

Douglas County



COMMUNITY RELATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Prepared by :
Melissa Blosser &
Bailey Gumm
Public Information
and Community
Relations

**Douglas
County**



**Douglas County
Sheriff's Office**



"Every encounter with a citizen is an opportunity to make a positive impact."

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF 2021

In 2020, we saw constant changing landscapes, causing it to be more difficult than ever to strategically plan messaging past a month. This year our team focused on shifting back to daily operations and long-term strategic communications planning for both internal and external communications. With additional staff and resources, the Community Relations Office was able to plan and appropriately allocate resources while providing consistent, clear, and transparent communications.

The Community Relations team shifted the focus back on telling our story, implementing strategic goals, consistent engagement efforts, and serving our community with heart. As detailed in this report, our active social media platforms continue to be our main digital communication tool for getting information out to our residents – a tool we provide for both the County and Sheriff's Office. In addition, we continue to keep our relationships with the media and our stakeholders fluent as we recognize people continue to get their information through different methods.

This year presented us with its own array of communication challenges and emergencies. We provided communication response for one bi-state wildfire, a second summer fire in the Tahoe Basin, snow blizzards, COVID-19 vaccine roll-outs, home intruder shootings, and Vacation Home Rental program outreach.

Currently, we are updating the internal and external communications plan to keep Douglas County on the path of consistently providing effective, authentic communication through innovative means to inform and promote Douglas County. We will hold true to our values to deliver accurate, proactive, engaging, timely, educational, and transparent public outreach.

An ability to adapt to an ever-changing media landscape is critical to effective communications. We remain committed to adapting to evolving technology, to regularly evaluating the needs of our organization and external audiences.



Melissa Blosser

MEET THE TEAM



Melissa Blosser

Community Relations Manager and Public Information Officer



Bailey Gumm

Community Relations Specialist



Shannon Strickland

Community Relations Intern

VICTORIES FOR 2021



- Melissa Blosser graduated the FEMA Master Public Information Officer Program (MPIO) at the Emergency Management Institute with over 130 hours of course work; making Melissa Blosser one of two MPIO's in the State of Nevada. There are less than 125 total in the country.
- Brought back 'Great People Great Places' employee recognition program with new certificates and revamped format to include an in-person presentation from the County Manager and Assistant County Manager.
- Work with CGI to produce 6 new County videos and 1 new Sheriff's Office video.
- Added a full-time employee and hired a part-time intern.
- Bailey Gumm completed two UNR course in graphic design.
- Produced "Day in the Life" videos and template for future use.
- Working with a third-party consultant to update the external communications plan.
- Working with a third-party consultant to collect employee data and develop an internal communications plan.
- Melissa Blosser made appearances on Good Evening Douglas and Lake Tahoe TV as well as coordinated County and Sheriff's Office staff appearances to expand reach at the Lake.
- Successfully launched a new 'Report a Concern' platform and app as well as trained multiple department users on the new Ready 311 software.
- Served in the JIC, providing emergency response for the Tamarack and Caldor Fire. Led a regional After-Action Report with all regional and bi-state PIOs. This report was given to the Department of Emergency Management and responding agencies.
- Created educational curriculum and held a Social Media Policy Review and Training Class at the Community Center for Department Managers and social media administrators.
- Team assisted with budget presentation materials for departments.
- Started up a new Facebook page for Dispatch 911 Emergency Services and Animal Services.
- Provided research and evaluation of internal communications departments and programs in other jurisdictions.
- Shannon Strickland completed a needs assessment with Social Services and is creating work product for Social Services, Adult Day Club, Homemaker Program, and the Community Health Nurse.
- Melissa Blosser was asked to speak at the Nevada NACO conference to show how Douglas County is effectively and strategically communicating.
- Provided educational material and web content for VHR ordinance and resolution.

