

Writing an effective press release

(from *The Courier-Journal* staff)

Reporters and editors like news releases. They want to find out about potential stories that they can cover and publish in the newspaper. If your event or idea is novel, new, different, intriguing, funny, tragic, important, groundbreaking or colorful, say so. Do it quickly and get to the point near the top of the release.

Here's what should be in a release:

- ▶ Who is hosting or sponsoring the event.
- ▶ What the event is. Is it a news conference, a symposium, a demonstration, a rally, performance art?
- ▶ When it is. Please include the date, the time and the day of the week. (Editors are always looking for weekend stories, so specify whether it's on a Saturday or Sunday.)
- ▶ Where it will be. Please include the address and directions.
- ▶ The name of a person to contact for more information. Include that person's phone numbers at work and at home, as well as his or her e-mail address. Make sure your point person is well-informed about the event and is available for calls or e-mails.
- ▶ Confine your release to one page if at all possible (two at most, but one page is better).
- ▶ When the press release is ready, take time to select the news department, editor or reporter most likely to be interested in your story idea or event. It's not a good idea to blanket the newsroom with your releases; chances are one editor will think another editor is going to do something with your information.
- ▶ Two good reasons to follow up your mailed, faxed or e-mailed press release with a phone call: To ensure it arrived and was read, and to establish personal contact with your recipient.

(use ### or -30- at the end)