

2008 National Crime Victims' Rights Week
Community Awareness Projects

April 13 - 19, 2008

Justice *for* VICTIMS. Justice *for* ALL.

This is the first in a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. CAP TIPS are also posted on the subgrantee page of the NCVRW CAP web site, <http://cap.navaa.org/subs>.

Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIPS

(To Improve Public awareness)

by Anne Seymour

How to Plan and Implement an Effective Billboard Campaign

Introduction

Billboards offer a great venue for publicizing 2008 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) and its theme, your agency or organization, and/or the services you provide that help victims and survivors of crime. With effective placement of billboards, literally thousands of people can be exposed to your message on a daily basis. It's important to remember that you usually have only a few brief moments to *impart a message that viewers remember!*

An effective billboard campaign involves four important steps:

- 1.** Determine the message you want to include on your billboards.
- 2.** Determine the artwork and design you want to incorporate into your billboards.
- 3.** Secure billboards at the best locations to meet your objectives, and at the most cost-effective rate possible.
- 4.** Get your billboards up to promote NCVRW.

Determine Your Message

Your message will be based upon the objectives of your billboard campaign:

- Do you want to reach the most number of people possible?
- Do you want to target high-crime, rural-remote, or other specific geographical areas?
- Is your message specific to 2008 NCVRW, or more general in terms of victims' rights and services?

It's important to engage your NCVRW Planning Committee to determine your objectives, and then to make sure that the outdoor advertising company with which you contract completely understands your objectives!

The 2008 NCVRW theme – “Justice for Victims. Justice for All.” – lends itself perfectly to a billboard campaign. It is direct, concise and memorable. You may also want to consider additional messages that promote your organization or coalition; describe services available to victims and survivors of crime; and/or promote specific NCVRW activities that you are sponsoring. Remember, in billboard advertising, “less is more!”.

It's important when deciding upon your message that you *keep it simple*, and *limit the number of words* on the billboard. Professional billboard companies generally advise to limit your message to “ten words or less.” The most effective billboards are those that have a concise message, and offer a telephone number or website URL to contact “for more information.”

Determine Your Artwork and Design

The NCVRW Resource Guide includes a CD with artwork in three formats: PDF; JPG; and Quark.

You should work with the billboard company to determine the most effective pieces of Resource Guide artwork that you can incorporate into your design, and/or to develop your own personalized artwork and design. Many billboard companies have departments that can help you with your artwork and design, or can refer you to a reliable local company that provides this service.

Your artwork and design will depend on the size of the billboards you are renting. Typical billboard sizes are 14-by-48 feet; 12-by-24 feet; and 5 by 11 feet.

Some general tips for design include the following:

- Find a partner and drive around your community and view billboards. Take notes about those whose messages are most powerful and memorable, and that incorporate designs and fonts that you like.
- Your lettering should be at least two-to-three feet in height.
- Listen carefully to the design advice of the “experts” at the billboard company or design firm, but also don't hesitate to speak your mind and offer your opinions! Make sure that you provide the company with a *written copy* of the overall objectives for your billboard campaign.
- Carefully review the artwork, design and lettering *prior* to having it displayed on actual billboards. It's helpful to have at least two people in this important review phase, and be sure

that all *spelling* and *contact information* are correct!

- You should work closely with the outdoor advertising company and be very clear and concise about:
 - Your objectives and message.
 - Your concepts for the overall design.
 - The theme colors you want to incorporate (the 2008 NCVRW colors are **PMS 273C** (a *blue/violet*) and **PMS 575** (a *muted shade of green/yellow*)).

Former CAP recipients who conducted NCVRW billboard campaigns advise that:

- It's important to engage your NCVRW Planning Committee members in a discussion about the billboards' message, theme and design. Get input and creative ideas from *as many people as possible*.
- The sample artwork included in the NCVRW Resource Guide is easily adapted to billboards.
- Consider using local leaders, such as your Mayor or District Attorney, in your artwork or message.
- Many billboard companies will work closely with you on developing your concept and design; meeting your budget limitations; and in some cases, even monitoring the amount of traffic that passes by the billboard.

Secure Billboard Locations

To identify outdoor advertising firms in your area, simply type "billboards, (city)" or "outdoor advertising, (city)" into any internet search engine. It's a good idea to seek and secure bids from more than one company (if more than one is available).

Some considerations for location include sites that are:

- In high-traffic areas to increase the number of people who will view your message.
- In high-crime areas to target populations who can directly benefit from your message.
- In specific locations that can increase outreach to traditionally underserved or unserved victim populations.
- The most cost-effective in relationship to your budget.

Former CAP recipients who conducted NCVRW billboard campaigns advise that:

- Negotiate carefully on both *location* and *price*!
- Ask the outdoor advertising company if it has data on the amount of traffic that goes by a

specific billboard location on a daily or weekly basis. This information will help inform your decision about location.

- Some outdoor advertising companies will work out a deal in which you pay for a certain number of billboards, and then they provide a certain number as a pro bono contribution (which requires documentation of their “donation” from a nonprofit organization affiliated with the NCVRW billboard campaign).
- Many outdoor advertising companies offer a discounted price for non-profit organizations (or a deal such as “buy one, get one free”), so be sure to specifically ask if such a rate is available.
- The more empty billboards an outdoor advertising company has, the more likely they are to negotiate with you on price and location. It’s a good idea to drive around your community and take note of the number and location of vacant billboards.
- Many empty billboards are located in high-crime areas, which offer an excellent venue for your messages.

Get Your Billboards Up!

One of the most important decisions you’ll have to make is the *timing* of your billboard displays. Most billboard companies offer monthly rates. The timing of your billboard displays should be based upon the following considerations:

- If you are publicizing a *specific NCVRW event*, plan on placement that begins one month or two months prior to the event, depending upon your budget.
- If you have a *more general message* about crime victims’ rights and services, contracting for the entire months of March and April is a good idea.

Make sure you carefully review your billboards once they are up to ensure that they meet both *your contract and your expectations!* Also, ask in advance if your outdoor advertising company can provide you with data that document the level of traffic that goes by your billboard (and be sure to include any such data in your final CAP report to NAVAA and OVC!).

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annese@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

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