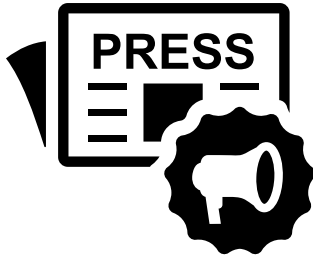
DCSO CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

- **Letter's for Seniors:** DCSO encouraged the community to write handmade cards for our homebound seniors for Valentine's Day.
- **Fundraiser for Dispatcher:** Off-duty DCSO hosted a fundraiser at CoCoMoes raising over \$12,000 for a dispatcher with cancer.
- **Autism Awareness:** second time DCSO has wrapped a car with autism awareness recognition pieces to go around and put registrants into the alert program. Reached over 22K on Facebook.
- **Thumbs Up For Law Enforcement:** Campaign created with the DCSO Advisory Board which encouraged the public to give law enforcement personnel a thumbs up in the spirit of support.
- **Live 911:** Created video, photo, social media, and media content to showcase DCSO as the first law enforcement agency in Nevada to deploy this new technology.
- **Special Olympics Torch Run:** In-person park event, photos, and handled media coverage.
- **TRIAD Outreach:** focused efforts on increasing senior program and event outreach for TRIAD through monthly calendars, webpage, and social media posts.
- **Burgers for Badges:** Provided video editing assistance, event photography, and social media promotion.
- **Bark in the Park:** In-person park event to raise funds for the K-9 Unit. Team took video, photos, and did social media coverage for the event.
- **Fright at the Fairgrounds:** Created videos, social posts, graphics, and media coverage for promotion.
- **Coffee with a Cop:** Created branded social media graphics to promote these community events.



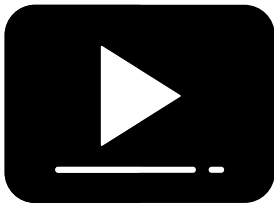
PUBLIC INFORMATION

STATS



Press Releases

- 98 total press releases
- 27 were related to the Tamarack and Caldor Fires



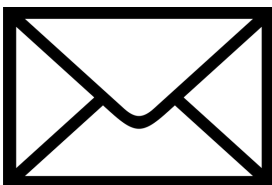
Video Content

- Thank you Douglas County and Town Road Crews
- Senior Center Valentine's Drive-Thru Event
- Senior Center St. Patrick's Drive Thru Event
- National Stress Awareness Day
- Day in the Life of County Engineer



Website

- Number of Returning Users: 255,009
- Number of New Users: 251,582
- Most Popular Pages: Homepage, Assessor's Online Services, Assessor, Caldor Fire, Recorder, Tamarack Fire, Parcel Maps, Departments
- Highest Age Demographics of Users: 25-34 yrs & 55-64 yrs
- Top Usage by Area:
(1) Gardnerville Ranchos, (2) Reno, (3) Carson City,
(4) Gardnerville, (5) Minden/Johnson Lane



Constant Contact Emails (54 total)

- Newsletters: 3
- Board Action Summaries: 32
- Great People Great Places; Exceptional Employees: 13
- Back to School Vaccine Clinic :1
- Nevada Speed Test: 1
- Surveys: 4

(Employee Website Outage, Emergency Evacuations, Website Content User Feedback, and Conflict Management Training for PIOs and Communicators)

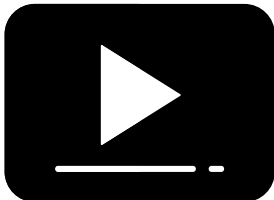
DCSO PUBLIC INFORMATION

STATS



Press Releases

- 64 total press releases



Video Content

- A Day in the Life DCSO School Resource Officer; **3.9K views**
- A Day in the Life DCSO Search and Rescue; **2.4K views**
- Carson Valley Days PSA; **2.5K views**
- Live911 Technology; **3.4K views**
- American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament; **2.8K views**
- Burgers for Badges (editing assistance); **5.5K views**
- Fright at the Fairgrounds Facebook Live; **3K views**
- Caldor Fire Community Updates (3 Facebook Lives)

Video 1; **27.5K views**

Video 2: **18.1K views**

Video 3: **13.3K views**



Website

- Most Popular Searches: (1) Inmate Search, (2) Inmate, (3) CCW, (4) Warrants, (5) Jobs/Employment

Video content continues to perform well on all social algorithms. In 2019 and 2020 the team shot safety video content which was reused this year. During the year our office was using a gimble which allowed for movement video shots and those clips were not necessarily created into video packages, but were posted on social platforms in place of using still graphics every time.

This year we also experimented more with Facebook Lives for more community events and emergency updates. This allowed for information to reach our community immediately, created an alert for people to tune into, and gave a more casual setting than filming with scripts does.

