

To: Local RTA Presidents and Public Relations Chairpersons
From: IRTA State Public Relations Committee

Submission Guidelines and Requirements for Local Newsletters, Press Releases, and Website Development

This information contains suggestions to help you develop your local newsletters, press releases, and websites for your local membership. Our goal is to bring the Indiana Retired Teachers Association and your local RTA chapter to the attention of retired and active educators, legislators, and the general public. Information regarding recognition for these efforts at the annual Representative Assembly is also enclosed.

The deadline for submission of one newsletter, two press releases, and the website is March 31. Newsletters and press releases should be mailed to the State Public Relations Chair Gary Addison, 4802 North Sussex Road, Muncie, IN 47304; optimist@sprynet.com.

Your newsletter, press releases, and websites will be recognized at the Representative Assembly.

Newsletters:

Newsletters are invaluable in getting information out to your retired and active teachers. Every RTA should consider developing a newsletter. These can be simple but should include the following:

- Name of your RTA (Banner)
- Minutes of the last meeting/Treasurer's Report
- Committee reports
- Contact information for state and local officers/committee chairs
- Calendar of events for state and local activities

Optional things to include:

- Articles on community service projects/volunteer opportunities
- Feature articles on members
- Memorials
- Photos
- Jokes

Press Releases:

Photo copies of two press releases generated by the local RTA or a feature article by the newspaper staff written between January 1-December 31 for the local newspaper or radio/TV station should be submitted to the State Public Relations Committee by March 1 for recognition at the Representative Assembly. The articles may concern service or group project or individual member accomplishments and should identify retired teachers.

Most newspapers and other forms of media list contact names, addresses, and email addresses for public use. Make a list of the contacts that you will use for your local's information. You will need to update this list regularly. Send the same copy to each media source but in a separate email. Be sure to include your public library. Try to always include a picture with identifying information.

When sending press releases via email, send your press release as the body of the email

rather than as an attachment. Make sure to state “press release” in the subject line. Place your contact information after the body of the press release so the reporter can contact you if further information is needed.

Accompanying photos should be sent as separate attachments to that email in JPG or jpeg format at no more than 150 dpi (dots per inch that decides size) or fewer than 72 dpi. Send the caption for the photo labeled as “caption information.” Do not include the photo within the copy page in your word processing program; always try to attach photos to the email containing your press release.

Some newspapers will not use photos without permission to print. If you determine that such is needed, you may print a typewritten or computerized form stating that permission to use the photo has been given. Leave a line for the signature of each individual. Most newspapers avoid this problem by stating within the caption that the photo has been provided.

Consider these ideas for improved press releases:

- Shorter is better for a news release.
- Double space if submitting hard copy (paper rather than email).
- A single page has the best chance of survival.
- Do not write the headline.
- Keep paragraphs very short--no more than 30 words.
- Try to use at least one strong quotation. Attribute the quotation with name, RTA position, and town of residence.
- Avoid using dates of past events or the year if talking about the current year.
- Always include the organization, its affiliation with IRTA, a short statement of purpose, and local contacts.
- If your county RTA has a website, be sure to list it as the last line item of the press release.
- Use your name, email, and phone number below the copy for further information that might be needed by the media.

On the next page is a sample press release as it would appear in the body of an email submission or as hard copy sent to a newspaper. Remember that hard copy submissions should be double-spaced while email submissions are single-spaced. Each newspaper has a particular style, and changes may be made to your copy. Still, if you follow a similar format and use the suggestions from the IRTA State Public Relations Committee, the most important features of your copy will stand a good survival chance. Don't, however, think that you will ever be given a by-line!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

Your County Retired Teachers Association (YCRTA) was well represented by officers, committee chairs, and members at the recent Indiana Retired Teachers' Representative Assembly in Indianapolis. Along with committee reports and introduction of scholarship winners from the eight different areas, recognition for outstanding community service was awarded. YCRTA member, His/Her Name, Town, received the coveted clock award for exceptional community service. His/her volunteer work included working with disadvantaged children through local reading and library programs. The clock award is sponsored by Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA) and is awarded to retired teachers who are outstanding in their contributions to youth.

Other awards included recognition for outstanding newsletter, press release, and website.

YCRTA is an affiliate of Indiana Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) and promotes legislation and special interest activities designed to improve the economic and social status of retired teachers. His/Her Name is President of the YRCTA.

For further information visit YCRTA's website: www.whateveritis.com.

Submitted by Your Name

YourEmail@whatever.com

Your phone number including area code

Caption for photo attached

Person's Name, town, receives the coveted AMBA Award at the Indiana Retired Teachers Association's Representative Assembly in Indianapolis. He/She was honored for his/her time with his/her church, AARP, and disadvantaged children.

Note: You must give a name and phone number in case the newspaper needs further information! The caption information should be located within the body of the email, as shown above.

Websites:

Websites should be linked to the Indiana Retired Teachers' website. Contact IRTA to set up this link.

Examples of outstanding websites are available on the Indiana Retired Teachers website on the left under "Local Chapter Information." Active websites are underlined and in blue. The Representative Assembly booklet will list past winners of outstanding websites.

Sometimes a county group fights the idea of starting a website for many reasons. Foremost among those reasons is fear. Many feel they just can't develop a website, and individuals today have every reason to be concerned about their identities. Still, a website with no contact information is practically useless. Try to use generic addresses such as webmaster@website.com. Having no website fails to convey the correct message to those active teachers who will be retiring soon.

Your IRTA Public Relations Committee hopes the following guidelines will be helpful when your county decides to take the step of building its own website.

