

Submitted By

Organization: Holliston Democratic Town Committee
Contact Name: Cynthia Burrow
Contact Email Address: cjpburrow@gmail.com

Summary

Getting coverage in local online and print press can show others in community that it is safe and right to stand with their neighbors. Many people hesitate to take that first step out their doors and into the rally crowd. An uplifting story that focuses on community and productive action can give them a little push. For the purpose of this resource, “local press” refers to online and print news sources in your town that operate like newspapers (not local social media pages like Facebook). An example would be hollistonreporter.com, which used to be a town print newspaper and is now fully online.

Steps

Gather Information

- Take pictures and video, but be aware of each publication’s rules around permission. For example, Holliston Reporter will not run photos showing people’s faces unless we have specific permission from the person pictured. To solve this, we blur faces in crowd pictures. Or we ask folks to hold their signs over their faces when we take pictures at the demonstration.
- Count attendance numbers and say how you got those counts. For example, we might say, “Over 200 people registered to attend, but a hand count showed actual attendance at well over a thousand!”
- If you gathered donations for a charity, say how much you gathered, but also what that money means for the community. For example, “We gathered \$870 for the Holliston Pantry Shelf. That will provide over a thousand means for members of our community in need.”
- If you had speakers, make sure you have their names (correctly spelled) and affiliations.
- Get quotes from notable attendees if possible. For example, “Holliston’s own State Rep. James Arena-DeRosa says, “The event underscored that we are stronger together, and that positive, unified action can make a huge impact locally.”

Write the Press Release

- Use standard press release format. (A sample is included with this document.)
- Keep it to one page.
- Use action verbs and short, descriptive sentences. Local news sources often publish press releases verbatim, and you want to grab and hold the reader.
- Provide a way for people to take action next. For example, “Regular demonstrations will continue. Check www.hollistondems.org for the latest information. Join an alliance of area activists at <https://mnwactionhub.blogspot.com/>.”
- Have someone review your work before submitting.

Submit and Publish the Press Release

- Read and carefully follow the guidelines of each local media outlet.
- You just spent a lot of time writing a press release—repurpose it as a blot post on your organization’s website, in your newsletter, or on your social media pages.

Follow-Up

- If you haven’t seen your news story published within a week or two, follow up with the editorial contact listed on your local news outlet’s website.

Costs

No cost.

Materials/Supplies

None.

Lessons Learned/Helpful Tips

- Look for a volunteer in your organization to be the “press contact.” One person who writes well and knows the process can crank out press releases more quickly than someone who is also trying to fulfill other responsibilities.

Supporting Documents

- April 19 Demonstrations Press Release