

How to get News Media Coverage

January 2022

Benefits: News coverage of Wildlife Rescue Centres often results in Donations (either cash or supplies) and Volunteers. The public also learns about what your Wildlife Rescue Centers does and they do not have to take injured and orphaned wild animals to the Human Society or Animal Control .

Terms : Wildlife Rescue Centres is what the public calls us (through search engines and other) Wildlife Rehabbers is what we call our selves and at times the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) . Authorized Wildlife Custodian is the official term that the MNR calls us (in the legislation) .It is best to use Wildlife Rescue Centres with the Media ,it is self explaining and used most by the public.

What is the News Media. There is Local , Regional (Provincial) and National Media . The best Media and the one you are most likely to get coverage from is local Media . They are looking for local news stories to differentiate them selves from National or Regional Media. Types of stories breakdown into basically investigative (Headline) and documentary (good news) . Wildlife Rescue fits under documentary or good news stories . The reality we are filler or the Friday file stories. When space permits they will run a story on us. Most cases you will not be on the front page or the lead story . Most News Media Companies are part of chain of publications, radio stations or TV Stations. This can lead to an assembly line approach to news stories. . News Media cycles or time line have become shorter and will keep getting shorter . You have to fit into their time lines . You have to capture their interest and attention. The Media does not have to run stories on Wildlife Rescue Centres.

Media Contact or Public Relations Person : Appoint one person in your Center to be the Media Contact person . It makes it easier for the Media . Makes sure you're your Media person know the facts about your Centres , when opened, how it was started , what animals you handle , how many your centered handled in the last year, who helps you and what help you can uses from the public .The Media person doing the interview will be looking for background information. The mention the fact "Wildlife Rescue Centres are licensed by the MNR but get no help from any level of Government and are completely dependent on the public for support" . Know the facts about your Centre .

Press Release ; This is how you get the News Media attention. The Media is flooded by press releases , tips and news from other Media . Getting their attention is a competitive process. You have to give them a reason why they should cover your story. Your press release should not exceed one page . Your press release should be sent to the News Desk (also called News Room , Assignment Desk) for Radio or TV Stations or Editor for printed publications. Always lead with the key points first. The best stories coming from Wildlife Rescue Centres are human interest , stories about an individual animals . What happened to it (hit by a car, trapped in the ice, mother killed by a hunter) . How it was rescued and came to your centre . What you people , volunteers did to keep it alive and how they went beyond the call. How it recovered . The more personal the better. The public identifies with the individual animal not great list of statistics about how a species is doing . Micro not macro.

The most important thing about a Press Release is the Headline or Subject Line. You have to get the Editor or news room persons attention immediately . If your press releases headline does not capture their attention they will not read any further. They just have too much information coming at them . Always include your Media Contact person at the bottom of the release and give them a phone number and email address. Make it as easy as possible for your Media person to be contacted . If you have photos available let them know, follow up by phone one or two days after you send out your release. Did they get it , if not say you will send it again and who's attention . If they have received it you have a 15 to 30 second chance to pitch the importance of your press release and why it would be worth while for their audience . The squeaky wheel gets the coverage.

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Media Lists ; Ontario Community Newspaper Association has a list of members on their website . You can do a Google search of Media by type in your area. Also Ontario Wildlife Rescue has database of over 140 Media outlets in Ontario with contact information . It is broken down by print media , radio stations , TV stations and Web or Blog Media . It is also divided up into South West , South Central , South East and Northern Ontario . Ontario Wildlife can do a Press Release broadcast for Wildlife Rescue Centers in the Province .

For more information contact Ontario Wildlife Rescue at 416 436-9892 or sandy@ontariowildliferescue.ca