Francis, Ronald - Salt Lake City, UT

eBlast
News briefs from Utah NRCS

February 14, 2005

Here's a New Gimmick

In an effort to improve internal communications for NRCS employees and conservation partners, we have initiated an electronic news gram that will provide timely, need to know info, in brief email blasts. It is hoped the colorful header, along with photos and graphics, will alert you that information of value is included.

Since our last all-employee meeting, we have evaluated the possibility of an electronic newsletter. In a survey, about half of the NRCS employees said they wanted an electronic newsletter, the other half said the same old periodic email system was fine. So, I guess we compromised and are now sending you an email in newsletter format on newsworthy occasions. On most occasions, it will probably only be one news item per blast. You comments and suggestions on this approach are welcome anytime. We want it to be a welcome addition, not another good reason to hit the delete button.

Look for future editions, which will be logged onto the Web site for review at anytime. But for now, here is some info I've been wanting to get out on a public affairs training opportunity. This may not be the best example of a worthy news item, but it will do to illustrate how it works.

"What Makes NRCS News" Training Course Available in March

The following public affairs half-day course will be offered in March at each area office. If you are interested in learning how to better identify and communicate local conservation news, see the enrollment instructions at the end of the course description. Hope to see you there.

Ron Francis, state public affairs specialist and course instructor

UT NRCS Training Course # 0082: "What Makes NRCS News"

Dates: March 10, 9-noon, Richfield Area Office
March 16, 9-noon, Provo Area Office
March 23, 9-noon, Price Area Office

Overview:
An introductory course that helps NRCS and district employees better understand what makes good local or state news stories and what their role is in getting those stories covered by the news media. Students will complete exercises that will show them how to identify news, determine the hook, write the story and make the pitch.

Objectives:
General: (at the end of this session, participants will know)

1. Understand how media relations and public affairs are relevant to your job
2. Understand why good media relations and public outreach are important to the field office, the state office, the agency and the department
3. Understand your role in the agency's media relations, public affairs and outreach
4. Know the basic principles of good media relations, public affairs and outreach

Specific: (at the end of this session, participants will be able to)

1. Define public affairs, outreach, and publicity

2. Answer: Who is your public affairs specialist and what does he or she do?
3. Identify the appropriate audience for any information or outreach effort.
4. Identify ways to reach out to the public and partner organizations
5. Know the difference between a news release, media advisory, public service announcement, advertising, and other communication tools
6. Know what makes information newsworthy and determine when it's appropriate to send out a news release
7. Know how to set up a news release in a standard format
8. Know how to develop a media contact list
9. Know how to send out a news release
10. Know how to determine when it's appropriate to speak with a reporter and when a media inquiry should be referred to someone else
11. Know how to speak with a reporter and give an effective interview
12. Know how to determine who their congressmen and state legislators are and the difference between the two.
13. Determine when it's appropriate to communicate with congressmen and when a matter should be referred to someone else.

Duration (hours or days): 3 hours

Target Audience:
District Conservationists, RC&D Coordinators.
New, or experienced NRCS and UACD employees who have a responsibility to communicate conservation information to the public.

Contact:
Sharon Jensen, State NRCS Training Officer (801-524-4576)

How to enroll:
Go to I*CAMS to request enrollment in UT0082. (Contact Sharon Jensen in the state office for help)
To enroll, select "Employee Self Service," click on "Tasks" and select "Training," then "Request Catalog Course", where you can search by course number, location, and date. UACD employees, or other interested participants may call Ron Francis (801-524-4557) or their area office to reserve a spot.

NRCS Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah

To see blasts from the past go to e-Blast archives

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To submit news items or subscribe/unsubscribe to the mailing list, contact NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Ron Francis at 801-524-4557; ron.francis@ut.usda.gov

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