

## PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAT #3 – FEBRUARY 28, 2024 ON ZOOM

### TOPIC – PR TOOLS

19 members present – 7 others could not attend, but requested the written summary

#### **We began the session discussing what is meant by internal PR communications**

- Internal public relations seeks to present the Unit in a clear and meaningful light in the eyes of its members
- It helps our members understand the Unit's and the American Legion Auxiliary's vision, mission and goals
- It helps our members understand the important role they play as individuals to help the Unit be successful
- Consistent internal messages will help everyone understand the "big picture," be engaged and motivated, and more likely to speak positively and enthusiastically about the Unit to family and friends.

#### **What are the benefits of internal PR?**

- We must keep in contact with all our members to increase our chances of getting them more engaged in what the unit does
- Engaged members are more likely to renew their membership
- YES – Internal PR is at the heart of a solid membership program
- Engaged members are more likely to ask their friends to join
- Engaged members are more likely to volunteer
- If our members think that we truly care about them, they will care what we say, think, and do as Auxiliary members

#### **Internal PR basics**

- Communicate clearly and regularly in a way that is easily understood
- Make sure your communications are friendly and personal
  - Special contact on birthdays, holidays, or just pick a day as an excuse to contact a member you have not seen in a while (Groundhog, Day, National Ice Cream Day, or even make up a holiday as an excuse to contact them)
- Make sure your communication is timely
- Don't withhold important information – transparency is important
- Unit leadership should be visible and approachable
- Use a variety of methods to ensure your information is received

- Learn your members' preferred communication methods
  - Phone, Email, Text, Newsletter, Personal visits, social media, website
- Consider holding low-key, social, non-meeting gatherings
  - One county mentioned a county "tea party" where they dressed up, wore funny hats, and brought a friend along with them – included Junior members
- Highlight new/newer members in your newsletter, Facebook, or even with a picture in your post or meeting facility. Make sure everyone has a chance to get to know these members. Do the same thing for longer-term members to make sure the newer members get to know them as well
- Consider face-to-face visit parties. Have a few members meet and travel around town to visit Unit members. Bring goodies and have a little party with each person.

### **We discussed why some members just don't want to come to meetings**

- Multitude of reasons are possible
- Our challenge is to use internal PR tools and methods to make them more likely to attend
- Make sure meetings are well run
- Add a social aspect to the meetings
- Find ways to have fun before or after the business is done
- Ask ourselves "What's in it for them?"
- Effective internal PR also includes recognition and awards – large and small. Volunteers need to be recognized for what they do, and feel valued for what they do

### **Wrap-Up**

- PR Chats are held the last Wednesday of each month through June. The Chats will run from 6:30-8:30. Members may attend the entire session or drop in anytime during the session to listen and/or participate. Members of the PR Committee will be available in the chat room the entire 2-hour period each month. If members wish to continue talking past 8:30, we welcome that enthusiasm and will remain engaged.
- The general topic for the March 27 session will be EXTERNAL PR – REACHING OUT TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS