



West Branch City Council
City Administrator's Report
2/05/18

Pending Action Items:

The Wastewater Task Group – No Updates

Report from the Desk of the City Administrator:

- After some painstaking negotiations a 10 year lease has been signed for the 101 Council Street Property in West Branch, Iowa with a company known as US Venture. A parent company for US Auto Force who will be occupying the building formerly known as the P&G warehouse. U.S. Auto Force is a leading wholesale distributor of national and international tire brands, aftermarket undercar parts and vehicle lubrication services. The business is expected to operate local, regional, national, and international distribution and retail services.
- Kudos to our Fire Department (a Job Well Done!!!)



- A Call for Service – The City has a number of vacant and term expirations in our Boards and Commissions. Therefore the City is inviting citizens to volunteer their time to one of our openings. These boards and commissions are aimed to be diverse in opinions and back grounds. For details call 319-643-5888, ext. 10
- The International City / County Manager Association (ICMA) provided a great focus on issues facing smaller communities. For this reason, I will be releasing several presentations that were highlighted at this year’s conference. The topic this week is a continuation of a presentation entitled, “Organizing a Premier Community”. Please see attachment 1 (Step 2). Step 1 was attached in the 12/04/17 City Administrator’s Report; Step 2 was attached in the 12/18/17 City Administrator’s Report.

Events / Scheduled Meetings:

Quote from the Organizing a Premier Community Presentation (part 2) is attached.

“The Strength of a Community Lies in the Hands and the Hearts of the People Who Live There.”

Attachment 1
ICMA Presentation
“Organizing a Premier Community”


STEP 3 **Spread the Word**

This step is about building public awareness and interest for your Community Heart & Soul project. It’s also about involving new voices and demonstrating transparency in your work. Crafting messages carefully framed to reach diverse people can have a surprising impact on how residents react to your efforts. Before you start getting the word out, assemble the tools, information, and people power required to support communications.

Step 3 includes three tasks:

- 3.1 Set the stage
- 3.2 Prepare a communications plan
- 3.3 Build community awareness

TASK 3.1
Set the stage

 The Foundation’s [OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS](#) resource and [COMMUNITY NETWORK ANALYSIS TOOL](#) will help your team with this task.

Community members will want to know the basics of the project—the who, what, when, and where. Heart & Soul communication goes further: it helps people understand why the method will benefit them and their town. Heart &

Community engagement and participation is only successful if people know when to show up, why they should bother, and that their participation matters. Heart & Soul needs a communications plan and a designated team to carry it out. Some members of the communications team will come from your Heart & Soul Team, while others, with particular interests and skills around communications, may come on board for this purpose. Successful communication requires a combination of skills in community organizing, marketing savvy, writing, graphic design, website and social media development, and managing email and address lists. It can even call for the use of more than one language, where necessary, and an understanding of culturally appropriate communication methods.

A communications plan should clearly establish:

1. Messages: what you will say
2. Audiences: to whom you will say it
3. Communication channels: what methods you will use to deliver it
4. Messengers: who will deliver the messages
5. Measurement: how you will know that you are successful

1. **Messages.** These are simple talking points that explain Heart & Soul in various ways. Team members need to be able to explain the process in the time it takes to get through a grocery store checkout line—on a normal day, not the Wednesday before Thanksgiving! A few simple messages must convey why Heart & Soul is important, and such messages should be tailored to fit the audience. For example, be sure to let the local

Practicing a grocery store checkout-line speech is a great activity for a Heart & Soul Team meeting so members can clarify and refine the message and become comfortable sharing it. Have team members practice their answers with each other, and be sure to do some role-playing. What would you say if you were talking to a high school student, an elder, or a rancher? Would you say something different to each? Roll your grocery cart up to the checkout line to see why practicing is important (Figure 3). For more ideas, see our [Checkout-Line Speech Examples](#).

