



# City of Kyle Communication Policy

The City of Kyle is committed to open, honest communication with residents, businesses, City employees, and visitors. This plan outlines the City's policy in regards to meeting that commitment. The following key assumptions are the basis for this plan:

- Communication should be a priority in the development and planning of programs and services and is necessary to the successful completion and implementation of these activities. To that end, communication resources and efforts should be considered in each part of activity planning to guarantee the success and quality of City customer service.
- All City of Kyle personnel are involved in communication efforts on a daily basis, whether it is dealing one-on-one with customers and/or the general public; working with one another; or responding to the media.
- Due to the growing complexity and volume of City of Kyle communication activities, as well as the increasing interest in the City of Kyle by both internal and external sources, an organized and formal plan is deemed necessary in order to track, monitor and access messages that are being sent and to identify additional communication tools needed to adequately inform these customers and publics.

# **External communication**

**This section provides a brief description of the various vehicles used for external communication currently available to the City for disseminating information and policies relating to the proper management of that information. These vehicles are:**

- Media Relations**
- Internet**
- Kyle Quarterly**
- PEG Channel**
- Advertising**
- Mail Campaigns**
- City Council Meetings**
- Surveys**

## Media Relations

To better serve our community, the City of Kyle needs to let the public know who we are and what we do. That message is often conveyed through the news media. The entire City staff needs to be aware of how we can cooperate with the media to better serve the public.

Communication goals:

- **Establish a uniform procedure for working with the media that will help ensure accuracy, Citywide coordination and a timely response to meet media deadlines.**
- **Maintain a good working relationship with the media.**

Policy:

All media contacts to a department should be reported to the Communications Director.

- If the information requested is considered routine, as defined below, the contacted employee should proceed with giving the reporter the information.
  - Following the interview, the employee should then notify his/her immediate supervisor or department director.
  - The Communications Director should also be notified by a department representative, after the interview takes place. The notification to the Communications Director can be via e-mail, voice mail, page or phone call, whatever is easiest for the department representative.
  - Routine information includes, but is not limited to: general questions about a department's function, items listed on a Council agenda or board/commission agenda, meeting times and locations, special events or news conferences planned by a department, questions about a particular program offered by a department, etc.
- Responding to media inquiries at crime scenes, fires, hazardous materials alarms, and other emergency and/or public safety situations should be handled differently. The responses typically must come from the scene and from the designated spokesperson at that scene. In the case of Fire, Police and EMS, the designee is typically determined by the person in charge of the scene. Power outages or problems involving Water/Wastewater are also included in this exception. The Communications Director should be notified in those instances where there is media coverage and will come to the scene when warranted.

- For any inquiries that require extensive research, involve multiple departments, deal with policy issues, are corporate in nature or may be controversial, the Communications Director should be notified immediately before an interview takes place, via phone or page. A designee from the department(s) involved, along with the Communications Director, will be responsible for coordinating the response to ensure accurate and complete information is given to the reporter. The Communications Director, along with the Department head, will determine who should serve as spokesperson for the media. This must be done in a timely fashion to meet the media deadlines. In these instances, the Communications Director is responsible for notifying the City Manager.
- The Communications Director will work with any City Staff, City Council Member or other City representative regarding obtaining media training.
- City Council Members respond to media inquiries at their own discretion. Council Members are **strongly encouraged** to notify the City Manager's Office and/or the Communications Director when they have had contact with the media.

## Internet

The Internet has increasingly become a tool of choice for City employees, citizens and people, both nationally and internationally, to get information about the City of Kyle.

Communication goal:

- **Be accurate, consistent and timely with information that is to be published on the City's Web site. Additionally, ensure that the information published is accessible by all people regardless of their respective level of technology.**

Policy:

- The Communications Director, will determine what information is highlighted on the City's home page.
- The Communications Director will work with department heads and the City Manager to determine what information will be posted to the City's Web site.
- Linking to an outside news source as a way to promote City of Kyle-related information is prohibited. Exceptions to this would be in the case of a co-sponsored event.
- Information posted to the Internet should include a contact name with a phone number and an e-mail address. This contact person should be in a position to respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner.
- The Communications Director is responsible for determining what graphics standards might be appropriate for the City's web site

## **The Kyle Quarterly**

This publication is a general interest eight-page quarterly newsletter focused on City news and initiatives and mailed to all utility accounts in the City of Kyle. This newsletter, published by the communications director, may include submittals from City departments. Mailings also may include fliers from City departments and community groups. Additionally, the newsletter is posted on the City's web site.

Communication goal:

- **An effective, economical means to educate neighborhoods, residents and businesses about City services and resources for neighborhoods and to promote City information to grassroots organizations.**

Policy:

- The Communications Director will establish a mechanism with which all relevant departments can have input into the content of the newsletter.
- The newsletter will be mailed to each City of Kyle utility account at intervals determined by the Communications Director with approval from the City Manager.
- The Communications Director will post the newsletter in its entirety on the City's Web site.
- The editorial content should reflect the policy goals of the City Manager and the Kyle City Council.
- The newsletter will be distributed and promoted at all appropriate City facilities and related community events.

