

Template for an Effective News Release

Headline

- The headline should describe the content of the article.
- Language should be simple, concise, and clear.
 - Resist the temptation to write a provocative headline.
- Highlight in the headline whatever has the potential to draw readers in most. Is it the name of your organization? The specific project? The size of the grant? Idaho Heritage Trust's involvement? Prioritize the words in the headline based on your answers these questions.
- Often, an editor will rewrite the headline. Don't be offended if this happens. It often comes down to layout issues and formatting concerns for the specific outlet.
 - With this in mind, make sure the title you submit contains the most necessary information for the editor from which to pull. If you include extraneous information, there's a chance an editor will pull the wrong pieces when rewriting the headline.

Examples:

1. *"Adams County Historical Society Receives \$10,000 Idaho Heritage Grant to Restore Historic Railway Depot"*
2. *"Beloved P&IN Railway Depot to Be Restored with Help of Idaho Heritage Trust Grant"*
3. *"Idaho Heritage Trust Awards Grant to Adams County Historical Society"*

The Lead-In: Paragraphs 1 & 2

- The most crucial information should come first and proceed accordingly to importance. No preamble.
- The first two paragraphs should only be one to two sentences long.
- Start with a strong leading line, then add the important details.
- Provide as many details as possible in these first couple of sentences, so if the rest of the article gets cut due to length or other reasons out of your control, the most important information will still be published.

Example:

The Adams County Historical Society (ACHS) has been awarded a \$10,000 matching grant from the Idaho Heritage Trust (IHT) for the first of three phases of work to restore the corbels, soffits, and fascia of the P&IN Railway Depot in New Meadows.

These repairs will reinforce the connection between the roof and outer wall while maintaining the unique architectural flourishes that make the building so iconic.

The Body: Paragraphs 3-5

- Now that the reader knows what is happening, it is time to delve into why this is important and who is involved.
- These paragraphs can be longer but should still be limited to two or three sentences at most, with a new paragraph starting whenever you change subject.
- Use quotes if available from prominent figures in your organization or IHT to flesh out your release.

Template for an Effective News Release

- A good structure for these paragraphs would go like this:
 - Paragraph 3: The historical significance of your project and why the public should care.
 - Paragraph 4: Who Idaho Heritage Trust is and the significance of receiving a grant from IHT for your organization/project. Use recent data from our website to show our contributions to the state at large, and remember that the more impressive you make the Trust sound, the more impressive it appears that you received a grant from us!
 - Paragraph 5: Any further significant details, including past support from IHT, other fundraising/matching partners, past projects completed by your organization, etc.

Examples:

1. *The depot was rescued from demolition in 1978 by then President of J.I. Morgan Logging Company, Will Kerby. The Adams County Historical Society was formed for the purpose of restoration of the last remaining depot of what was once the P&IN Railway extending from Weiser to New Meadows.*
2. *The depot hosts special events, meetings, and celebrations for the local community, as well as being an important attraction in bringing folks from across the state to Adams County.*
3. *“More than half of IHT grants are awarded to rural communities with populations of 5,000 or fewer,” said Executive Director, Katherine Kirk. “This year, ## projects received matching grants totaling \$\$\$, with an additional \$\$ approved by Trustees architectural and archaeological assistance throughout the state.”*
4. *(An alternate to #3) Idaho Heritage Trust matching grants are awarded annually through requests coming from all over Idaho with an emphasis on smaller communities.*
5. *Over the years, Idaho Heritage Trust has supported many restoration projects on the depot, including the recently completed restoration of the President’s Room on the 2nd floor.*

Concluding Sentence(s)

- End your article on a call to action.
 - Tailor your call to action to the needs of your organization. Ask people to engage, investigate further, reach out, support, etc., but stop short of directly asking for donations.
 - Provide them with information on how to do so via your website and/or ours.

Example:

For more information and to learn how to get involved with the Adams County Historical Society, view their website www.historicpindepot.com or on the Adams County Historical Society Facebook page. Further information about IHT and their other awardees can be found at www.idahoheritagetrust.org

Before you hit send, PROOFREAD

- Let the release sit for a bit and read it from top to bottom with fresh eyes.
- If you can, get someone without firsthand knowledge of the project to read it over and make sure all the important information is clear and understood.
- Doublecheck those details:
 - Sums of money, dates, IHT information, spelling of names and titles.

Template for an Effective News Release

- If you would like a specific piece of information to include in your release and you cannot find it elsewhere, please feel free to ih@idaheritage.org.

Additional Hints to Use and Share:

1. The 5 W's of Journalism – Always address Who, What, When, Where, Why, and the bonus How Much (if a significant sum is involved)
2. Always include contact information – website, social media address, or phone #
3. Make your articles timely, old news is not effective.
4. In giving credit to the Idaho Heritage Trust, please include more about our mission, work, and impact.
5. Once you finish your article, ask yourself if this appealing to a potential reader. Are the details you provide relevant to the general public? Is there terminology that needs further explanation to be understood by an average reader?
6. If possible, become acquainted with your local editor or reporter and promote interest in your project by inviting him/her to the preservation project site or give him an overview for better understanding. On site pictures always add reader appeal, and the interest of an editor/reporter could lead to further stories and more publicity for your project in the future.
7. Use effective project photos with follow up articles during the restoration period. Before and after photos are impressive and tell a great story on their own.
8. Partner with other organizations in sponsoring programs associated with preservation projects in your region. Also, some important community person or group being associated with the project is always a plus, so don't be afraid to reach out to local businesses, other nonprofits, and elected officials for their stamp of approval. These can be invaluable for press releases and other marketing materials.
9. Give recognition to volunteers in your local newspapers and newsletters.
10. Share unique experiences in your releases, such as finding old news articles or artifacts during the restoration work funded by IHT grants.
11. Create articles before and after grant awards which include visits by architects, IHT consultants such as structural engineers, conservators, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office and Idaho State Historical officials, etc. These provide great photo opportunities as well as a better chance to entice news outlets to tell the full story of your project.
12. Do not crop your photos, newspapers do effective photo cropping to fit.
13. Photographs should be 350 dpi and no larger than 8x10.
14. When submitting, include your personal contact information for follow up.