

# Leading Tactics for Rural Fund Development

FOCUS C

## Engaging the Entire Community in Building Community Assets

TACTIC 5

### *Reach donors through local media*

#### What is it?

As John D. Rockefeller once said, “Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people *know* you are doing the right thing.”

Getting your name in the local press and on the airwaves can help you reach out to potential donors, large and small. Donors, professional advisors, town leaders, volunteers, and others can't very well work with you—or *give* to you—if they don't know who you are, what you do, or what your work has to do with them.

Even though community foundations and funds are one of the fastest-growing types of philanthropy in the United States today, not that many people know about them. Many community endowments struggle to raise their profiles with the news media, especially in rural areas. That's why effective communication is such a critical activity. Building successful media relationships can contribute to your community foundation's success in achieving both its endowment-building *and* its community-building goals.

## How does it *really* work?

### First: Set your strategy table

Using the media effectively starts by covering the same basic groundwork that is required to begin any good communication effort. Here are some questions to ask yourself and to consider carefully in using the local media to help make your community foundation or fund known and build your endowment:

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#### ■ **Why are we communicating?**

What's the goal or objective? To increase your donor base by 10 percent? To grow your endowment fund by a specific dollar amount? Just to get the word out that you exist? It helps to be clear and specific about what you want to achieve with your message.

#### ■ **Who must I reach to achieve this goal?** Who are the decisionmakers who can help you reach your goal?

#### ■ **What do we actually want them to do?** Of course you want them to contribute money or assets to your fund's endowment, but what's the first step in that process? Do you want them to call you to request more information? Come to a meeting or event? Look for your letter in the mail next week and open it?

#### ■ **How do we phrase our message so that it will be credible and persuasive?** Use what you know about the people you are targeting—their interests, concerns and activities—to shape your message in terms that appeal to them. Avoid jargon that might sound good but doesn't grab anyone. For example, if someone were asking *you*, would you rather "Give to the foundation" or "Give to our hometown"? Can you phrase your message so that it is in the self-interest of your potential targeted donor? For wealthier people, for example, your press message might say: "Foundation donors can give to our hometown *and* give themselves a tax break at the same time."

**■ Which media do you want to target to help deliver your message?**

When you think the media is essential to delivering your message, your next step is to understand the different media options available. For example, if your goal is to build public awareness about your fund's existence and its role in the community, you likely want to reach large numbers of people through local newspapers, radio and television. This is especially the case in rural communities, where everyone needs to know about the fund and understand it before people start to give.

So, where do people in your community get their information? Do they read a weekly newspaper, a daily, or just a Sunday edition? Do they listen to the local radio station in their cars while driving around the county? Are there local newsletters or bulletins they read? Do they subscribe to certain magazines? Do specific ethnic or racial groups in your community keep in touch with special newspapers, newsletters, or local radio or TV call-in programs you would want to target?

And if you are looking for larger gifts, where do the decisionmakers you are targeting get advice about their financial decisions? From professional financial advisors? The local bank manager? Investment clubs? And what do *they* read? If you're trying to reach high-wealth donors, it may be more effective to place an article or advertisement in a specialized publication that you know their financial advisors read. Do they have special newsletters or magazines, or is there a local radio host, news columnist or feature editor who specializes in financial issues and options?

- What hooks will appeal to those media?** You have a message and know the media you want to contact. Now what will “hook” that newspaper or radio station so that they will cover your news—and make it more likely that people will pay attention? Is there a community happening—glad ones or sad ones—that you can piggy-back your message on and help people hear it? Is there a date—like a holiday or deadline—with a theme you can utilize? For example, tax time is often a good “hook” to get people to pay

People often connect with stories. Can featuring the story of a specific donor or quotes from grantees help you gain coverage?

attention to the benefits of charitable giving! Remember also that people often connect with stories. Can featuring the story of a specific donor or quotes from grantees help you gain coverage?

Remember that it is often the combination of a good message and a well-known messenger that makes information newsworthy. Build relationships with the media that will enable them to cover your issues well.

### Next: Use the best tools

Two sets of tools can help you utilize the media to get your messages across. The first set includes tools to help you work *with* the media—providing journalists with good reliable information and building relationships with them over time so that they cover your issues well. The second set of tools will help you learn to communicate *through* the media to reach potential donors and other target audiences in your own words. When considering your options, remember that it is often the combination of a good

message and a well-known messenger that makes information newsworthy.

