

## **MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS**

A media interview is a communication opportunity. No matter what topic the interviewer has in mind, you have the opportunity to make your own key points. Here are a number of tips to help you stay in control of the interview process.

### *Before*

- Track all media inquiries and note the reporter's name, organization, date and purpose.
- If possible, review the scope of the interview with the reporter so you may anticipate what might be asked.
- Provide background information that helps the reporter understand the issues.
- Identify the points that you want to communicate during the interview and make sure these facts come to mind easily.
- Identify a message that you can incorporate into your first and last remark (e.g., Reporter opens interview saying "Thanks for talking with us today." You answer: "I'm proud to speak on behalf of this unified response effort," or "Thank you for this chance to promote flood insurance.")
- Dress appropriately.

### *During*

- Listen to the entire question before answering.
- Avoid speculation.
- Beware of false assumptions and erroneous conclusions.
- Avoid hypothetical questions.
- Be alert to multiple questions, and address them individually.
- Be confident and concentrate on delivering your message.
- Keep your answers simple and direct.
- Speak in "sound bites" (concise, memorable explanations).
- Never repeat inaccurate or damaging information spoken within a reporter's question. Instead, state the information in a positive manner within your answer.

- Do not refer to the reporter by name during your answers, as the reporter may not be included when the interview is aired.
- Treat all questions seriously.
- NEVER speak “off the record.”
- While answering questions, be attuned to opportunities to promote *your* messages.
- When you have answered well, stop speaking. Resist the urge to “fill the silences.”
- If you are being recorded or taped and botch an answer, simply begin the answer again. If taped, the exchange will most likely be edited.
- Avoid nervous gestures.
- Display good posture and maintain eye contact.
- If you wear glasses, ensure they are not slipping downward. Remove dark glasses.
- Avoid wearing stripes and red
- Do not overuse hand gestures.
- If seated, ensure that your jacket does not ride-up by sitting on the coattails.
- Leave all equipment concerns to reporter or sound technician.

*After*

- Obtain any information you promised to supply.
- Provide written background information, and be available to the reporter for follow-up questions.
- If the story is publicized with inaccuracies, call the reporter and politely point out the errors.