Standard Procedure 142
New Media Protocol

Effective: 6/19/15
Supersedes: 3/29/10
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PURPOSE:

To provide a procedural framework that allows the Town timely adaptation to and incorporation of emerging New Media tools, technologies, and applications; to present accurate and timely information in a manner that is consistent with the Town Council's policies and philosophies as well as state and federal laws and regulations; to present information in a manner that is consistent with the Town of Cary's Mission Statement, Statement of Values, and annual Communications Plan; to ensure consistency and uniformity between elements of the organization.

DEFINITIONS:

Communiqué: Message, report, posting, statement, document, or other product distributed via New Media.

New Media: Internet and mobile-based video, audio, text or multimedia communications, services, tools, or applications that facilitate dynamic, multi-directional information sharing; includes but is not limited to Blogs, microblogs, text messaging, and social networking and news sites; excludes traditional media such as television, radio, newspaper and other print journalism.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Working closely with the Technology Services Department, the Public Information Office oversees the Town's New Media program.
- New Media activities are supplemental and additive to the Town's website, which serves as the primary information vehicle for the Town.
- The Town's New Media personality will be informative, caring, authentic, proactive, constructive, conversational, respectful, specific, and, wherever possible, include a call to action.
- Communiqués will avoid debate; Communiqués will be focused on adding value.
- New Media tools will only be utilized after Public Information and Technology Services has the necessary security and retention hardware, software, and protocols in place for the particular application.
- New Media records will be created and managed according to the Town of Cary's Public Records Policy and the North Carolina General Statutes.

PROCEDURES:

1. New Media will be developed using only Town of Cary approved hardware, software, protocols and technical practices established by the Technology Services Department.

2. The Public Information Office is the only Town staff authorized to create/authorize the creation of New Media sites/accounts/feeds or to distribute/authorize the distribution of content via New Media.

3. Town staff and others working on behalf of the Town including consultants, contractors, and volunteers will complete Town-specific New Media training from the Public Information Office and the Technology Services Department before utilizing New Media.

4. New Media communiqués will adhere to the Town's New Media Style Guide.

5. The Town may re-distribute or forward third-party communiqués originating from another government or outside group with which the Town has a direct, official relationship, such as a sponsorship agreement.

6. Wherever possible, New Media communiqués will reference/point to the Town's website, which serves as the primary and official source for Town information.

7. Promotional announcements for Town-sponsored events, programs, and activities are permitted; however, promotional announcements for events, charities or outside organizations in which the Town has no official interest or sponsorship are not permitted.

8. Hyperlinks may be provided in the Town's New Media communiqués to any other local, state, federal, or international government site as well as to any site managed by a not-for-profit corporation providing services to Cary citizens and having a direct, official relationship with or receiving financial support from the Town of Cary. Hyperlinks to any for-profit corporation may be provided only in special circumstances where the for-profit entity is co-sponsoring a Town of Cary activity or event. The link may only be active during the event and during a specifically-defined, limited promotional period.

9. Videos, photos, and other media may be utilized with New Media provided that they are supported by security and retention hardware, software, and protocols.

10. Requests for project/initiative-specific New Media sites/accounts/feeds/communiqués should be made to the Public Information Office, preferably as part of project communication plans that articulate the audience, purpose, and messages involving New Media.

11. The Public Information Office will maintain a New Media page on www.townofcary.org that includes the Town's New Media policies and practices as well as information on which New Media tools the Town is utilizing.

12. The Public Information Office will regularly monitor New Media sites and communications by and about the Town and issue/authorize "fact checks," clarifications, and other communiqués in response as needed.