- **Tools for working *with* the media.** With this set of tools, you communicate with reporters and editors, hoping they will pick up your news and cover it.
- **Press kits.** A press kit includes the bare-bones information that helps your media contacts understand your community foundation or fund and any specific message you have.

***Basic press kit.*** Your basic press kit is something that you always have available on request. It contains background information about your community foundation or fund, important financial and program facts, updates on the growth and impact of your work, and biographical information about your board members and staff (if you have any). Many community foundations and funds put their basic press kits on their web page, so that they are always available.

***Special initiative press kit.*** When you are starting a specific initiative—for example, an endowment match campaign—you might add tailored items

to your standard press kit. These might include a special press release, a brochure about the initiative, or information about the success other places have had with a similar effort. For example, with an endowment match campaign, you might put your work in a national context by including information about the history and growth of community endowments across the United States, along with a story about a successful rural match challenge campaign from another state.

- **Press releases.** A press release helps you let the media know about your organization's specific endowment building events, efforts, changes or achievements. At its most basic level, a press release will relate the "who, what, when, where, how and why" of your news. Even when the media does not cover your releases, they still serve several important functions. They keep the media aware of your organization, building their knowledge and your name recognition over time. (*Repetition is powerful!*) And you can distribute your press release to anyone in the community who has connections to the potential donors—you can even send it to donors themselves.

- **Meetings with reporters, editors, editorial boards.** Your foundation's or fund's leaders also may request meetings with reporters, editors or editorial boards. You might use this method when you are establishing your foundation or any new endowed fund that addresses an issue important to the community. As time goes on, use it again when your board feels it is warranted—some foundations do it once or twice a year just to stay in touch. Before any meeting with editors or reporters, make sure that you're prepared. Know the message that you want to convey, know why it merits public attention, and bring along any background materials—including stories—that support your message and would help in writing an article or editorial.

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## Just the facts...

### Six good things worth memorizing about your community foundation or fund

Every community foundation board and staff member will feel confident talking to friends, family, colleagues and the media about your work if they commit the answers to these six simple questions to memory. Do update them at regular intervals as needed!

**1. How big is your fund?** Although the size of your assets isn't a full measure of your significance or impact, it can impress people that yours is a serious effort. Generally you respond to this question with a dollar figure that represents your "total assets." *Total assets* refers to all the funds your foundation or fund holds and makes decisions about—that is, your endowed funds *plus* any funds you hold for donors to "pass through" your foundation or fund as immediate (non-endowed) grant funds.

You get extra credit on this question if you also have some sense of your foundation's or fund's *expectancies*—which refers to the number and dollar total of any planned gifts or bequests that donors tell you they are definitely leaving to you in the future. You may not have them in hand today, but they sure show your potential!

So your full answer to this question might be something like: "We have \$1 million right now in endowment and grantmaking funds, and we know of *at least* \$5 million that 27 donors plan to leave us in the future."

**2. How have your assets grown lately?** It's always good to know how your numbers from *Question 1* have increased in the last quarter or over the last year.

**3. Who is investing your funds?** All board members should be able to explain that the funds are being managed professionally—complete with the name of the firm or financial professionals doing it—and that board members who serve on your foundation's or fund's Investment Committee are monitoring those professional investors.

**4. What's your return on investment?** This question refers to how well the investment of the foundation's funds has performed. The answer doesn't have to be technical. You can simply say "better than average" or "We're on track with other community foundations our size," "We're holding our own," or "We're up over last quarter."

**5. How much are you giving away?** Know how much you have given back to the community in total dollars and in the number of grants over the last year or two. A historic figure that totals your grantmaking over your entire history is also a nice number—and becomes more amazing every year! Knowing the names of one or two local organizations or causes that have received grants is a real bonus.

**6. Who is on your board?** Depending on the size of your board, you may not be able to remember *everybody* without a list in front of you, but know the names of your officers and a sample of other board members that represent the full range of geography, professional experience, issue expertise, community leadership, race and ethnic culture, and economic class that you cover.