SOCIAL MEDIA DOUGLAS COUNTY



POSTS PER PLATFORM



550 Posts



3 Videos



**376 Original
Tweets**



150 Posts

SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

As of January 1, 2022 the Douglas County Facebook page is at **16,765** (16.8K) followers. That is around a 3K increase in followers which is about what we saw the year prior. We are continuing to grow at a consistent rate. On the next page you will see our reach and engagement posts. To note, if we did a top 5-7 engagement posts, it would show posts involving employees perform well such as: Mike Torres appointed as Chief Probation Officer, and new hires Caren Witt and Brook Adie.

Facebook Page Reach 2021: 649,974

The Facebook layout changed this year and what that meant for us is we lost all of our "likes". Any user who previously "liked" a classic Facebook page was not transferred over in the new page experience. Douglas County maintained all their followers during the change, but lost a good portion of our audience.

How Do We Measure Up?

WASHOE COUNTY ONE MONTH SNAP SHOT :

FOLLOWERS: 14K
JANUARY POSTS: 42
JANUARY LIKES: 583

CARSON CITY ONE MONTH SNAP SHOT:

FOLLOWERS: 4.1K
JANUARY POSTS: 4
JANUARY LIKES: 48

DOUGLAS COUNTY ONE MONTH SNAP SHOT:

FOLLOWERS: 16K
JANUARY POSTS: 40
JANUARY LIKES: 2504

**Does not include any posts fire related*

TOP PERFORMING POSTS



TOP 5 POSTS: REACH

It is recommended to avoid travel on U.S. 50 into California (South Lake Tahoe) due to heavy congestion...

Posted: December 28, 2021

Reach: 24.5K

Press Release "Precautionary Boil Water Notice for East Valley Water System"

Posted: July 19, 2021

Reach: 19K

Press Release "Douglas County Officials Announce Closure of all County Offices on Monday, December 27, 2021"

Posted: December 26, 2021

Reach: 18.1K

National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

Posted: January 9, 2021

Reach: 16.5K

Press Release "Reopening of the Douglas County Senior Center"

Posted: April 26, 2021

Reach: 15.9K

TOP 3 POSTS: ENGAGEMENT

***UPDATE* All travel lanes have reopened... (Fatality crash)**

Posted: February 23, 2021

Engagement: 48.9%

Press Release "Board to Consider Plan to Open Douglas County"

Posted: April 9, 2021

Engagement: 31.2%

Press Release "Douglas County Commission Approves Reopening Plan"

Posted: April 16, 2021

Engagement: 30.5%

SOCIAL MEDIA DCSO



POSTS PER PLATFORM



212 Posts



11 Videos



167 Original
Tweets



85 Posts



129 Posts

Douglas County Sheriff's Office Instagram

Started: June 26, 2020 | **Followers:** 1,918

Top Performing Post: The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is the law enforcement presence at the ACC Celebrity Golf Tournament in Lake Tahoe...

Reach: 1,860

Interactions: 432



[View Insights](#)

[Boost Post](#)



Liked by wilnit41 and 414 others

douglas_sheriff_nv The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is the law enforcement presence at the @accchampionship Celebrity Golf Tournament. With this being such a high profile event, it takes months of planning and preparation which started back in the spring.



[View Insights](#)

[Boost Post](#)



Liked by spnawareness and 406 others

douglas_sheriff_nv Lagatha, our new 2 year old lab, decided she should run the morning meeting 🐕👮 #DCSO #DouglasCountyNV #k9dogs #puppylife

**Does not include any posts fire related*

TOP PERFORMING POSTS DCSO



TOP 3 POSTS: REACH

Press Release "Three Men Arrested for Attempt to Solicit Sex with a Minor"

Posted: May 24, 2021

Reach: 38K

Press Release "Douglas County Sheriff's Office Transforms Patrol Car to Promote the Autism Recognition Alert Program"

Posted: April 2, 2021

Reach: 22.7K

Nevada State Police are turning around all westbound traffic on HYW 50 and Kingsbury Grade. Travel out of the area is not advised.

Posted: December 28, 2021

Reach: 26.8K

TOP 3 POSTS: ENGAGEMENT

Press Release "Douglas County Sheriff's Office Involved in Chase of Parolee"

Posted: November 16, 2021

Engagement: 44.7%

Coffee with a Cop was more like coffee with all the cops!