2. **Audiences.** These are the people whom you want to reach with your messages. As you'll have learned from your network analysts, target groups might include: home-owners, renters, business owners, volunteer and civic organizations, students, young working parents, retirees and seniors, low-income residents, ethnic minorities. For more ideas, see our [Many Perspectives from Diverse Voices](#) list.

Since Community Heart & Soul focuses on increasing the number *and* diversity of participants in planning, pay careful attention to finding people who are not typically part of the planning process and those who are particularly tough to reach.

3. **Communication channels.** These are ways to get the word out, such as local newspapers and radio stations, websites, email lists, hangouts around town, bingo nights, gatherings in homes, the post office (direct mailings are pricey but effective), and the utility bill (which can often include notices or flyers). Make a list of these opportunities and figure out which channels best serve the different sorts of people and neighborhoods that make up your town (Task 1.2: Understand community networks). Learn how to use these channels most effectively: what are the deadlines for placing a notice in the paper, and who is the right person to contact at the radio station? Using existing outlets is always easier than inventing new ones.
4. **Messengers.** Understand that some messengers are better suited to certain messages or certain audiences. Here again, your Community Network Analysts will have identified key people who can relay your message to specific groups. A good friend or trusted colleague is often the only person who can persuade a potential volunteer to participate. Your team is a team of messengers, and they all have at least one friend who is well connected to a group of residents you need to reach. If there is an important group not represented on your team, work to find a connector who can engage that group. Make it clear to team members that this is part of their job.

FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE CHECKOUT-LINE SPEECH

Team member with no practiced messages:

Neighbor named Hal:

Hi Norm, what's this Heart & Soul thing all about, anyway?

Team member named Norm:

Well, Hal, we're holding lots of meetings and talking about stuff that's going on in our community. You know, economic development, zoning regulations, and comp plans and how to make them better. And we think if everyone gets together and talks a lot we can vision out for the future with better ways to do things—a way to talk about the future, you know?

Neighbor named Hal:

Hey, is that cheese on sale? See you later!

Team member with a ready-to-go message:

Neighbor named Hal:

Hi Norm, what's this Heart & Soul thing all about, anyway?

Team member named Norm:

Glad you asked, Hal. We're trying to bring our community together by talking about and identifying what matters most to all of us. It's the heart and soul of our town. We know our heart and soul will guide us to make the best decisions for our future and what we love about this place!

Neighbor named Hal:

Wow, can I do anything to support that vital work?

Team member named Norm:

Yes, you could join our team as a volunteer, and we'd love to hear your thoughts on how to get your neighborhood involved.

5. **Measurement.** The best way to evaluate your outreach efforts is to ask a quick set of questions at your events as part of a [Participant Survey Form](#). Asking these questions consistently will help you to understand which audiences you're reaching through which channel(s), and to assess whether you're living up to Heart & Soul Principle 1: Involve Everyone.

Here are some examples:

- How did you hear about this event?
- How old are you?
- In which neighborhood do you live?
- How long have you lived here?
- How would you describe your level of involvement with this project so far? (Response options: A lot, Some, Not much, A little bit, or I'm a first-timer.)

The true measure of success lies in combining the responses to these key questions. Let's say you host an event, and you learn that 85 percent of the people there heard about the event via a poster at the coffee shop, and they're all ages 50-65, live in a nice neighborhood, are longtime residents, and have been very involved in the project so far. This tells you that you've got a very committed group of people representing a reasonably similar viewpoint. Every community effort needs this core of committed people.

If, however, you learn that 50 percent of people heard about the event via a sign at the entrance to the mobile home community, and your age groups, neighborhoods, and level of involvement are more varied, you know that you're starting to cook with gas! The next time you plan an event, you might consider adjusting your communications efforts to support this change in representation.