Of course, if your foundation is engaged in a particular endowment building challenge or has taken leadership on a specific community issue, each board member should be familiar with that, too.

- **Press conferences or media events.** Another tool that encourages journalists to write in-depth stories about your work is to hold press conferences or briefings to highlight your special events or newsworthy achievements.

For example, you might have a press conference right around Thanksgiving (which is a good "news hook" for stories about philanthropy and giving) that features your annual endowment milestones, along with a few donors or grantees who tell their own stories about the difference that giving or receiving has made to them. Rural newspapers and broadcast media especially love to highlight feel-good or do-good stories about local people!

- **Tools for working through the media.** You can use these tools to encourage the media to publish or broadcast your message in your own words.

In addition to working directly with the media, learn to communicate *through* the media to reach potential donors and other target audiences *in your own words*.

- **Letters to the editor.**

Letters to the editor reflect the ideas and opinions held by people in your community on any number of issues. Because the letter-to-the-editor section is widely read in rural areas, it's a great way to reach a lot of people. For example, you might ask a board member or donor to stress in a letter that having a local endowment could produce grants that might make a difference in the future on a particular community issue. Keep in mind that when you generate a lot of interest in this section of the paper, editors and reporters are likely to follow up to see if there is a larger story to be told.

- **Op-eds.** Opinion editorials, written by people who are not journalists, are another regular feature in most newspapers. Typically a few hundred words in length and written in a persuasive tone, these opinion pieces give you an opportunity to craft your message and deliver it directly to your audience in your own voice. You can ask influential people from inside or outside the community to write about the power of building community endowments, about the importance of giving to your hometown and its future generations, and how your community foundation or fund can help. Potential donors might start paying attention.

- **Columns, feature articles, radio interviews and television appearances.**

As you become a trusted source for journalists, they will be more inclined to call on you for information and commentary on local issues. Strong, clear speaking skills and a reputation for knowing your facts will make you a good candidate for repeat quotes, or for appearances on community radio or public television. You might also offer to write a regular—or occasional—column that covers inspirational stories about donors, what your organization is doing in the community, or trends in philanthropy. Many rural community funds find it



easy to place such feature stories in local newspapers—it helps the editors fill their pages with good, local copy!

- **Public service announcements.** Public service announcements, or PSAs, are 10- to 60-second spots on television and radio that stations donate to meet the Federal Communications Commission’s public-service requirements. This kind of airtime is mainly available to community associations and nonprofit organizations, or to for-profit organizations that are sponsoring community or charitable events. You can find out your local stations’ policy and process for scheduling these spots, and see if you can fit a message about your foundation and its endowment into the mix.
- **Speaking at other organizations’ events.** Speaking at other organizations’ events helps publicize your own organization’s work. Depending on the event, you may be asked to describe what your foundation or fund does, how it serves the community, a current program you are operating or community issue with which you are dealing. Members of the media may be there and cover your presentation. At the very least, the host organization’s newsletter or other publications will likely print something about the event.
- **Paid (or donated) advertising.** You may not have any budget to buy ads, but find out if you can afford advertising—sometimes it can be a big help. Keep in mind that even if your budget allows for paid advertising, you still have many important decisions to make involving *where* and *how* you will advertise—print media, radio or television. If you are paying for space or airtime, the sales representative for the station, paper or magazine should be able to tell you about the specific demographics (age, size, etc.) of their audience. And you can always ask for donated space! When the Beacon Community Foundation in Daniels County, Montana, was getting started, the local newspaper donated space for a series of cartoon ads that explained different kinds of endowment donations, featuring their “Mr. and Mrs. Leeva Legacy” characters.

Speaking at other organizations’ events helps publicize your own organization’s work—and may gain media coverage of your message.

## Building helpful capacities

While not all of the tools and methods above *are* costly, many *are* strategy and labor intensive. Consider the following ideas and steps that can increase your capacity to set and advance a media strategy that will help you build local endowment.

When Montana's Beacon Community Foundation was getting started, the local newspaper donated space for a series of cartoon ads that explained different kinds of endowment donations, featuring their "Mr. and Mrs. Leeva Legacy" characters.