Posted: October 8, 2021

Engagement: 34.7%

Press Release "Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Federal, State and other Local Authorities Shut Down Illegal Marijuana Operation"

Posted: September 21, 2021

Engagement: 32%

SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

While Facebook continues to be the highest performing platform for DCSO and the main source of information for the public, Instagram provides a great opportunity to share a window into their profession, provide helpful tips, post photos, show personality, and connect with local partners who are also on the platform.

NOTABLE INCIDENTS



Tamarack Fire

- Incident communication for Douglas County began July 20th and ended August 5th.
- Evacuation communication Issued for the Leviathan Mine, Holbrook Junctions Areas, Topaz Ranch Estates and Topaz Lake Areas.
- Opened Up Evacuation Sites (2) in Douglas County at the Community Center in Gardnerville and the TRE Community Center.
- Douglas County Declared State of Emergency.
- Provided Recovery Services to Residents Affected by the Tamarack Fire, by building a local recovery resource webpage and collaborated with stakeholders.
- Worked with the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Incident Management Team who took command of the fire on July 20, 2021..

Press Releases

- 16 total fire related Press Releases

Top 3 Performing Posts on Social Media

- 86 total emergency related social media postings



Press Release "Tamarack Fire Preparation For Evacuation, Power Outage, and Road Closure"

Posted: July 20, 2021

Reach: 85.3K & Engagement: 29%

Hwy 395 is now closed from China Spring Rd. to the NV/CA Stateline and at Hwy 395 and SR 208

Posted: July 21, 2021

Reach: 48.7K

Press Release "Voluntary Evacuations Issued for Topaz Ranch Estates and Topaz Lake Areas"

Posted: July 21, 2021

Reach: 38.5K & Engagement: 25%

For 2021 the average organic FB reach is 5.2% of the audience at the time of post according to Hootsuite. When looking at the overall organic engagement rates per post, governmental pages see an average engagement rate of 0.21% according to a report posted on Social Insider. With those statistics, 5.2% of our audience would be approximately a reach of 872 audience members.

#TahoeStrong

Pray4Tahoe

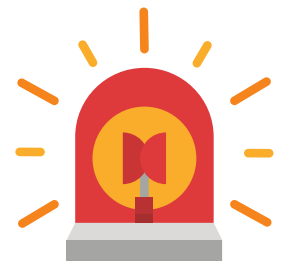
NOTABLE INCIDENTS

Caldor Fire

- Incident communication for Douglas County began August 30th and ended September 4th.
- First time in modern history Douglas County residents were subject to a mandatory evacuation order.
- Evacuations Issued for Upper Kingsbury South & North, Central Kingsbury, Lower Kingsbury, Round Hill region, Lake Village, and Lower Oliver's/Kahle Drive region.
- Opened Up Evacuation Sites at the Douglas County Community Center and the Douglas County Fairgrounds.
- Douglas County Shelter became reached capacity then regional shelters opened up in response.
- Douglas County Declared State of Emergency
- Provided warning messages to Foothill residents as the fire burned within 3-4 miles southwest of the County line.
- Communicated Recovery Services to Residents Affected by the Caldor Fire
- Created the PIO group name? All basin area

Press Releases

- 11 total fire related Press Releases



Top 3 Performing Posts on Social Media

- 91 total emergency related social media postings

Press Release "Valley Evacuation Warning, Recommend Evacuation Preparation"

Posted: August 31, 2021

Reach: 100.4K & Engagement: 19%

Press Release Update Received word the Carson City Evacuation Centers are now full. "Evacuation Warning, Recommend Evacuation Preparation and Road Closures"

Posted: August 30, 2021

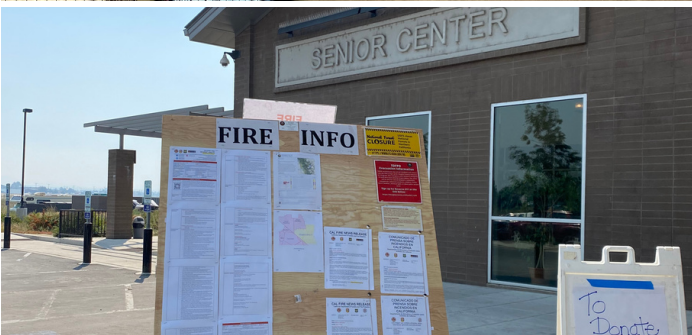
Reach: 128.6K & Engagement: 13%

Caldor Fire Update - Road Closure Changes: If you are planning to travel back up the hill, please take precaution, expect delays, and drive safe!

