

— PUBLICITY —

Newspaper coverage and news releases as well as photography are very important to any Lodge or State Association. Often, good coverage is not accorded simply because information and arrangements are not made in advance. Remember that new items, publicity and “build-ups” for an event at a Lodge must compete each day with the hot news happenings of the day. What’s important to you may not be very important to someone else and, vice-versa.

Let us consider first the publicity and news coverage. It applies to newspapers, radio and television. It can be about a special event; visit by a special guest or dignitaries to a convention, Lodge meeting or even State Association Night. It can be about Installation of new Lodge Officers; Initiation of a special or large class of candidates; Community Project of the Lodge; remodeling of the premises, or dedication of a “new wing.” People make news. Activities involving people are the important news items to the newspaper, radio and television.

Your guest of honor will appreciate good publicity. It adds prestige. It helps build the public image of the Lodge and State Association.

Solicit your invited guest for photographs — glossy print or newspaper mat, or both (*Mat for the newspaper and picture for the TV station*); for a biographical sketch of the guest, particularly as to office or title and efforts in Grand Lodge or State Association as well as hometown Community Service; also, other background, particularly if unusual, is welcome.

With such information at hand, prepare your release. It does not have to be in written journalistic form, although this is nice if you have someone who can do this. Factual notes about the guest, the function and other information is needed. BEAR IN MIND the “five W’s” of a news item ... and sometimes there’s an “H” involved, too. The “five W’s” represent: Who? What? Where? When? and Why? Answer each of these questions in your release or note. The “H” is for How? (*such as how the dignitaries are coming ... via air, train or car*).

If you are preparing a release, be sure to get these five W’s answered in the first two paragraphs or at the top of your list of notes.

You can expand with details after this is done.

Remember, editors accept no responsibility for any happening so you MUST have your event announced by the Exalted Ruler, or someone in charge (*State President or Convention Chairman, etc.*).

If your honored guest will speak, say so. If the speech is to a closed meeting, to the public, at a Memorial Service, or on a sight-seeing tour, let it be known. Interviews should be arranged well in advance and be sure if to be attended by the media, the guest is so informed and agreeable. Interviews provide extra coverage for the good of the Order. Sometimes the media, newspaper, radio or TV will want to cover. If so, assist them in any way possible.

If your town has all three news media, MAKE SURE you contact all three with your news item. Don't slight one or two for another. Coverage is what you want and need. Use all available media. If one isn't interested, you have, at least, offered.

Visits of a Grand Lodge Official or some other dignitary to children's hospitals, orphanages, Memorial Statues, Senior Citizens Homes, Historical sites or something of the type can, many times, prompt "on the spot" news coverage. Inform the media, if such is planned.