- **Get your board involved.** A successful media effort will benefit from board leadership, commitment and time. Be sure to call upon the skills and experience of your board members as well as any staff you may have. Not only will your board's community stature raise the interest level in your organization and its work, but you also may find that their active involvement increases their commitment to the organization!
- **Form a marketing/communications/media committee or task force.** Have your board set up a marketing committee whose members will take responsibility for joining with any staff to develop your media plan, to carry out key assignments, and to enlist other board members and volunteers to accomplish specific tasks in the plan.
- **Design a media and community outreach plan.** Consider starting with a modest plan, and expanding as necessary. To start, list your activities for the coming year, such as your annual meeting, board elections, grant deadlines, and grant awards. Put those dates on a calendar and plan a news release—along with some follow-up strategies such as letters to the editor or speeches to service clubs—for each event. You can change the plan during the year according to your circumstances.
- **Recruit volunteer help.** Not everyone who helps out has to be on the board! Help is all around you. Think about your community resources, including high school or community college teachers who may have journalism classes filled with students eager to practice their new skills. Marketing professionals from local

businesses and utilities may also be willing to give you some time or materials. Local advertising staff and print shops may be able to donate services. Ask these people if they will serve on your task force. And remember, even individuals who can't commit to serving on a task force may be willing to advise you on a particular project or activity.

- **Develop your key messages.** The task force can help you hone the key messages that you want to communicate. When thinking about key messages, you need to articulate whether your goal is to make people aware of your community endowment (education), or persuade them to get involved with your foundation or fund (urge them to action—including giving to endowment). The nuances between the two are important and will affect the kind of language you use in brochures, letters and other publications.
- **Develop a media kit.** A media kit can be simply a folder with your logo on it. Inside, you can include a sheet of your letterhead with a brief description about your community endowment and its goals. As you go along, you can add copies of your annual reports, newsletters, and reprints of any news articles or columns that have been published about your accomplishments. You can include some “real life” stories, profiles of donors, board members, clients or grantees, or key staff people, as well as simple descriptions of how to give to your community foundation or fund. It would also be helpful to design a simple brochure about your foundation or fund to include in the media kit and have available to hand out when making presentations.
- **Develop media relationships and lists.** Media outreach is a continual activity, so it's helpful to develop and maintain ongoing contact with reporters and other media professionals. Make it a priority to keep in touch—perhaps by inviting them to lunch or coffee occasionally, or making sure you mail them something about the foundation's or fund's progress at least twice a year. It's also critical to keep your contact information up to date; journalists frequently change assignments and employers.

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**A final word of caution: Don't pursue media tactics in a vacuum!**

The goal of effective media communication is not simply to get attention. The object of your efforts should be to use media tactics to help you reach specific organizational goals. If this is not the case, it's worth asking yourself if your work to generate media coverage is a wise use of time and money.

Ideally, your media and communications should flow from a master plan developed in conjunction with your foundation's or fund's overall strategic plan. By doing this, you will ensure that your communication strategies help support your organizational goals. Planning ahead helps you identify, budget for, and develop communication products and capacities you will need to reach your key audiences.

## The usual—and unusual—suspects

As you are trying to communicate *with the media* as well as *through the media*, you should consider the audiences you are trying to reach.

- **General population.** Using local media means you will reach a wide audience. While we usually think of major gifts coming from the obviously wealthy, there are definitely less-obvious prospects. Some donors may decide to make modest gifts on a regular basis, perhaps leading eventually to a major bequest or planned gift that they keep secret until they pass away. We've all read the stories—the schoolteacher who lived modestly but left a substantial scholarship to the local high school or the frugal bachelor farmer who made a major bequest to his local church. It is important to keep your foundation or fund and all the good it is doing in the eyes and ears of the entire community—lest you miss many potential donor opportunities!
- **High-wealth donors and their advisors.** These donors often have histories of supporting charitable organizations and causes and may already understand endowments. These donors also are likely to have financial advisors, so reaching those advisors can be key. Professional advisors who are aware of your community endowment will appreciate the information and credibility that regular media coverage of your fund provides. They can use the news coverage to inform

## Obstacles & challenges

## Eliminating the fear factor

**It's way too hard to explain what we do to media types—they just don't get it.** Problem Number One for community foundations or funds is crafting an understandable message. Community foundations are not easy to describe because they provide a variety of services for a variety of purposes to a variety of people and organizations. It's hard to do in one "soundbite."