Posted: September 4, 2021

Reach: 89.8K

WILDLAND FIRE PHOTOS



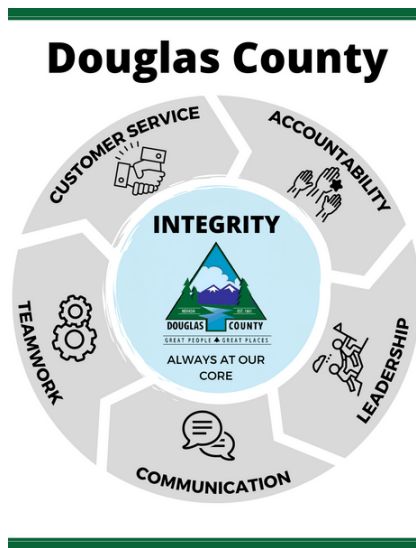
COUNTY & DCSO WORK PRODUCTS



- Developed "Day in the Life" videos/template for County and Sheriff's Office.
- Updated County-wide stock photos and videos.
- Designed "Great People Great Places" employee certificates and nomination sheets.
- Wrote out monthly social media content calendars.
- Put together a Vacation Home Rental FAQ packet.
- Designed the Vacation Home Rental Logo.
- Created a Welcome Packet template for New Hires.
- Assisted with the Spotlight Business Award video.
- Took employee headshots
- Redesigned Board of County Commissioners Proclamations.
- Created flyers, social media posts, graphics, and wrote press releases for a variety of departments, events, and news announcements. Branded "Now Hiring" graphics for recruitment.
- Wrote Blogs: "Submitting Public Comment During Virtual Meetings. A Step-by-Step Guide to Engaging with your Local Government", "Snow Headquarters", "Fun Ways to Unplug for a Day in Douglas County", "4 Surprising Ways to Help Our Animal Shelter When Adopting Isn't an Option".



**DOUGLAS COUNTY
VACATION HOME RENTAL
CODE ENFORCEMENT**



SOCIAL MEDIA MAY OVERVIEW

POSTS	TWITTER	INSTAGRAM
Facebook 14 Nextdoor 17 Instagram 12 Twitter 19	Tweet Impressions 37.6K Profile Visits 2,080 Mentions 44 Followers 2,174 (+14)	Instagram 1,710 (+30) Accounts Reached 2,328 Content Interaction 2,084

CONTENT TOPICS

Press Releases (10), Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, Tip Tuesdays: Motorcycle Safety, Trivia Thursday Boat Patrol, May the 4th, Law Enforcement Memorial, Blue Mass, Sgt. 1 zero survivor plaque, MOST, Peace Officers Memorial Day, Dodgeball tournament, POST Grads, Boat Safety

TOP PERFORMING INSTAGRAM POST	TOP PERFORMING FACEBOOK POSTS/VIDEO
281 post likes 1,328 post reach 6 comments 2 sends	37.4K post reach 29% engagement, 20.6K reach

AREAS FOR OPPORTUNITY

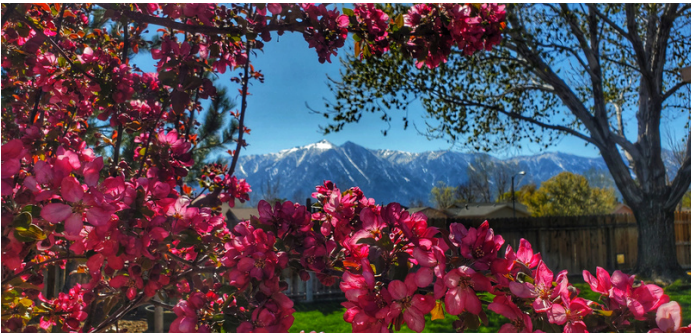
- In the survey conducted during the audit, 53% of the residents believed that Douglas County is acting in the best interest of the County and 49% believe the County is honest and transparent. We would like to see those numbers increase.
- Improve website usability and evaluate website content workflow.
- Have consistency in brand and communication style.
- After assessing the data collected following the Tamarack and Caldor wildland fires, there is opportunity to revise our emergency preparedness and evacuation education.
- Embed ourselves in each department culture so we can better communicate about the operations and services they provide to the public.
- Increase the consistency of key messages and build a better future for Douglas County through increased engagement and collaboration with external audiences.