In addition to helping you do a better job, gathering such information makes your work more open, or transparent. Participants who know what becomes of the opinions and ideas they offer are far more likely to trust the process and the people associated with it, and to continue to participate. Besides, our Heart & Soul Principles promise that community members will be asked their opinions about what matters most, that their opinions will be heard, and that their opinions will contribute to decision making down the line. Information gathered and stuffed in a shoebox will not, we guarantee, contribute significantly to your town's future decisions and actions. This transparency and good record keeping delivers on our Principle 3: Play the Long Game.

CREATE Your Heart & Soul Identity

Once you've identified the overall goals of your Heart & Soul initiative, you'll want to come up with a distinct brand. A brand identifies your project as unique.

It includes a name, and often an image or logo, but don't over complicate this. Your town's name followed by Heart & Soul works just fine. Include your project name and logo in all of your communications efforts to help residents easily identify your Heart & Soul project. When people see the logo, they know that the flyer, ad, event, or document is connected to this effort. But branding is more than the consistent use of a recognizable logo. Each of your community events and all of your team members' interactions, whether with individuals or organizations, become part of your brand, or reputation. Your aim is to make those interactions strengthen trust in your brand.

FIGURE 4: BRANDING EXAMPLES



TASK 3.2

Prepare a communications plan

Now for the nuts and bolts of communications and outreach: Before Heart & Soul goes live, take the time to prepare a communications plan (see [☑ Communications Plan Basics](#)) and assemble basic communication materials and the means to manage and deliver them. The following lists are a place to start, but our [Outreach and Communications](#) resource and supporting samples and templates are the places to go for the real deal.

Elements of strong communications:

- **Project purpose**—clarify what you are communicating about with two to three key ideas. What do you want to accomplish with your Heart & Soul project?
- **Communications goals**—What are you trying to accomplish with communications? Substantially increase participation? Show people why Heart & Soul will benefit them and the community? (See [☑ Communications Goals Follow Through](#) sample)
- **Communications team**—These are dedicated, knowledgeable volunteers; some who have professional communications experience
- **Internal communications**—How will you communicate with key project partners and project teams about meetings times, events, updates? How often?
- **Core messages and branding**—Develop key messages and a brand linked to Heart & Soul Principles (see [☑ Branding Brainstorm Tips](#))
- **Online presence**—Create and manage a website, social media profiles that include announcements, regularly updated information, interactive content and public access to records (see [☑ Website and Social Media Tips](#)).
- **Contact management**—Devise a way to manage contact information for hundreds of people; maintaining Excel files may be the simplest approach.
- **Communications activities**
 - Identify priority audiences using the [Community Network Analysis Tool](#) resource
 - Summarize your town's media assets (see [Outreach and Communications](#) resource). List local media, interested reporters
 - Use traditional and non-traditional channels most effectively (see [☑ Publicity Work Plan](#) sample)

- Coordinate communications efforts with project timeline—have a communications plan for each event and milestone.

- **Communications budget**

- ☑ [Sample Communications Budget](#)

- **Benchmarks of success** (evaluation)

- Choose measurement methods
 - Set realistic targets (how many Facebook likes; how many attendees at events)
 - Save all press articles, letters to the editor, media interviews
 - Assess which channels are working best (see [☑ Prioritize Communications Channels Sample](#))

Pre-launch communication materials:

- FAQs (frequently asked questions) and their answers (see [☑ FAQ Samples](#))
- Talking points for volunteers (see [☑ Talking Points Samples](#))
- Process map or timeline as a simple diagram that conveys the major project steps (see [☑ Milestones Worksheet](#) and [☑ Milestones Poster](#))
- Templates for newsletters, flyers, and posters (see [☑ Graphic Design Tips](#))

Helpful communications materials:

- Communications team's meeting notes (see [☑ Meeting Notes Sample](#))
- Summary reports from activities, press releases and articles (see [☑ Summary Report Sample](#))
- Advertisements (flyers, posters, mailers, newspaper ads) to promote events (listen to [☑ PSA Example](#))
- Presentations to provide project updates to clubs, committees, elected officials, and others
- Newsletters (printed or digital)

