Navigating the Media

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Speakers

- Lacy Pate, Public Relations Manager, NCACC
- Jessica Loeper, Chief Communications Officer, New Hanover County
- Tim Buckland, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, New Hanover County
- Frank Williams, NCACC President-Elect, Brunswick County Commissioner
Why is media engagement important?

Why should counties develop a communications strategy and who can help?

What do reporters want?

How should elected officials engage with the media?

Why communicate with the media?

If there is a story to tell, someone will tell it.
Symbiotic vs. Unfavorable

Symbiotic

- Elected officials and the county get help from the media in promoting priorities and accomplishments
- The media helps get critical information out to residents
- Residents get consistent and accurate information

Symbiotic

- People tend to believe what they hear first.
- When you know a story will break, get your side out first.
- “So many departments say, ‘we can’t discuss a personnel matter’ and blow off the public. I applaud this sheriff for his transparency.”
- “Sheriff Grady is so honest he would arrest himself”
Symbiotic vs. Unfavorable

**Unfavorable**

- County or elected official's reputation is compromised
- Inconsistent messaging
- Misinformation or disinformation is spread
- Public trust is lost

**Media Training 101**

**Communications planning**

- Who is my PIO, how can they help?
- How can we communicate with local media?
- How can we ensure consistent and accurate messaging?
**Reporter Relations 101**

**What do reporters want?**

- What motivates reporters?
- How do we generate media interest?
- How do we cultivate positive relations with reporters?
- How do we handle aggressive or inaccurate reporting?

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**Crisis Communications**

**Tips for weathering crises**

- What should elected officials do to prepare for a looming crisis?
- What steps should we follow to respond to a media inquiry?
- What if we can’t answer a question?
- What happens if we say nothing?