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## Vital Resources: PIO Online Emergency Toolkit

Want to know the latest emergency online tools available to emergency communicators? [Click here](#) for a brief description of the technology we should all know about and have ready

## President's Message: Make CAPIO Your Professional Beacon in Trying Times



**By Jenny Peterson, CAPIO President**

Budget cuts. Service reductions. Layoffs.

These are all frightening words we've heard a lot over the past year. There is no doubt that at least one of these phrases has affected each of us in some way.

While it is true that these are trying times, CAPIO is here to be your professional beacon as you navigate the seas of change.

Now, more than ever, it is vitally important to your professional well being to stay connected and involved with CAPIO.

Many of us - present company included - have had our training and membership budgets cut, leaving us with two choices: forgo our professional connection with CAPIO or pay from our own pocket to stay current.

If you find yourself wrestling with these two choices, I encourage you to do the latter. At just \$175 a year - that's less than \$15 a month - CAPIO remains one of the most affordable and effective professional organizations around.

Above all, the year ahead is shaping up to be one of the most exciting in CAPIO's history, so you will not want to miss out!

Several regional workshops are being planned for the year ahead, which will provide learning and networking opportunities closer to your home.

The board is also working diligently to refresh the CAPIO brand and update its Web site in order to provide additional opportunities to learn and network online.

CAPIO's bi-monthly e-newsletter continues to grow with each edition, and

for the next big one. This information is courtesy of Kelly Huston of the California Emergency Management Agency and author of [procommunicator.com](http://procommunicator.com), the "ultimate site for public information officers" who want to learn how to effectively communicate during a crisis.

### Clark Winner Rovanpera to Retire



Brad Rovanpera, a 23-year member of CAPIO and Paul B. Clark Award winner, is retiring as PIO from the City of Walnut Creek on Aug. 6, after 24 years of service with the city.

Brad has been active in CAPIO for many years, serving as 1st vice president, secretary, and member at large (Northern California). Brad also designed and was webmaster for CAPIO's first Web site in the 1990s, redesigned the CAPIO logo, and contributed to the CAPIO newsletter *Let's Communicate*.

is quickly becoming a one-stop resource for information on industry trends, job announcements and regional recaps.

And work is already under way on the 2010 CAPIO Conference planned for beautiful Santa Barbara. The conference will be held from April 13 to 16, so mark your calendar now and plan to attend this exciting event!

If you've already renewed your membership, then thank you for partnering with CAPIO. If not, then I encourage you to [renew your membership today](#).

I sincerely look forward to working with you to make CAPIO a beacon of light for all of us involved in the public information sector.

### Putting Words in Their Mouths: Speechwriting Tips 101

By Lovetta Kramer  
Kramer Communications

I've been writing speeches for about 40 years now, all kinds, and, for me, writing a speech is a great deal like writing dialogue for a character in a play. The speech is intended to deliver a story to an audience, and the speaker is the character who delivers the lines. In order to be successful, the speaker must be comfortable with the dialogue, connect with the audience and deliver the message clearly and in a way that is easily understood and acceptable by that particular audience.

To continue the comparison, I think of speech writing as type casting. After researching the speaker's bio, the company's backgrounder, and Googling the subject matter for other viewpoints, I read earlier speeches and print interviews and, best of all, watch online videos of earlier speeches delivered by this speaker. Finally, if at all possible, I meet with the speaker to get his or her take on the speech. What do they hope to accomplish? What is the underlying goal? What are their concerns? What response do they expect? Then I LISTEN. In the course of the conversation, I can get a pretty good fix on the speaker's perspective and personal presentation style, be it rigid, informal, dramatic, etc. I should be able to slip right into the type casting with the next speech I write for this individual. John Wayne made a lot of movies, but he was still John Wayne. That's a good thing.

Besides knowing the speaker, the speech writer also needs to know the audience in order to customize the lingo and speak from the listeners' perspective. The message will be the same (I don't believe in dumbing



Even though Brad will no longer be a PIO, he'll always be a CAPIO member. In 2005 he received the Paul B. Clark Award, which makes him a lifelong member of CAPIO.

Brad and his wife, Debbie, will be moving to Lake Monticello, Virginia, where they have already purchased a home. Brad plans to seek a position as an interpreter at Jefferson's Monticello.

CAPIO wishes Brad a fond farewell and best wishes for this exciting new chapter in his life and career.

## Networking: Good Investment in a Tough Economy

### By Linda Fisher-Helton

No matter how confident you feel today, sudden unemployment can undermine your confidence and self-esteem. Putting effort into updating your resume and re-connecting professionally with our colleagues today will yield an environment open to opportunities.

As a PIO all your efforts are usually to promote someone else's project, so it can be difficult to take the time to reflect on all you have personally accomplished. Taking stock of your achievements, awards, and professional affiliations will help you (and your resume) to stay current.

down) but speaking to colleagues at an industry convention will have a dramatically different jargon level than speaking to professionals in another field, visiting foreign dignitaries, a neighborhood meeting or an elementary school.

I try to be aware of current events and acknowledge public opinion about the topic in the speech, especially the opinion of the folks who are likely to be in the room. Should the speaker be prepared for enthusiastic cheering or cat calls?

One good way to connect is with rhetorical questions that may well be on the minds of the audience, and then answer them. "Can we afford this program in these difficult times? Yes, and here's why." "Are we all going to be out of work? No, and here's why." "Is this project a panacea for all that ails us? No, but here's what it WILL do."