**Get as clear and simple as you can.** First, develop a short, simple, effective definition of a community foundation. For example: *"Our community foundation is a pool of capital, contributed to by many people in the community. We invest the money for the long term. We use the interest to make grants to local organizations that do things to improve everyone's quality of life."*

Or: *"Our community fund is a savings account for the community to which everyone can give. It grows over time to help our young people and generations to come."*

You can develop your own definition. Just be sure to make it simple and short so that people from all walks of life can understand it—and you can remember it! After you get that out, just focus the rest of your message on whatever your current news is!

**We have never written anything for public consumption before.** The idea of crafting a news release, designing a brochure, or writing a letter to the editor may be daunting.

**There are models and formulas for this kind of writing.** It's not that hard really. Please see samples of some key pieces in our RFD Tool Box—and adapt as needed!

**We have a lot of board members who are afraid to speak in public or with the media.** They say it's the most common of fears, and for many it's really severe—almost paralyzing.

**If the message is clear, there is less fear!** You have a few ways to combat fear. First, write down a complete list of *Talking Points* that include the main things you want your spokesperson to *always say*. This helps your spokesperson gain confidence that they won't miss anything—they can even hand the sheet to the reporter! Second, public speaking *does* get easier the more you do it. Get some practice by joining a local Toastmaster's International chapter. Last, keep in mind that different people have different abilities—maybe some board members can do this, and those who can't can help you with something else! In other words, play to people's strengths and interests.

*(continued on next page)*

<b>Obstacles &amp; challenges</b>	<b>Eliminating the fear factor</b>
<p><b>Our board members claim that they just don't know enough about the foundation to sound intelligent.</b></p>	<p><b>Even when you're a novice on the board or staff, there are some key facts that you really should know cold.</b> If all board and staff members can memorize and keep updated on just a few facts about your foundation or fund, they will be well prepared to talk before just about any group. <i>For the list of what you all need to know, please see page 6: Just The Facts.</i> Some community funds even put a few key facts on a business card that board members can carry with them at all times!</p> <p>If you couple these <i>Just The Facts</i> with the list of <i>Talking Points</i> you want to make related to a specific newsworthy event or activity, you are all set!</p>
<p><b>What's the big deal? Besides the Town Crier, we don't have any local media.</b> Especially in rural areas, there may be only a handful of newspapers, television and radio stations.</p>	<p><b>Use them to your best advantage—and think well beyond your borders.</b> Sure, you probably already know—or at least know of—the news outlets in your community that you can cultivate. Just remember that if they talk you up, it can only do you good. Such papers and stations often need news, and the news should be <i>positive and local</i>. You can be a blessing for them, and they, in turn, can serve you well.</p> <p>Beyond that, don't stop at your county line. What else do people read? The rural-focused Nebraska Community Foundation regularly updates the <i>Omaha World-Herald</i> and the <i>Lincoln Journal Star</i> about the progress rural Nebraska communities are making in building local endowment funds—and they have received prominent coverage in both papers for years! Turns out a lot of rural people read those papers as well. (Even the <i>New York Times</i> and <i>Wall Street Journal</i> followed suit with Nebraska stories of their own.)</p>
<p><b>We don't have adequate resources to deal with media outreach.</b> You may feel you lack the people and finances to do the work necessary.</p>	<p><b>Reach out to your community, and you can do it.</b> Your board may not have all the expertise and time you need to do this. So brainstorm with them about local individuals who might help with your media writing and outreach work. Search the Internet for associations in your state or region that might have local professional members willing to help out. Perhaps someone has a spouse or an elderly neighbor just itching to do something useful and interesting...and don't forget those high schools!</p>

their clients about your work and the tax advantages of both current giving and charitable bequests.

- **Nonprofit organizations.** Your message can include information about the accomplishments of nonprofits that are your grantees, as well as the advantages of establishing an endowment for a nonprofit organization. Indeed, if you hold endowments on behalf of some nonprofit organizations or make grants to them, highlight them in various ways. This helps them appreciate you even more!

