

Public Relations

2010-2011 National President's Theme: The Power of One
2010-2011 Department President's Theme: It is Great to be an American!

Plan of Action: Public Relations

Purpose: To work collaboratively with all levels of the organization to create, implement and support a proactive communications network that advances the objectives and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and positively projects our image and programs to the general public.

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Objectives:

1. To promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary, its mission and goals, through a variety of materials and resources that will be made available to Departments and Units online and/or hard copy.
 - a. Create a Public Relations Toolkit and provide training in its implementation.
 - b. Develop speeches/news releases for the following: Memorial Day, Poppy, Four Chaplains Sunday, D-Day, American Legion Day, Pearl Harbor Day and other veteran-related days as appropriate.
 - c. Identify brochures and other publications that represent the Auxiliary's programs and purpose.
 - d. Involve Junior members in promoting social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr and MyVetwork through bulletins that identify the process to participate.
 - e. Work collaboratively with the Department to provide content for the ALA website to include best practices from Units.
 - f. Promote the free *ALA e-News* and emphasize increased member subscriptions.
 - g. Promote the identity of the American Legion Auxiliary, its mission and goals, by expanding the distribution of ALA materials, including gift subscriptions of the magazine, pamphlets and applications within the community at local libraries, job fairs, medical facilities and supermarkets.
 - h. Work collaboratively with all Department Program Chairmen to identify public relations needs for their programs.
 - i. Work with Department Chairmen to compile a list of media contacts for Units to use within each Department.
 - j. Promote American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary collaboration through linkages with information included on The American Legion website.
2. To compile and distribute innovative public relations ideas, as submitted by Units, via the website.
3. To recognize those Units that establish new websites.

DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI WEB SITE: www.missala.com
DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK GROUP: *American Legion Auxiliary Mississippi*

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Public Relations Awards

- A. **Unit award:** Public Relations – Outstanding Overall PR Program, presented to the Unit Chairman having the best overall PR program in the Department.
Materials and guidelines:
- Copies of articles, newsletters, pictures of displays, events promoting Units, speeches given, website URL, or any other examples of public relations may be included in the entry. Junior programs should be included as well as press book development.
 - Entries must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words
 - Deadline: May 1, 2011
 - Send to Department PR Chairman. This is a Department award and is not forwarded to National.
- B. **Unit award:** Program Emphasis -- Best Three Media Releases
The Department Chairman will choose the best set of three articles submitted by a Unit and send them to the designated member of the National Public Relations Committee.
Materials and guidelines:
Units are encouraged to prepare press releases (photo may or may not be used with article and article pertaining to the same subject).
- Include three different media publications, highlighting different ALA programs, published in three different months (Sept. 1, 2010 – May 1, 2011). Example: December-Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; February-Americanism; April-Children & Youth.
 - Acceptable media publications must support the Auxiliary's mission and goals.
 - Deadline: May 1, 2011
 - Send to Department PR Committee Member Linda Rollins
- C. **Unit award:** Innovative Public Relations Activities
Award: citation
Presented to: all Units submitting a “best practice” that is highlighted on the National website
Materials and guidelines:
- Unit documents the innovative best practice activity and submits a copy to the National organization.
 - Documentation must be from a media source between April 30, 2010, and May 1, 2011.
 - Deadline: June 1, 2011
 - Send to Department PR Chairman, with a copy to the Department Chairman
- D. **Unit award:** Website - New Website Launch
Award: National citation
Presented to: all Units developing a website during 2010-2011
Materials and guidelines:
- Website URL, webmaster name and contact info
 - Website must have been created since September 1, 2010.
 - deadline: May 1, 2011
 - Send URL address to Department PR Committee Member Angela Kilcrease

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- E. **Unit Award - Press Book** – Due at State Convention in July 2011 or mail to Department Chairman before convention. Each Unit should create a book of the year's published news articles, newsletters, bulletins, fliers, etc., and each **must** mention the Unit name/American Legion Auxiliary to be accepted. The Department will give first, second and third place awards for best overall Unit press book. There will be no Unit membership size category. All Unit membership sizes will compete in one contest.

Material must be prepared in a press book no larger than 12"x15." News clippings and other PR items should be placed on white paper with minimal decorations. Some color, primarily on the cover page is acceptable. Newspaper articles and photos concerning an Auxiliary and /or Legion Family function or program must be placed in chronological order. The first page of entry must include the name and address of the Unit PR chairman and name, location and number of the Unit. The entry must also include a completed copy of the Unit's Annual Public Relations Report form and a narrative report not to exceed 1,000 words. The narrative must describe how the PR program was promoted in the Unit, making reference to the newspaper clippings included in the press book. Copies of articles may be used. **The name of the newspaper and date (located at either the top or bottom of the newsprint page on which the article appears) must be clipped and included with each article.** There will not be National competition in this category.

- F. **Department of Mississippi Press Book** – Send original clippings to the Department PR Chairman of your Unit's articles (with paper's name and date of publication), Unit newsletters, District newsletters, bulletins, fliers, public event programs and anything else used in promotion of a Unit event, program or meeting. The articles submitted by Units throughout Mississippi will be compiled into a Department of Mississippi Press Book. Please plan to make your Unit's PR efforts a part of this year's permanent record. There will NOT be a National competition in this category this year.

- G. **Junior Public Relations Award – Best Media Coverage of Activity or Project Award:** National Chairman's Award, presented to one Junior group (Department, District or Unit)

Materials and Guidelines: Articles, newsletters, pictures of displays promoting an event are all acceptable. Deadline: May 1, 2011. Send your entry to Department PR Committee Member Mary Jo Abraham, who will select winning entry and forward to National Chairman for consideration.

Resources

The following resources direct you to programs and services related to the objectives of the National Public Relations Committee as related in this Plan of Action.

Auxiliary information: [www.legion-aux.org/MO-Programs/Public Relations/resources](http://www.legion-aux.org/MO-Programs/Public%20Relations/resources) and [www.legion-aux.org/Public Relations/Public RelationsMaterials/Index](http://www.legion-aux.org/Public%20Relations/Public%20RelationsMaterials/Index)

1. Media contacts in local areas: <http://capwiz.com/legion/dbq/media>.
ALA sample news release template for Units: available online or by contacting National Headquarters at alahq@legion-aux.org.

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2. *Writing Tips*, available by contacting National Headquarters at alahq@legion-aux.org.
3. *Getting Started in Unit Public Relations*, included in the toolkit, online or by contacting National Headquarters at alahq@legion-aux.org.

HomeFront magazine and National News newsletter contain messages from the National President, Committee Chairmen, feature articles on issues of interest, best practice showcases, new programs and activities of senior and junior members. Both publications are free with membership.

Resources provided by the American Legion:

The American Legion Web site offers various points of information. See www.legion.org/whatsnew/publicrelations/publications.

Additional Resources:

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, current edition (available online/in book stores)

Wall Street Journal/Washington Post (keep current on veteran's issues)

Wall Street Journal (subscription rate may vary)

Washington Post (rates vary based on delivery location)