## **Public, Education and Government (PEG) Channel**

Once established, the City's PEG cable channel is based primarily on a format of unedited, televised government meetings and media events. The channel will also run an electronic bulletin board at times when there are no broadcast shows airing.

Communication goal:

- **The City's PEG Channel offers the best option for bringing City government into the City's households. Because of some limitations – namely citizens' access to the station and competing mediums – The PEG Channel should be utilized as one resource among many to disseminate information on a variety of City issues.**

Policy:

- The PEG Channel will be promoted as an outlet for citizens to receive information about the City.
- The Communications Director, with input from the City Department heads, will evaluate ways to incorporate key City messages through the PEG Channel.
- All aired meetings and events will be recorded and archived and made available to the public.
- Content for the PEG Channel will be developed by the Communications Director and approved by the City Manager.
- Request from outside sources to air programming on the PEG Channel will be considered on a case by case basis by the Communications Director.

## **Advertising**

Generally in display form and not required by law. Some advertising is done to meet legal requirements for notice of public hearings or proposed City action.

Communication Goal:

- **Provide information about upcoming events, programs, public hearings, etc. that are sponsored or offered by the City.**

Policy:

- A copy of any display ad, announcing a special events and/or upcoming public hearings and meetings should be sent to the Communications Director for information purposes prior to the ad being sent for publication.
- All display ads should include the City Seal.
- Legal notices should follow standards that identify the notices as advertisements from the City of Kyle.
- The Communications Director will notify the City Manager regarding any advertising being considered for placement

## **Mail campaigns**

Mail campaigns use the postal service to distribute City-related information to people's homes or businesses. This can also include door-to-door delivery of notices and door hangers.

Communication goal:

- **Communicate the City's policies, services offered, events and other messages to the general public or to certain segments of the City, depending on the issue.**

Policy:

- Any communication sent to the general public to announce a special event, program, etc. will have a City Seal included in the document.
- The Communications Director is responsible for determining what graphics standards are appropriate for direct-mail campaigns, door-to-door delivery or notices and door hangers.
- A copy of any proposed direct mail piece should be sent to the Communications Director prior to being printed or mailed.

## City Council meetings

Kyle City Council meetings are conducted on the first and third Tuesday's of each month, usually at City Council Chambers. However some meetings may be held at other venues. The Communications Director handles on-site media relations and serves a "gatekeeper" role by ensuring that all media requests are responded to by the most appropriate and informed City Staff representative. Meetings are broadcast live on Channel 6 and are rebroadcast at intervals scheduled by Channel 6 personnel.

Communication goal:

- **Ensure City response to agenda items that will get media coverage through an awareness of issues. Promote unnoticed "good news" issues for the City.**

Policy:

- The Communications Director will work with department heads and the City Manger to identify agenda items for potential advance publicity.
- The Communications Director will work with department heads to identify agenda items that will require research and ensure that any needed background material is made available to representatives of the media and the general public. Key spokespeople should also be identified prior to the Council meeting to assist the media in getting questions answered about specific agenda items in a timely manner.
- All City Council meetings will be aired "live" one the City's PEG Channel as soon as the Channel is active. The meetings will be rebroadcast at predetermined times to allow for viewing by as many interested parties as possible.
- Recordings of City Council meetings will be achieved and made available to the public upon request.

# Internal communication

This section provides a brief description of the various vehicles of internal communication currently utilized by the City for disseminating information. These vehicles are:

**Bulletin Boards**  
**Email**  
**Staff Meetings**

## Bulletin boards

Bulletin boards should serve as information centers and a place where employees can go for regular updates on issues.

Communication goal:

- **A means for immediate information to promote a department/division sense of identity.**

Policy:

- Department heads will encourage appropriate use of bulletin boards and ensure that access is available to all employees.
- Content is internally focused and for use by department/division personnel. If material is of a confidential nature or inappropriate for those outside the department/division, then other means of communication should be used.
- Each department/division should maintain a bulletin board in a highly visible, highly trafficked area.

## **Email**

Emails can be City-wide, department-wide, to a group of employees, or to individuals. This can be a very effective form of communication and provides documentation of the message and when it was delivered.

Communication goal:

- **Content connects employees and promotes departmental policies.**

Policy:

- All emails should be retained by the City's email host and on each users computer for a minimum of six months.
- Any business related documents within an email are subject to that documents retention schedule as defined by the City of Kyle's Document Retention policy.
- Department heads are responsible for delivering information contained in emails to any appropriate staff that do not have access to email.

## **Staff meetings**

Sessions should be face-to-face on a regular basis, no less than annually for entire departments and monthly for division staff.

Communication goal:

- **Provide forum for issues, policies and departmental expectations to be discussed in two-way format with personnel.**

Policy:

- These meetings are open to City employees only and as such, they are not open to the media or general public.

## **Conclusion**

This Communication Plan is intended to be a “living” document and will be revised as needed and kept up-to-date by the Communicaitons Director.