## Types of gifts, payoff, payoff horizon

Depending on the focus of media coverage, you can expect a variety of gifts, such as:

- **Contributions to area, unrestricted or field-of-interest and donor-advised funds, agency endowments and scholarship funds.** Seeing your foundation's or fund's name in the news around specific issues or initiatives will alert interested people to what they can do for their favorite causes or for the community foundation overall.
- **Planned gifts and bequests.** For prospective donors who are not able or willing to make living gifts, the stories that you place in the media over time about donors and their deferred gifts can prompt them to think about what they might do with their own wills or planned giving arrangements.

The payoff for this tactic is multifaceted. Designing a communications plan provides a focus and strategy for your messages in all your work, not just endowment building. This work is, in essence, community outreach, which is really about building community.

Increased visibility not only enhances your organization's credibility—the contacts you make also will be valuable. Local media people tend to know everyone and everything that's going on—their network will be an important place to build relationships useful to grantmaking and endowment development. Appearing consistently, objectively—and positively—in the local media can introduce the organization to donors you might not have found otherwise—a good way to find “angel donors.”

The payoff horizon is immediate to long-term.

## RFD Tool Box

All the resources that follow relate to using media efforts to help you grow endowment. The websites listed are active links to the materials that are available online. Where materials are not available online, use the email links provided.

**Resources for the field.** Key organizations and resources that provide critical tools and information to the entire philanthropy field.

### 1. Million Dollar Messages for Peanuts: *A roadmap for rural community foundations in local and regional marketing*

**Details:** This terrific hands-on, how-to workbook walks you through the nuts and bolts of how small, rural community foundations can use national and local resources to market their services, mission and successes. Developed by former Montana Community Foundation executive director, Sidney Armstrong, for the West Virginia Community Foundations Consortium, it is grounded in rural flavor, reality and focus. It goes into more depth on what we have introduced here, covering news releases, letters to the editor, columns and articles, public service announcements, brochures, fact sheets, websites—the works. This is a wonderful resource for your marketing task force to read first—then use regularly.

**Download:** [www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/million\\$book.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/million$book.pdf)

**Contact:** West Virginia Community Foundations Consortium, 304-517-1450, [www.GiveToWestVirginia.org](http://www.GiveToWestVirginia.org)

### 2. Community foundation marketing

**Details:** Recognizing the difficulty that many organizations have in developing public relations and media programs, the Council on Foundations and the Community Foundations of America have developed good professional marketing material specifically designed for community foundations. Some of this material may not be well tailored to small rural foundations or funds, but you can adapt some of the ideas to come up with a number of no-cost or low-cost ways to get your messages out.

All U.S. community foundations may access the National Marketing Action Team site, but its free, downloadable resources are available only to members of either the Council on Foundations or Community Foundations of America who have



agreed to comply with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations. See their website for more information.

**Online:** [www.cfmarketplace.org](http://www.cfmarketplace.org)

**Contact:** National Marketing Action Team, Council on Foundations/Community Foundations of America, 800-727-2357, [support@nmat.org](mailto:support@nmat.org)

### 3. The SPIN (Strategic Press Information Network) Project

**Details:** The SPIN Project provides accessible and affordable strategic communications consulting, training, coaching, networking opportunities and concrete tools to help non-profit and community-focused organizations engage in communications to achieve their goals. Their website offers a lot, but here we refer you to online tutorials and materials to help community organizations work effectively with the media, place their issues in the news, and improve media coverage. Specific tutorial topics include: Strategic Communications Planning, Developing Relationships with Reporters, News Releases, and Community Organizing and Strategic Communication.

**Online:** [www.spinproject.org/article.php?list=type&type=22](http://www.spinproject.org/article.php?list=type&type=22)

**Contact:** The Spin Project, 415-284-1420

## Helpful examples from your peers.

Leading or representative examples of good practice by colleague community foundations or funds.

### 1. Community foundation public service announcements

**Details:** Here, courtesy of the Arkansas Community Foundation, are five sample scripts they have drafted for their rural affiliates to use as radio public service announcements (PSAs). Each has a slightly different pitch and intended impact. These will help you think through the message you might want for your PSAs.

