call with questions
- Keep it brief, ideally to one page
- Conclude it with three #'s (###). This indicates the end of the document

MEDIA ALERT
Alerts include the what, who, when, where and why of an event.
- **At the top of document:** Write MEDIA ALERT in large font
- **Headline:** Keep the headline short, but include location, time and date
- **What:** What kind of event is this and what is its purpose?
- **Who:** Are there any notable figures (fire chief, local officials or celebrities) that will be present?
- **When:** Date and time of your event
- **Where:** The exact location of your event. Provide cross-streets and phone number
- **Why:** Use this to briefly note any interesting information and statistics

A media alert can also be sent for inclusion in your local newspaper's calendar of events listings. This is a great way to publicize your upcoming meetings, workshops or volunteer opportunities.

NEWS RELEASE
A news release contains breaking news or announcements and goes into more detail than a media alert.
- **Top left:** Write FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.
- **Top right:** Include contact information.
- **Headline:** Keep the headline short but creative, and include location, time and date.
- **First paragraph:** Include the date of release and city where the release originates from (ex. FRESNO, Calif., July 3, 2005 –). The first paragraph includes the main information about your event (who, what, when, where and why). Keep this short and to the point.

- **Subsequent paragraphs:** List additional supporting information in the following paragraphs. Include statistics and a quote from your designated spokesperson.
- **Final paragraph:** Include background information about your organization and repeat contact information (For additional information, please call _____ at 916-555-5555).

News releases are ideal to use when making an announcement about a new initiative, if your organization is honoring a volunteer, or to announce an annual event such as Wildfire Awareness Week. Samples can be found on this Web site.