



HEADQUARTERS  
CIVIL AIR PATROL MINNESOTA WING  
United States Air Force Auxiliary  
6275 Crossman Lane  
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota 55076-1815

10 February 2009

## Wing Public Affairs Plan

### **I. Introduction**

This annual plan, required to be prepared annually by CAPR 190-1, represents the plans of Headquarters Minnesota Wing for its Public Affairs Program, including regular marketing communications, mission communications, and crisis communications. It was prepared by Colonel Thomas B. Theis and Captain Richard T. Geis, in consultation with other staff officers.

### **II. Situation Analysis**

Minnesota Wing is organized in four Groups containing 24 Squadrons. There are 489 cadet and 771 senior members. Wing conference, SAREXs, O-flights, encampment and flight academy, change of command ceremonies, air shows, professional training and cadet national special activities provide some of the activities in which Minnesota Wing is involved.

In calendar year 2008 the following were noted: USAF assigned reimbursable missions 33 with 26 finds, 0 saves, 106.5 aircraft hours and 3,168 personal hours. Mission training included 51 missions, 805.6 aircraft hours and (not available) personal hours. There were 2 disaster relief, 2 missing persons, 2 mission/downed/overdue aircraft, 12 other (HS, NWS, CD, etc), 28 emergency Locator transmitter missions.

Minnesota Wing Headquarters Squadron is responsible for the smooth conduct of all CAP squadrons in the state of Minnesota. The community we serve are the people of Minnesota. Our greatest strength is our Headquarter Squadron members and squadron members throughout the state. Internally, we conduct the CAP program with significant effectiveness. An internal weakness would be a "less than" focus on the sharing of the CAP story and our mission accomplishment with the people of Minnesota. Externally, we are prepared to assist in the community when we are called upon to do so. As noted above, we perform many hours of community service throughout the year with the serendipity of some community members learning about CAP through this service. Our weakness is that our program has not become one of which the community as a whole is aware. Some significant parts of the community have a relationship with CAP MN Wing and our Minnesota squadrons, yet we can and should do better to reach the community with our story.

- Unit Strengths can be improved with a continuing and strong sense of unit cohesion and willingness to conduct our mission and program with a more significant focus on ways to document and record what we do. We have a MN Wing publication that is informative and promotional and is a base for this purpose.
- We can improve throughout the MN Wing by a better training at the squadron level in the functions of public relations with a better awareness of specific steps to be taken to note what we do, how we help, and what our responsibilities are relating to public affairs. The squadron will be aware of how to show the way for visitors and new members with information packets and member mentors assigned to each new person.
- Opportunities to locally inquire with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts to establish a sponsoring relationship with the squadron should be examined. Coordination in ceremonial events between these groups will encourage interest and bonding between them.

### **III. Goals**

PAO instructional classes will be given at the squadron level upon request. Group commanders of the four groups have been contacted and offered PAO classes. Air shows throughout the state will be supported as recruiting opportunities. The Wreaths Across America program is being established at our two Minnesota veterans' cemeteries and the national cemetery at Fort Snelling. Outreach to the community defining this program is being undertaken at the wing and squadron level. A basic PAO instruction in the form of a classroom presentation is available to any new PAO at the squadron level. Amendments to these goals will be added throughout the year.

#### IV. Objectives

Prior to conduct of squadron or group level PAO instruction class, inquiry will be made as to specific topics that the class participants may wish to be addressed or covered in the course. Determine projects (hosting air shows, dedication events, assisting local flying or flight history clubs, volunteering in the community, member promotions events) the unit has planned throughout the year and support these activities from wing level with encouragement and material specific to the event or project.

These items are in place at this time:

- Newsletter for internal communications
- Regular submissions to the wing newsletter, the North Central Region News newsletter, and the CAP News Online

#### V. Strategies

1. **News Releases.** The PA staff will prepare news releases for each significant activity other than regular meeting night activities. If appropriate, an advance news release will be sent to local news media. After such an event, a news release will be sent to the local media, if appropriate, and to the wing and region newsletters and the CAP News Online. Such activities may include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Unit participation in SAR exercises and actual missions (other than Counter Drug)
  - b. Public appearances of members of the unit in uniform, such as community relations events
  - c. Special or unusual unit training, either on a meeting night or other time
  - d. "Milestone" promotions and awards for members
2. **Photography.** The PA staff will strive to obtain quality photography to illustrate news releases and newsletter articles. Photographers should avoid "grip and grin" posed photographs in favor of photographs that show actions. Photographs distributed outside of the local unit should show proper conduct and uniform wear.
3. **Monthly Newsletter.** The PAO will produce a monthly newsletter telling about unit success stories and previewing upcoming activities. This newsletter will be distributed electronically to all members. Members who do not have email or web access will receive printed copies. The newsletter will be posted on the unit website. The monthly deadline for members wishing to submit information for the newsletter will be the first of the month and the newsletter will ordinarily be distributed within a week after that. The goal of the newsletter will be to project the image of an active, vital unit that has many good things happening. It will primarily be an internal communications and retention tool, however it will be available for distribution to community partners, prospective members, and other interested parties outside CAP.
4. **Higher Headquarters.** Each significant news release will be delivered to the wing and region PAOs (or designee) and to the Civil Air Patrol News Online. In addition, units will

keep the wing and region PAOs advised of problems, challenges, and upcoming opportunities in the Public Affairs Program.

5. **Community Relations.** The unit PAO will collaborate with other appropriate staff members and the commander to increase unit visibility in the community with activities such as color guard performances, service club presentations, and support for worthy community events. Discuss specific events the unit may be planning, based on goals.
6. **Internal Communication.** The PAO and the Commander shall communicate regularly, if possible in person and at least monthly, about Public Affairs opportunities and challenges.
7. **Website.** The PAO will collaborate with the webmaster/IT Officer of the unit website to ensure that the direct and subconscious messages for the general public all reflect positively on the unit and the organization.
8. **Branding.** Whenever possible, the CAP marketing slogan "More Than Meets The Skies" and the nationally-standardized explanation paragraph will be incorporated into external communication.
9. **Recruiting and Retention.** The PAO will collaborate with the unit's Recruiting and Retention Officer to stage several recruiting events during the year. As example, the various air shows throughout the state offer significant opportunities to meet the people of Minnesota and share our story.
10. **Professional Development.** The PAO will pursue professional development in Public Affairs. Possible areas appropriate to your unit may include:
  - a. Entering and progressing in the Public Affairs Specialty Track
  - b. Training to become a mission Information Officer, or renewing qualifications.
  - c. Subscribing to the NCR ALL-PAOs listserv and the national CAP-PAO listserv.
  - d. Taking other available in-person or correspondence courses for Public Affairs.

**APPROVED:**

THOMAS B. THIES, Colonel, CAP  
Minnesota Wing Commander

**DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)**  
Wing/PA

**RECORD OF REVIEW:**

Review Date	Commander's Initials