



**HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
ELMENDORF AFB, Anchorage Alaska**



01 JANUARY 2022

Wing Public Relations Plan 2022

Introduction

This plan, required to be prepared annually IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7a, represents the plans of the Alaska Wing for its Public Affairs Program. It was prepared by Lt Col Bryan Emerson.

Overview

The Alaska Wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is geographically the largest Wing in CAP and covers a wide variety of terrain, facilities and weather presenting unique challenges. There are few roads, railways or population centers, and availability of fuel, airports and maintenance is extremely low. The winter, in particular, is challenging with icing conditions, the highest mountains in the USA and long distances between landing points. Because of these conditions, it is necessary to maintain a fleet of unique airplanes operating on wheels, skis and floats as the need dictates. Obviously this also requires special training and facilities for the aircrew and mechanics. For example, maintenance is restricted to only a couple of locations in the State, with much of the flying task being maintenance flights from the units and back.

The Wing has fifteen squadrons as of January 2022, (no change from the previous year), mostly Composite squadrons with a mix of Seniors (482 vs 504 from last year, -4%) and Cadets (240 vs 213, +13%) members and one Flight. Eleven of these units have a designated PAO who is not also the Commander (down from 13 from last year), one Unit level assistant (down from 2), and four Commanders acting as PAO for their squadrons (up from 2).

Public Affairs duty assignments list four members at the Master level (up from 2 last year), one Senior (up from none), and two Technicians (up from one).

The four step planning process

1) Determine PA strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

• **Strengths:** The Wing enjoys much popular support from its military-friendly and can-do/hardworking culture. The recently published online monthly digital wing magazine has been hugely successful with its roughly 1,000 subscribers and, hopefully, will become a platform for donations.

• **Weaknesses:** The Wing headquarters organization is based on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson and one of its biggest challenges is to maintain good communications.

Telephone communications are incomplete, with different companies supplying service to various locations and villages such that one needs several cell phones at one time if it is necessary to make calls from them. Internet service, also provided by varying service providers, is inconsistent in reliability. Covid restrictions have hampered the ability of its members to communicate among themselves in person.

The staff is decentralized, using mostly emails as the main method of communication, the lone exception to this is the annual Wing conference, typically the first full weekend of October. This complicates the process of mentoring and supporting staff in subordinate units. Many local units either have no dedicated or an ineffectual PAO. The units need to work toward certifying more Public Information Officers (PIOs) through their E/S programs.

CAP units in the wing vary from active, dynamic squadrons to small flights that struggle to survive. The need for further training and professional development is constant. Many local unit PAOs are relatively new members who are inexperienced at the functions of the program. Many squadrons leave PAO duties to squadron Commanders who are not specifically trained in this area. Lack of proper training does not allow PAOs to do their jobs effectively and get their message out as they would wish, which is a detriment to CAP in general. This, in turn, discourages members from joining this potentially exciting and extremely relevant duty position.

Needs/areas for improvement at the Unit level include increasing the effective members of the Squadrons and recruiting more motivated PAO Officers and assistants. The unit PAOs need to focus on the recruitment, training and retention of highly motivated members to serve as PAOs and PIOs. At the Wing level, improvements could be made in maintaining communication between Wing and Squadrons to provide incentive for units to maintain a relevant flow of information. Region improvement would be helpful in the form of PAO seminars and workshops to provide PAOs with the latest and most advanced training to ensure effectiveness in job performance, especially if delivered online.

• **Opportunities:** CAP is very involved in Emergency Services and has been active in many missions in the last year that reflected well on the organization, especially with many new missions involving the US Coast Guard. The Wing carries out SAREX and photography exercises annually. Press releases issued by partner organizations and citing CAP's involvement are used to promote CAP during and after these, and actual SAR missions, as they occur. There are many positive events associated with the Civil Air Patrol that are of interest to CAP members as well as the community at large. To successfully relay information concerning those events helps our organization in terms of recruitment and public relations.

• **Threats:** The elimination of State funding, the limited substitution of CAP with drones by our partner organizations, a depressed economy and the Covid pandemic have hindered our responsiveness, lessened our importance and depressed cadet membership respectively over the past year. These trends are expected to continue for the foreseeable future but placing more emphasis on recruitment and retention to increase volunteer hours may partially ameliorate them.

