

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



STORY COUNTY, IOWA

Story County Board of Supervisors

900 6th Street

Nevada, Iowa 50201

www.storycountyiowa.gov

FY25

July 2024 - June 2025

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Story County Mission and Values

Engaging our diverse communities to responsibly provide quality opportunities and services that matter

Accountability | Collaboration | Environment | Equity | Inclusivity | Innovation | Wise Use of Resources

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOAL

Transparency and accessibility through duration of projects and issues in Story County and access to factual information for the public and County employees.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

- Increase citizen participation and trust in local government.
- Spread awareness of issues and projects. Generate and distribute accurate information for residents, community organizations, businesses, other governmental organizations and media sources that serve these groups.

Audio and/or video of Boards and Commissions meetings posted online

Updated County Services Sheet and Poster

Electronic access to Boards and Commissions meetings

Story County Informational Booklet - historical purposes only

Consistent website updates and review of analytics

Timely press releases, accompanied by photos and graphics and follow-up

Department videos - video descriptions of department duties and services
Increase quality of audio, visual production, and presentation
Distribute via social media platforms

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOAL

Share the Story County vision with the general public and decision-makers.

The reality of county government in Iowa is that it is a somewhat decentralized operation, serving diverse needs of our residents, while facing the fiscal realities of budgeting and other economic constraints. Our communication strategies are designed with this in mind.

Assist the Human Resources Department with Onboarding and Recruitment Program materials and office/department recognition events

Ensure consistent messaging and branding by developing and following a Communications/Style Guide that outlines a set of guidelines and standards for County communications and publications. Update logo usage guidelines and application for use and revise logo policy as applicable or needed.

- Produce posters, bulletin boards, mailed letters and other products
- Tradeshow Toolkit - display boards

Partner with local communities to publish content in newsletters

Use digital and multimedia platforms to create compelling, creative content to share the County's story; create a photo-repository for the storage of images

Annual Worksession of the Board of Supervisors to discuss communications and outreach

Develop and practice universal social media branding

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOAL

Improve communications between the Board of Supervisors and our constituents.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

Integrate strategies that promote two-way dialogue between citizens and government. Continue to seek out ways to meet people where they are, providing different opportunities to be engaged, in person and virtually, as appropriate.

Increase engagement on social media

Monthly radio updates of County events and activities

As appropriate, help organize, facilitate, and promote special events for the County

Analyze website tools, modules, and capabilities for potential implementation

Mass mailing with content related to County's website and social media pages

Conduct a technology needs analysis related to communications strategies

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

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**County News -
internal newsletter for County employees**

**Get to Know Story County
video/social media segments**

**Explore possibility of developing a County
services directory**

Research potential costs for county-wide mailings

Speakers Bureau presentations

STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOAL

Engage the community through service and recognition.

We recognize it is important to serve the county through multiple outlets. We will strive to encourage participation and service in community activities and events, along with recognizing outstanding County Staff, citizens and employees.

Citizen of the Year Award

National County Government Month

County participation in Leadership Programs

Leadership Boot Camp for Boards & Commissions

Assist in promotional materials for internal committee initiatives

**Quarterly "Information Exchange"
(Brown Bag Lunch Series/Town Hall Series)**

Maintain Annual Proclamation Schedule

Public Service Recognition Week

GOALS | STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

GOAL

Enhance emergency response communication.

Story County excels in communicating in emergency response and related issues. Story County will continue to plan for enhancing communication strategies in this area, identifying all appropriate solutions to reach necessary populations for all types of incidents.

Continue supporting exercises for the Emergency Operations Center and the COOP/COG

Enhance distribution of information post disaster

Outreach campaigns for Flood Awareness Month and National Preparedness Month; Review and update the Program for Public Information (PPI)

Review the Story County Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 External Affairs

- Review and update Story County EMA Public Affairs Activation Checklist
- Review and update Public Information Officer Procedures Guide

TARGET AUDIENCES

Not only are Story County's communication strategies targeted towards those already "in the know" about what is happening in Story County – the targeted audiences are far greater! Story County identifies six Target Audiences (described below) towards whom strategies are directed as further outlined in this Plan, including:

County Employees - Public Officials - General Public - Businesses - Media - Other

COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Story County employees work in various locations and buildings throughout Story County. Within the Story County government framework, there are six elected offices – Board of Supervisors, Auditor, Recorder, Treasurer, Sheriff and Attorney, and over twenty different County departments or program areas in this structure. Communication amongst County staff at all levels ensures the vision for Story County is presented in a consistent manner.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

There are over 500 "public officials" in Story County – whether it be a local council member in one of our smaller communities, township trustee, volunteer first responder, member of the local Planning and Zoning Commission, or an individual appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve on a board or commission. These individuals rely on Story County for information and support services.

GENERAL PUBLIC

According to the 2020 US Census, there are 98,537 residents in Story County. Of that, 16.5% of those people are under the age of 18, and 12.6% are over the age of 65. In addition, 97.2% of those people (age 25+) are high school graduates, and 51.6% (age 25+) hold at least a Bachelor's Degree. Our population continues to grow and the demographic dynamics dictate that we continually explore new communication strategies to engage and encourage participation.

BUSINESSES

Through the C2C Plan and Implementation Matrix, Story County identifies goals, objectives, and strategies that continue to encourage and support the strong, vibrant economy we experience. In order to meet these goals, the C2C Plan encourages Story County to foster countywide communication and strengthen collaborative efforts. Communication efforts regarding County programs should be targeted to existing businesses as well as potential emerging business throughout Story County.

MEDIA

As media continues to shift how news and information is delivered, we need to continue to use outlets to cooperate with them in getting out our messages, news, and happenings. Media is much more than the local newspaper, radio and television. It now includes blogs, online resources, YouTube channels, and social media and networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many others.

OTHER

Messages and information Story County shares must go beyond our perceived county boundaries. With I-35 and US Hwy 30 bisecting in our county, along with Iowa State University and many other attractions, we have to employ methods that reach our visitors. Not only those already here – but also those thinking about coming. What kind of information do they need to reach all their decisions? Are our communications strategies designed so that their questions are answered or can be asked in a manner to which Story County can respond efficiently and quickly?

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

We use this plan to communicate in a way that is timely, open and proactive:

TIMELY

We will communicate what we know when we know it.

OPEN

We will provide all public information in a way that's transparent, easy to access, and understand.

PROACTIVE

We will engage our customers and stakeholders before being asked to provide information and determine future needs.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Lisa Heddens



Linda Murken



Latifah Faisal

In January 2014, the Story County Board of Supervisors adopted the first Communications Plan. The Board of Supervisors amended the approved Communications Plan in May 2014. Annually, the Plan is reviewed by the Board and updated as necessary. The Board updated the Plan as follows:

**February 2015
February 2016
January 2017
January 2018
February 2019
December 2019
February 2021
February 2022
April 2023
November 2024**

Story County Board of Supervisors