LONG-TERM PROJECTS

- As outlined in the External Communications Plan, our team recognizes the need to create easy to read work product, establish project ambassadors, discuss desired outcomes for projects far in advanced, and incorporate tactics to achieve that.
- Reduce the number of admins in each department with permissions to create website content and train all admins on brand, ADA compliance, consistency, and usability.
- Ensure that leadership and all staff understand the value of integrating strategic communications into the day-to-day functions of Douglas County.
- Standardize common operational procedures for communicating the County's messaging and receive feedback from public.
- Create consistent evacuation terminology, provide webpages with evacuation maps, and push out an education campaign for evacuation preparedness.
- Establish a public involvement group which creates opportunities to better understand stakeholder satisfaction and needs.
- Our intern completed her initial communication assessment of Social Services, Community Health Nurse, Adult Day Club, and Homemaker Program. Following her initial findings she is working on updating their webpages, writing content for social media platforms, creating new printed material, and will measure public engagement.

PUBLIC PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

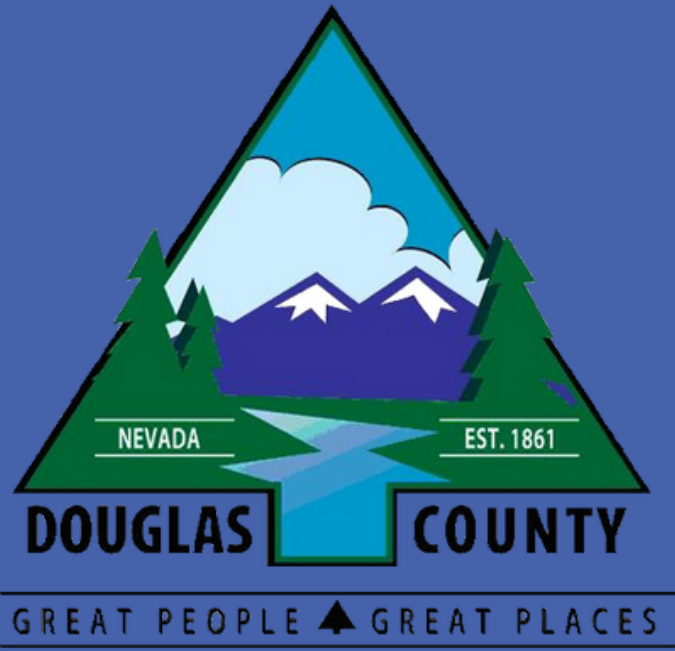
Through out the year our team does calls for photos through social media channels and our website to solicit photos from the public. This keeps our library of stock images fresh and continues to provide interesting and different perspectives of Douglas County that we love to share!



CURRENT OFFICE DUTIES



- **External Communications:** Plan, develop, implement, and evaluate timely and accurate communications strategies to provide information to and gather feedback from external audiences.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Conduct public opinion research to gather accurate data and evaluate public attitudes about communication preferences, initiatives, and the County in general as well as implement changes as a result of findings.
- **Digital Communication, Photography & Video:** Communication through planned and developed digital communication strategies including the County's websites, social media accounts, photography, video, graphics, and email marketing communication.
- **Brand Consistency:** Monitor brand usage to ensure consistency throughout the County.
- **Special Events:** Plan and implement, or provide support for all activities and events hosted by the County.
- **County Support:** Serve as a support and resource for boards, groups, Elected Officials, and the Board of County Commissioners.
- **Community Engagement:** Plan, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to involve the community in decision-making and planning for the future of the County.
- **Crisis Communications:** Serve as universal hub for emergency communication in times of crisis.
- **Media Relations:** Maintain relationships with key contacts at local media outlets and provide them with timely, newsworthy information on happenings within individual schools and the County overall. Monitor, track and record all media coverage. Serve as the County spokesperson, or provide guidance and training to the appropriate County staff members to serve in this role.



2021