

### ***What is a Speakers Bureau?***

Your Civil Air Patrol unit speakers bureau should be a coordinated effort to disseminate CAPs information, goals and needs. It is an ongoing part of an effective public awareness campaign that should be included in your Unit Public Affairs Plan.

### ***How can a Speakers Bureau help my unit?***

A speakers bureau should be considered a continuous program aimed at:

- Educating the community about the Civil Air Patrol.
- Motivating people to support your unit.
- Explaining a special challenge faced by your unit.
- Announcing events or new projects.
- Training and recruiting new members.
- Educating the unit's membership.

This public awareness effort is also particularly helpful during a crisis, creating a face-to-face outlet to reach key audiences with the your units message, as well as to dispel rumors or confusion about the critical situation.

Civil Air Patrol speakers can provide a much more personal contact than an emailed media release. Your unit speakers can also respond to specific audience questions, allowing members of your community to hear the message without media spin and clarifying fine points.

### ***Key Elements***

1. Selecting Civil Air Patrol Speakers
2. Selecting the Unit's Target Audiences
3. Selecting Your Unit's Message

Once you realize how a speakers bureau can support your unit, you must determine what specific messages are appropriate to communicate. It is a good idea to begin by posing these questions:

1. What sets your CAP unit apart from others?
2. What is your unit trying to accomplish?
3. What is the primary reason for the bureau's existence (education, membership, community support)?
4. Whom do you wish to reach?
5. What does the future of your unit look like?
6. What type of results do you expect?

### ***Topics for Speakers***

Your unit should have a 'canned' presentation explaining CAP's overall mission, its program offerings, who benefits from or uses these services, and the types of volunteer opportunities that exist. This is a broad brush educational approach, and clearly advises the community of the basics regarding the organization and lets an audience know how they can best support your unit.

Another planned presentation is a speech focusing on the three or four major goals of the organization for the CAP fiscal year. For example, is an expanded cadet program about to be introduced? Is there a special membership recruiting effort under way?

Perhaps an annual theme serves as a primary cause around which the whole unit is rallying. A theme-based speech frequently offers better audience recall, similar to consumers remembering an advertising campaign or slogan. Take a look at significant milestones or anniversaries that are CAP or aviation/aerospace related to draw the theme from.

The unit may have a set of topics it considers appropriate for any group. For example programs on the importance of aerospace education programs in the schools, or how CAP volunteers enhance the community through readiness and training might be starting points. You might also want to take widely known events from the community where CAP played a significant role, and use that as a topical launching point, such as a flood, search effort or other event.

Of course, your unit may have a key message it wants to communicate to a particular demographic group, such as participating first responder agencies, legislators and other governmental groups, senior citizens or school children. In such a case, special presentations may be developed to target this group and utilize an approach applicable to this key audience.

Clearly, your unit speakers bureau needs several presentations. Because creating an effective program is a time-consuming task, topics must be prioritized. Speeches developed first should have the greatest relevance to the unit or be of the most value to achieving your goals.

### ***Clarity of Purpose***

Each topic should be examined to determine the best approach for the individual speech. Is the purpose of the speech to persuade, to inform, or to entertain? Although the primary purpose of a speech is established, multiple purposes may result. For example, the primary goal of a speech may be to make the audience aware of your CAP unit, thus informing the audience of its existence and what it offers. The speech may also encourage members of the audience to join, thereby utilizing persuasion. It is even possible to use humorous anecdotes to make key points, providing entertainment value as well.

### ***How to Support Your Speakers***

Train your spokespeople before important speeches. Supporting materials will be needed, not only to be professional, but to ensure that everyone speaking for your organization tells the same story.

*Elements of a spokesperson package could include:*

- Instructions on how to best use included materials.
- Speeches of varying length on a single, important subject.
- Speeches on additional topics.
- An outline of types of speech to use before different audiences.
- A backgrounder of brief answers to frequently asked questions regarding the organization, its products or issues it is facing.
- Anecdotes related to the speech subject, which could be used when making an informal presentation.
- If audio-visual materials are part of presentations, there should be a page describing equipment needs and necessary room accommodations. Also try to have available a

- laptop with the presentations already loaded, and a powerpoint projector if available so your speaker can grab and go.
- IBM and Macintosh compatible disks of the speeches. This will allow your speaker to print out the appropriate speech.
  - Each speaker should have personalized biographies and photographs available to a program chair.

### ***Who to call when your speakers bureau is ready***

Your local chamber of commerce, mayors office, city council, county government, military base, airport authority, aviation related groups (such as the Ninety-Nines), schools and educational groups, parents groups (such as PTA or home schooling associations), state government, fraternal organizations, veterans organizations, business groups, womens organizations ( such as Zonta International or Business and Professional Women ), Toastmasters and many more that may be specific to your location/region.

### ***How to get help creating your presentations***

Contact your Wing PAO for assistance first since they just may have presentations that you can customize for your own unit. There's no need to always re-invent the wheel. CAP NHQ PA will also be working on sample templates and canned presentations that can be adapted to your unit and its location and needs.