**Download:** [www.aspencsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/PSAs-ACF.pdf](http://www.aspencsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/PSAs-ACF.pdf)

**Contact:** Arkansas Community Foundation, 501-372-1116, [www.arcf.org](http://www.arcf.org)

### 2. Rural endowment-focused news columns

**Details:** Ann Carrithers, the executive director the Hot Springs Area Community Foundation, writes regular columns and submits them to the local newspaper,

featuring stories of how regular people became endowment donors. These two examples might get you thinking about some local stories you have to tell.

**Download:** [www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/carrithers.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/carrithers.pdf)

**Contact:** Hot Springs Area Community Foundation, 501-321-8193,  
[www.arcf.org/page12817.cfm](http://www.arcf.org/page12817.cfm), email: [hsacf@hotsprings.net](mailto:hsacf@hotsprings.net)

### 3. News releases, and news and feature coverage

**Details:** The Nebraska Community Foundation and its affiliates have been aggressive about getting the news out about their aspirations, lessons and successes. Scrolling down the *Foundation News* section of their website gives you lots of examples of their local, statewide and national coverage, as well as the kind of press releases they use to garner coverage. The archive on that page will link you to even more. Board members, their spouses and other volunteers have helped in this effort over the years.

**Online:** [www.nebcommfound.org/news.htm](http://www.nebcommfound.org/news.htm)

**Contact:** Nebraska Community Foundation, 402-323-7330, [www.nebcommfound.org](http://www.nebcommfound.org)

### 4. Feature and opinion coverage on the importance of rural endowment

**Details:** This ground-breaking five-part series of feature/opinions—which appeared in the *Sierra Vista Herald* in Arizona’s Cochise County in February, 2006—describes the concept of “philanthropic leakage” from rural areas to other places, the importance of local nonprofits as an economic engine in rural communities, how those nonprofits struggle to stay afloat, and how having a community endowment and giving to one can help solve the problem. The series resulted from a conversation that the assistant general manager Pat Wick of the *Vista Herald* had with Arizona Community Foundation’s vice president of affiliates, Carla Roberts, when she met her at a community event. Their discussion grew into the idea for this series, and they each wrote part of it. You could easily adapt these locally, or print them simply to start a discussion with you own local media contacts.

**Download:** [www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/sierra-vista-herald.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/sierra-vista-herald.pdf)

**Contact:** Arizona Community Foundation, 602 381-1400, [www.azfoundation.org](http://www.azfoundation.org)

## Helpful samples and templates.

Generic templates or additional explanations that may help you.

1. **How to Write a News Release**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/news\\_release.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/news_release.pdf)
2. **How to Write a Column for a Weekly Newspaper**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/column.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/column.pdf)
3. **How to Write Letters to the Editor**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/letters\\_to\\_editor.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/letters_to_editor.pdf)
4. **How to Meet with an Editorial Board**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/editorial\\_board.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/editorial_board.pdf)
5. **How to Make Your News Keep On Working**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/news.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/news.pdf)
6. **How to Write an Article for a Professional Advisor Newsletter**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/advisor\\_newsletter.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/advisor_newsletter.pdf)
7. **How to Design a Simple Brochure**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/simple\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/simple_brochure.pdf)
8. **How to Use Public Service Announcements**  
[www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/\\_documents/tactics/PSAs.pdf](http://www.aspenccsg.org/rdp/_documents/tactics/PSAs.pdf)

## About the publication

### Leading Tactics for Rural Fund Development

Raising endowed assets in a rural setting can be very *different* from asset development in urban or metropolitan areas. *Leading Tactics for Rural Fund Development* was written specifically for rural leaders who want to raise endowments in and for their community.

This *Tactic* is one in a series developed specifically to make the job of the rural fund developer easier. The *Leading Tactics* were compiled from on-the-ground experience with rural endowment builders by the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group with significant assistance from the Southern Rural Development Initiative. Most *Tactics* were then vetted and improved by a dozen rural community fund developers at a Knowledge Lab in early 2005. The Lab was sponsored by New Ventures in Philanthropy, a national initiative of the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers, which also provided follow-up support to help complete the *Tactics*.



Please go to any of our websites to find more than a dozen other *Tactics* in this series in the following four focus categories:

- *Focus A:* Understanding and Leveraging Endowment In and For Your Community
- *Focus B:* Working with Individual Donors
- *Focus C:* Engaging the Entire Community in Building Community Assets
- *Focus D:* Targeting Community Endowment for Community Outcomes