Objectives ...

- To provide information about the local RTA
- To provide a link to the state so affiliations are clear
- To promote community service opportunities
- To offer information to members
- To offer information to potential members
- To offer an inexpensive means for constant legislative updates
- To be recognized among active teachers, who expect informative websites

Content

Information published on a website must represent the county and state association in an appropriate, accurate, and coherent manner.

The IRTA Mission Statement should always appear on the index or homepage or welcome page. ***"The purpose of the State Public Relations Committee is to promote and report the activities and work of the Indiana Retired Teachers Association and county RTAs through communication with local chapters, active teachers, legislators, local communities, and the media."***

Things to Include on a Website:

- Link to Indiana Retired Teachers' website
- Mission statement
- Is website, not blog
- Multiple pages
- Active links located at top or on left
- Contact information, preferably given as webmaster@website.com
- Calendar of events
- Up-to-date news
- Legislative updates
- Information about Membership/Associate Membership
- Benefits available to members

- Travel opportunities available to members
- Date of last revision (should be current)
- Community service/personal achievement stories or opportunities for volunteering
- Counting system to determine number of viewers (ShinyStat.com is a free counter.)
- Good overall appearance (no more than two fonts or two colors)

Things Not to Include on a Website:

- Copyrighted material
- Things that take too long to load
- Negative comments about other organizations
- Political biases/personal opinions
- Religious announcements
- Advertising or fund-raising promotions for organizations not affiliated with IRTA or the local RTA
- Opportunities which support local businesses

Ways to Hide Email Addresses from Web Bots (computer programs which scan for addresses):

The usual problem with email addresses on a website is that bots and other search things find your email and can then publish or share it with spammers. None of the suggestions that follow are foolproof, but your website user needs access and he/she is not usually the source of problems that give you problems when they know your email address.

1. A simple technique that foil most bots ... webmaster [at] mydomain.com ---- Most people intuitively know what you're communicating. Your user will need to put the address into his/her email client.

2. Using a domain email like webmaster@mydomain.com hides your personal email, but it is still readable by many bots which are the usual source for SPAM. You'll probably just get the spam here instead of on your personal email. You still might want something like this even for the solutions below so you still don't expose your personal email. It's often easier to change it if it somehow gets to a spammer.

3. Use an email encryter...very few bots can read these but the link is not invisible to your website user.

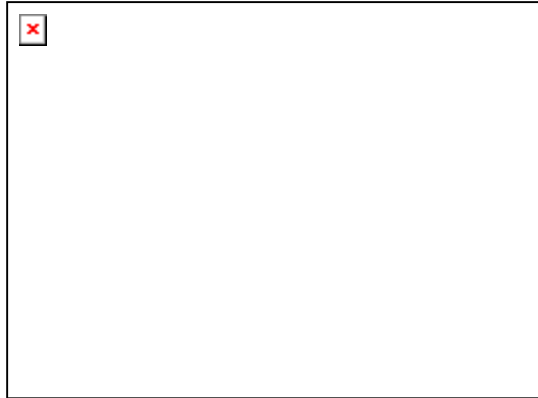
[Dynamic Drive email tools](http://www.dynamicdrive.com/emailriddler/index.htm) --http://www.dynamicdrive.com/emailriddler/index.htm

For more information, [Contact us](#) -- using Javascript

[Email Scrambler](http://javascript.about.com/library/blemail1.htm) -- http://javascript.about.com/library/blemail1.htm

Sample ... Report any errors or bad links to [Webmaster](#) --- using HTML
Sample ... Report any errors or bad links to [Webmaster](#) --- using Javascript

4. Create an image of your email address and use it, Bots can't read pictures.



Contact us at

5. Use a form. Web forms can send you an email but the email information is stored on the server and is not visible to website users or bots.

Your Name

Your Email

Message

Check if you are a member

Chicken

Steak

Thank you for contacting us.

How forms work depends on your website server host. Most have a place for you to configure email forwarding or location somewhere on the server. They support text, numbers, text areas, check boxes, radio buttons, menu lists, etc.

This example is not configured to send me the information.

NOTES:

Everyone should be able to use HTML.

Most people should be able to use a FORM or see an IMAGE.

Some people have disabled JAVASCRIPT.

Don't Miss Promotional Opportunities!

Low-cost, grassroots approaches can successfully get your message out in your community. Identify places that allow the posting of announcements and community events. Update the information as needed.

Develop attractive posters for libraries, local restaurants, book stores, credit unions, and church bulletin boards.

Produce flyers that include what your local RTA offers to retired teachers and active teachers. Be sure to include key details such as dates, deadlines, and contact information.

Utilize all local media to reach a larger audience. That includes weekly community tabloids, daily newspapers, local radio stations, and TV community bulletin boards. Remember that all media work well in advance; allow at least two weeks' notice for important announcements.

When your local has something to brag about, don't hesitate to call city TV stations. Nearly every station carries a segment concerning people or groups working for the good of others. Every local needs a newsletter. A newsletter which follows the Public Relations Committee guidelines will be noticed.

Consider developing a website.. Space--and help--is usually free through local libraries or by contacting a member of the State Public Relations Committee. Developing an interesting website that keeps up with current events and offerings will be appreciated by newer and younger retirees especially.

Consider a booth at local fairs. Your posters, displays, fliers, and especially members can promote your organization.

Ask for a booth at Career Day activities at your local high school. You'll see lots of old friends who need to know about our work.

IRTA and your local RTA chapter are the true voice of the retired teacher. Let your community know about your important accomplishments!