

Agenda Item 3. Public Information and Information Update

Public Information Goals

(Communication Plan for 2017- 2018)

Budget

The Board approved a 20% increase to the PR budget last year (from \$60,900 to \$72,900 = \$12,000) but due to a \$41,000 budget cut overall from the legislature, despite the request of an increase last year, we have had to scale back on our PR spending for the past few months as well as in the upcoming year. This cut back not only affected the overall budget for the Trust but also included PR as one of the components. As such, we have been cautious with our PR spending to make up the shortfall.

The increased costs towards development of the online grant application portal for the Trust were also a huge factor in having to be very conservative with the PR budget. We have had to pay the School of Raikes, our database Consultant (Marie Gregoire) as well as Stone Fin, our database developers to have the online portal ready for the 2018 Grant Cycle. There will be similar costs this fiscal year with our planned database update using the same team.

Despite the odds, we have still made some promotional material purchases and kept our advertising efforts going in the local papers and electronic media. We have continued to purchase new promotional material and purchase advertising space in Lincoln, Omaha and other statewide advertising opportunities as deemed fit.

Short Term Goals

- Increased visibility of the Trust to all citizens of Nebraska. There are still many people that do not realize where we get our funding from and what the Trust does.
- To ensure that people understand the Mission of the Trust – to conserve, enhance and restore the natural environments of Nebraska. To promote the Nebraska Environmental Trust across the State of Nebraska to demonstrate the pivotal role we have played in helping conserve, enhance and restore the natural resources of the State in all counties and regions for the last two decades.
- Planning for our next Annual Report – Our theme this year for the Annual Report is “**Ideas Into Action**”. Many of the projects we have funded have stemmed from unique ideas of individuals that sprang into action to make a difference. The objective of the Annual Report is to highlight some of these individuals and the impact they have had in Nebraska.
- Of prime importance is to keep members of Legislature well-informed about the activities of the Trust and how much funding has been put on the ground in all 93 counties. We want to

show that “everyone” has benefitted from the Trust’s funding. We also want to draw attention to the matching funds we attract to the State as a result of the funding.

- Continue to incorporate “Education” as part of the public relations campaign through event participation. Education not only in the programs that we fund but through participation at events across the State. Citizens of Nebraska, irrespective of their age, ethnic background or education need to know how important the environment is today or ten years down the road. We want to educate citizens about our priorities through our programs:
 - Habitat Preservation and Conservation
 - Surface and Ground Water
 - Waste Management and Recycling
 - Air Quality
 - Soil Management

Long Term Goals

- To ensure that the Trust’s role as a beneficiary of the Lottery is communicated clearly to legislators and citizens of Nebraska.
- Ensure the longevity of the Nebraska Environmental Trust and its programs to meet its legislative mandate and be a backbone for environmental restoration in Nebraska through its grant program.
- Ensure that the Nebraska Environmental Trust is recognized for the grants it provides for quality projects that are viable and worthwhile for the future of the State.

Publicity Planning & Implementation Throughout the Year

Press Releases

- When a new Chairman is appointed
- When new Board Members are appointed and current members are reappointed
- Invitation of comments before General and Recognition Grants are awarded
- To Announce Application List, Preliminary Rank Order List and Final Grant of Awards annually.
- To announce major changes in the grants process, if any.
- In collaboration with various grantee organizations throughout the year featuring various projects. Grantees are encouraged to do this through our Grantee Seminar and all grantees were given draft press releases to do so at the seminars.
- To promote Trust events such as the Grantee Seminars, the TAC Luncheon and Categories Roundtable meeting that is held every five years.
- Press Release in collaboration with organizers of different events through the Trust participation in such events

- Press Releases related to the Ferguson House – events, volunteers, etc.

From July 2016 to June 2017, the Trust has been mentioned in 697 (876 last year – July 2015 – June 2016) media clippings across the state with an average of 58 (73 last year – July 2015 – June 2016) clippings a month. There has been a decrease in news articles this past year as a result of several factors:

- 1) Fewer grants being awarded but with larger grant amounts.
- 2) More and more grantees are using social media as a PR tool to promote grants instead of the traditional news releases to save cost.
- 3) The Trust currently monitors newspaper articles but do not monitor other means/mode of promotion. The statistics given are merely print media statistics and do not include electronic media coverage.

That being said, for a small agency, we are still making a huge impact in Nebraska. The figures mark a collective effort of the Trust and its grantees in promoting the Trust. The Board receives copies of these newspaper articles via Dropbox which has been set up by Allison.