TASK 3.3

Build community awareness

This task is about building awareness, interest, and good will for your efforts by making a positive first impression—and positive second, third, and fourth impressions. Building awareness that leads to participation means building credibility and trust, and that means being honest and transparent in all of your dealings. Residents need to hear about

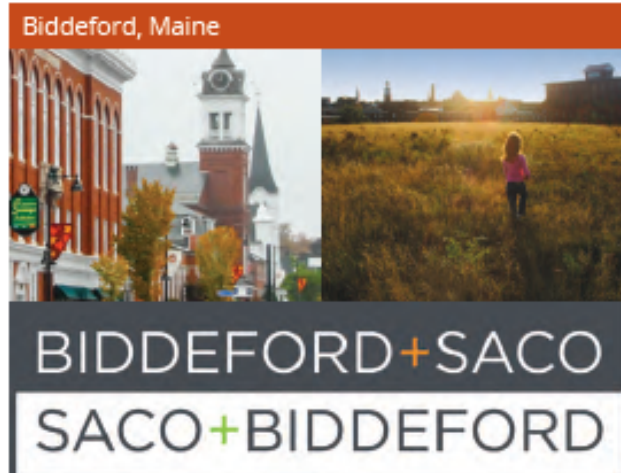
the process, understand how it can benefit the community and themselves, experience what it is like to be engaged in a meaningful way, and, as a result, be eager to continue to participate. One of the most important results of Phase 1 is to have well-informed, engaged community members who believe that the Heart & Soul process is worthy of their time and effort.

There are soft-launch and hard-launch approaches to building awareness. Successful approaches, especially for organizations that are new to community engagement, start with easier and less risky preliminary (soft-launch) activities, which begin to get the word out to build interest in a higher profile (hard-launch) activity that will kick off the Heart & Soul process.

Examples of soft-launch activities include:

- Go to regular gatherings of social and service clubs, the local government, and non-profit committees and making a pitch for the project. Give them reasons to care and show them how Heart & Soul will benefit their work.
- Get a table or booth at local festivals, farmers' and craft markets and set up an information station with some creative activities.
- Organize volunteers to meet with people one on one, promote this important work, ask questions, and *listen*.
- Persuade a local establishment to host a Heart & Soul Happy Hour.
- Enter the 4th of July or Mardi Gras parade.
- Start a social media campaign.

Hard-launch activities are usually big events such as a community forum or summit, a celebration, or a gathering of some kind that requires a major marketing effort. Such events combine awareness-raising and information-sharing activities along with more relationship-building activities such as discussion groups. Keypad polling (see page 34) can be a great icebreaker that also gives every person in the room—even the shyest—a voice. Big kick-off events can be expensive in hours and/or dollars, so get your money's worth: use a big kickoff event to also get started on Phase 2: Explore Your Community by gathering input from residents. For ideas on promoting a kick-off event, see our [Launch Party Promotion Plan](#) sample.



ON THE GROUND MARKETING BUILDS BRIDGES

In Biddeford, Maine, a [Community Heart & Soul project](#) led to a master plan spelling out goals for the small city, one of which was more marketing. Biddeford looked to neighboring Saco to do some regional marketing. Before co-branding could happen it quickly became clear that the two towns first had to contend with some history.

Saco and Biddeford have a history of division and not just by the Saco River that flows between them. The divide dates back to the nineteenth century. Biddeford was a textile mill town and home to the people who worked in the mills. Saco was traditionally where the mill owners and managers lived. Time and circumstances have eroded much of the divide, but when it came time for co-branding, longstanding sensitivities surfaced.

"It always came up. Was it Biddeford and Saco or Saco and Biddeford?" said Delilah Poupore, executive director of [Heart of Biddeford](#), the non-profit that led the Heart & Soul project. "There were feelings about that. There were traditions about that."

The solution: acknowledge the divide and move past it. Here's how the brand statement summed it up: "We are Biddeford and Saco, Saco and Biddeford: one dynamic place, no matter how you say it."