2) Establish objectives designed to fulfill needs and opportunities identified in Step 1.

The Public Affairs Operating Plan shall define goals to increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions and its contributions to our nation; promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry, and civic groups within the territory of the region; and comply with CAP regulations, directives, and requirements of National Headquarters and the Pacific Region.

Public Affairs Objectives:

1. Increase State legislature awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions and its contributions to our nation; and
2. Increase wing membership awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions and its contributions to our nation.

3) Establish goals and action strategies for each objective.

GOAL 1: Increase CAP's awareness among Alaska's State legislators.
Objective: Reach out to Alaska State lawmakers.
Strategy: The success of the CAP public affairs program in this area rests with each AK State legislator understanding what CAP is and does.
Tactic: Contact legislators and send each the monthly AKWG Public Affairs digital magazine and one annual statistical update. This latter document was designed and produced by NHQ PA and is titled, "alaska-cap-2021 Legislator information package.pdf".
Measure of Success: The Wing PAO will assist the Wing Government Relations Officer in reaching out to Alaska State legislators. Success will be earned when State funding is restored. The Wing PAO will seek feedback from the Wing's Government Relations Officer that all of the legislators received and read the materials.

GOAL 2: Increase CAP's awareness among it wing members.
Objective: Reach out to CAP wing members monthly.
Strategy: Ensure that each unit has a motivated, active, trained and contributing PAO and PIO.
Tactic: The Wing PAO will conduct online PA training sessions and/or publish training materials throughout FY22 while mentoring unit PAOs and PIOs individually on an as-needed basis. Contact squadron PAOs to solicit submissions for the monthly digital magazine and encourage all PAOs to complete their PIO training in Emergency Services. Offer training workshops for PAOs and PIOs at the annual wing conference. Commanders assuming the role of PAO will be assigned in both the duty assignment and specialty track until a permanent PAO is in place. Incident Commanders will be reminded that in the absence of a PIO during a mission that this responsibility falls to them.
Measure of Success: Increase participation rate of squadron PA members to the monthly digital magazine to at least 50%.

Depending upon available PA resources, which currently are limited, the Wing PAO will provide informal support to the following awareness objectives that have been requested by other Wing staff:

- increase the visibility of the wing, its members, and its events through an online presence with social media, specifically Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaCAP>); and
- publish a digital monthly magazine and disseminate it to the media of significant, timely and newsworthy Wing accomplishments.

4) State the desired impact envisioned for each goal provided in Step 3.

Impact of Goal #1: Reinstate CAP’s State funding.

Impact of Goal #2: Increase participation rate of squadron PA members to the monthly digital magazine.

The plan will be reviewed each year.

Evaluation of the previous year's goals, 2021

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Measure of Success: The Wing PAO will assist the Wing Government Relations Officer in reaching out to Alaska state lawmakers. Success will be considered when every Alaska State lawmaker’s office is briefed annually on AKWG activities.

Evaluation: Failed. Whereas the two documents cited were distributed to all legislators, there was no feedback to or from the legislators that they received or read them. Therefore, the Wing PAO will seek this feedback from the Wing’s Government Relations Officer going forward. Very positive feedback was received by CAP-USAF commanders and staff.

GOAL 2: Increase participation rate of squadron PA members to the monthly digital magazine.
Objective: Make all CAP members aware of what the wing and its squadrons are doing.
Strategy: The success of the CAP public affairs program in this area rests with each member understanding and becoming motivated about the Wing and squadron accomplishments.
Tactic: Solicit and compile squadron accomplishments from commanders and distribute via a monthly digital magazine. This will include awards, saves, finds, training exercises, safety data, commendations, etc.
Measure of Success: This goal will be considered successful if at least one-half of the squadron commanders contribute to each of the monthly publications.

Evaluation: Success. More than one-half of the squadrons commanders contributed to the monthly newsletters and many positive responses were received in support of this initiative.

Distribution

Upon approval of the Commander, this plan will be communicated to every Squadron and Unit PAO in the wing, as well as to the Region PAO.

APPROVED:


Col Kevin McClure, CAP
Commander, Alaska Wing

DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)

PCR Wing Commanders

PCR Staff

PCR/AK Unit PA

NHQ/PA

Record of Review:

Date :