Publicity Materials

The Trust has an array of materials that are used to publicize the Trust.

- Video – The Trust has two versions of a video that was produced in 2013. One that is 26 minutes and the other about 16 minutes but they have now become quite dated. We also produced a 30 second commercial with KSNB, which has been popular.
- Trust metal signage at project sites
- Promotional items with NET logo (pens, notepads, sharpeners, NET - recyclable plastic bags and tattoos for kids)
- Publications (Resource – monthly newsletter, circulation of our Annual Report, color lift-out from NEBRASKAland magazine and new brochures at Trust events and participating events)
- Grant application folders (General and Recognition Grant Folder) – Online versions only. Established an electronic application process for the 2018 Grant Cycle.
- Broadcast e-mails to promote events. We have transferred our subscription management system to Granicus, which has increased our subscription numbers by about 30% since we started 4 months ago. I expect this to increase further.
- Will be purchasing new banners and table top displays to promote the Trust at events.

Advertising Campaign

The Trust has continued its advertising campaign in some of the selected electronic as well as print media. The advertising campaign has been broken down to the following:

NET

- Advertising on NETV
- Advertising on 10/11 (KSNB) – Sponsorship of the “MY TV” Ad Campaign. Best bang for our buck considering the coverage area.
- Advertising on METV Omaha.
- Statewide advertising with Nebraska Press Association in all local Newspapers.
- Advertising on KRVN – contract with KRVN has been renewed three times.
- Advertising on Net Radio (Nebraska Public Radio) – 150 spots alternating between news and Fresh Air or Music
- Advertising in Siouxland Magazine
- Advertising at FFA Convention
- Advertising in Daily Nebraskan
- Billboard and electronic advertising with Nebraska Lottery in Omaha
- A lift-out in the NEBRASKAland magazine
- Advertising in NebraskaLife
- Collaborative advertising with our grantees – Recycling Bins, Roll-offs, Dumpsters, etc.
- Facebook for the Trust.

Ferguson House

We currently receive a lot of referrals by word of mouth and have been generating income from events. There are currently more events than we can cope with easily at the Trust, with the small staff number.

- Advertising in Lincoln Journal Star – Volunteer Week
- Advertising through KZUM for the usage of the Ferguson House.
- Facebook page for the Ferguson House.

Print Material

- Printed general brochure on the Ferguson House
- Also printed Self Guided Tour brochure
- Webpage on the Ferguson House on the Trust website.
- Updated videos on Ferguson House.

Grantor-Grantee Cross-Promotional Efforts

Grantor-Grantee Promotion - We have always encouraged cross promotion with all grantee organizations. This is done through website links and participation at events. We also send promotional materials to grantees for events/tours that are funded by the Trust. We will continue these efforts with grantee organizations.

Nebraska Lottery - The Trust has also worked more with the Lottery to cross promote. The Lottery logo has been incorporated in most of Trust promotional materials and the Lottery in turn has done some commercials featuring its beneficiaries including the Trust.

Nebraska Academy of Sciences – the Trust cross promotes the PIE Grants with the Nebraska Academy of Sciences in our Newsletter, website and all our printed material.

25th Anniversary Exhibition at the First Floor Rotunda (State Capitol) – The week of March 18-23. More details will follow on this celebratory event. There will also be other celebrations planned alongside our Anniversary but we will keep the board updated.

Events

The Trust has already participated in over 15 events for the first half of the year. Trust materials and promotional items were distributed at all these events. We have five additional events scheduled for the remainder of the year: Nebraska State Fair, World O! Water Festival in Omaha, Heron Haven Wetland Festival, Ponca State Park Outdoor Expo and the upcoming TAC Luncheon.

Website

The website has been a really useful tool for us in communicating with the public as well as the grantees. It is one of our first points of communication with members of the public and grantees. Applicants and grantees have been very dependent on the website to attain the latest news from us as well as grant application forms in Word/PDF formats. These forms were updated in 2016-2017. Updates have also been made to our website to improve our Google search function and add on links to our Ferguson House Facebook page. Over the past year, we have been working to make more electronic forms available on the website to make grants management easier for our grantees as well as internally.

The following priorities for remain for 2017:

- Annual Report 2017
- Implementation of Communications Plan 2017-2018
- Monthly E-Newsletter
- Press releases to local media
- Implementation of electronic grant application for the 2018 Grant Cycle.
- Continued updates on our local contacts database

Enhancing our usage of the new subscription management system through Granicus to improve list management and reach our target audience better