

Tips for submitting press releases & talking to reporters

FIRE Media Forum – May 16, 2003

From Tracy Rose, *Mountain Xpress*

Submitting a press release to *Mountain Xpress*:

- **E-mail often works best.** Next best is fax: (828) 251-1311. Third is mail: P.O. Box 144, Asheville, NC 28802. (Please don't send all three, though.)

***Xpress* main phone number: (828) 251-1333. www.mountainx.com.**

- **Contacts** for press releases:
 - **Cecil Bothwell**, Managing Editor, cbothwell@mountainx.com
 - **Steve Rasmussen**, Calendar Editor, environmental reporter, calendar@mountainx.com
 - **Tracy Rose**, Buncombe County reporter, trose@mountainx.com
 - **Brian Sarzynski**, Asheville city reporter, bsarzynski@mountainx.com
 - **Lisa Watters**, Notepad reporter, lwatters@mountainx.com
- **Tips for submitting press releases to *Mountain Xpress***
 - If something's really important, an e-mail AND a follow-up phone call probably works best
 - **Send it early:** For a reporter to have time to put an announcement in *Xpress'* Notepad, for example, we'd like to have the info 14 days before the Wednesday publication date.
 - If you're looking for a full-fledged article to run before an event, we'd need much more time than that. A month would be better.
 - A special note: Starting in November, *Xpress* will once again run a series of special holiday pull-out sections. As part of that, I'll be writing a weekly column that lists volunteer opportunities and program needs.
- **Advice on writing press releases & pitching ideas to reporters**
 - **Be clear**
 - Include the basics (the 5 Ws) in your press release: who, what, when, where and why.
 - The why – could be a chance for you to remind us of your mission – and help make a mental connection for us about why your event or issue is important.
 - Try to avoid jargon – no matter how much fun it is. Write & speak in plain English.
 - **Be accurate**
 - Don't give us written info that you're not sure about
 - **Be complete**
 - Don't forget to provide all the necessary contact info
 - **Be concise**
 - A one-page press release is probably enough. Two at the most.
 - **Highlight important info**
 - For example, if there's an upcoming registration deadline for an event, put it high up in the press release and highlight it