

Wire Services & State Radio Networks

Why are the wire services and state radio networks not used by the Corps of Engineers as much as they should? It's mystifying, since their exposure is so widespread. Have you ever tried either media outlet?

It's easy. Here's how. Normally there are two wire service bureaus in most large cities and some with regional bureau staffs. They are the Associated Press and the United Press International. There are others, but AP and UPI are the biggies. Remember, they send wire photos, too. A little wire service background might help. The coming of the telegraph speeded the gathering of news, but it also increased the cost. In 1848, six New York morning papers formed the Associated Press of New York, forerunner of the modern press association of the same name. The excitement of the Mexican War and of the political crises leading up to the Civil War spurred attention to the need for better mass communications.

United Press Associations formed from earlier regional agencies in 1907. Two years later the International News Service was born. In 1958 UP and INS merged to form UPI.

Reuters is the third wire service you should at least be aware of. The Reuters (pronounced "roy-ters") news report, which is edited principally in London, is purchased by some metropolitan American newspapers and TV-radio network news departments as a supplementary service. Reuters is the only foreign press association with important, in-place news outlets throughout America. This British-based wire service opened its markets to the United States with the opening of the Atlantic cable in 1866.

Enough history. Back to business, let's say you are planning to get the word out about a gigantic water safety festival and you want the information to go state-wide and beyond. Bring on the wire services to help. And, here is where your media

directory will come in handy (Chapter 22). Look up the bureau nearest you and telephone them. They are on an ultra-tight deadline and want you to feed them information. Leaving the office costs them time and money, except for large, hot stories. Therefore, here's where your fax machine will help. Every so often, on a major or unique feature story, the wire service will come out. If you want wire service participation, plan ahead and get on their travel schedule for hard news or feature stories.

State Radio Network

As before, if you want to "shotgun" your water safety activities use the statewide radio network. They are also listed in the media directory. Make sure to have what you want to say either on the computer or hard copy like with the wire service, but most importantly, have close at hand what you want to READ. Give the network some background, maybe fax it to them after the initial telephone call, and then be prepared to give them a beeper or actuality. Meaning, the radio person on the other end of the telephone line will tape what you say to be aired, with an intro and out-cut of information. If you should goooooof, stop, and start all over, they will edit it. Be very careful what you say during these interviews.

One great asset of statewide radio networks is most every mom-and-pop operated radio station — 1,000-watters, dawn to dusk — subscribes to this service. And, it's so easy. Remember, like wire service personnel, radio network folks stay in the office and collect from their outlying radio stations and people like YOU.

Are you about ready to go statewide with your saving lives campaign? Have at it... and good luck.