I follow a pretty simple speech construction formula:

- Acknowledge the audience;
- Preview what you're going to say;
- Say it in an orderly and appealing way;
- Recap what you said in a memorable close.

I am not a big fan of jokes as ice breakers. Too risky. Most speakers are terrible joke tellers, and everyone's sense of humor is different. Instead, I suggest connecting on a more personal level, perhaps by sharing a related personal anecdote. What do the speaker and this audience have in common?

If the speech is meant to persuade, as in a political campaign, and the speaker is relatively skilled, repeated phrases can be useful in revving up the crowd, as with Obama's "Yes we can." It lets the audience be part of the event, just like applause.

Quotable quotes are important, too. I try to utilize phrases that are prominently incorporated in the company's current communications campaigns.

I'm always sure to have the speaker thank everybody - the chef for an elegant meal, the wait staff, the venue for making the meeting a success, the committee who put it together, and always thank coworkers and employees. Sometimes these sincere acknowledgements are more meaningful and remembered longer than the speech.

I always prepare the speech to be a little short of the allotted time so that the speaker can add and edit without going over the allotted time. It's important to remember that this speech belongs to the speaker, not the

And, now more than ever, professional organizations are an essential part of a successful career path that provide a competitive advantage on a resume.

"Many people underestimate the importance of building and maintaining a positive reputation for themselves within their organization as well as their industry," says Executive Recruiting Specialist Teri Black-Brann. "It's extremely important to show up and contribute in meaningful ways. Being visible and active in professional organizations can be invaluable to your career - especially in tough economic times."

Take time to build and maintain your professional reputation by connecting with CAPIO members in your area. The membership roster is available on the CAPIO website. Use the roster to contact new members or introduce yourself to a like-minded professional in your area. New possibilities and opportunities are waiting!

**Linda Fisher-Helton, CAPIO Membership Chair, can be reached at 805-480-9991 ext. 235 or [lfhelton@ahacv.org](mailto:lfhelton@ahacv.org)**

**Los Angeles-based [Teri Black & Company, LLC](#) offers premier comprehensive executive search services to public sector clients throughout the Western United States.**

writer, and there will be changes.

I also include an overview of the event where the speech will be presented, including other speakers and the order of appearance. I use big type for easy reading and add stage directions: APPLAUSE; POSE FOR PHOTO; JET FLYOVER NOW; SHIP'S HORN BLOWS NOW; REMAIN ON THE STAGE; EXIT LEFT, etc.

When I'm finished with the draft, I read the speech aloud a few times for timing and to identify awkward spots. If I have trouble reading it, so will the speaker.

Finally, I offer to go through the speech with the speaker and encourage him or her to stand in front of a mirror and practice. It does make perfect, you know.

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## CalEMA PIO Kelly Huston to Speak at CAPIO-San Jose Workshop Aug. 20



The City of San José and the California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO) will co-host a regional presentation for all who serve in the emergency public information field, featuring Kelly Huston, from the California Emergency Management Agency (formerly known as the Governor's Office of Emergency Services).

Kelly has extensive experience as a PIO for high profile events, including the devastating floods of 1997, the notorious Yosemite sightseer murder investigation, the nationwide search for Washington Intern Chandra Levy and the Scott Peterson trial.

Kelly will share his riveting "war stories," practical tips, lessons learned, and best practices on managing information and logistics during a high profile event.

Kelly was recently appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to serve as Assistant Secretary of CalEMA, where he manages the State's Alert and Warning systems and team of communications professionals. Previously, he was the Deputy Communications Director for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. In that role he developed the Governor's statewide media relations strategy and managed millions of dollars in federal grants.

Workshop information:

**Thursday, August 20, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.**  
**San José City Hall Room 120, Wing**  
**200 East Santa Clara St., San José, CA 95113**

The event is free. However, please RSVP so we can plan accordingly.

RSVP to: Patricia Nicandro, 408-535-8112, [patricia.nicandro@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:patricia.nicandro@sanjoseca.gov).

## Santa Barbara Fire Survey Results

**By Sheri Benninghoven, APR, and Scott Summerfield**

The Santa Barbara region has experienced three devastating wildfires in the past year, resulting in hundreds of homes lost, millions of dollars spent to fight the fires and help communities recover, and tremendous disruption to tens of thousands of individuals. Nearly 30,000 area residents were required to evacuate their homes, while another almost 30,000 were in the evacuation warning area. Amazingly, no lives were lost in the any of the fires.



CAPIO board members saw the most recent fire, in May of this year, as an opportunity to gain insight into how the public learned about the emergency situation, what tools proved to be most effective to inform the public, and gather views from the citizens of the region.

An 18-question survey was quickly crafted by SAE Communications and a "viral" email campaign was used to send a link to the online survey to hundreds of residents. While not statistically valid, the results of the 752 individuals who took the survey online provide insight into what tools work in an emergency, and which don't.

## **What Worked . . .**

Most residents who took the survey learned of the fire via word of mouth or direct observation (62 percent). Just 16 percent learned about it from news sources.

The local and state agencies which responded to the fire received phenomenally high marks for their performance in fighting the fire and directing the evacuation efforts. Most local responders were viewed "very good" by three-quarters of the respondents, thus increasing the confidence in their local government among residents.

Not surprisingly, the primary source of information for most residents was the local television station, KEYT-TV. They interrupted regular programming for the first day-and-a-half or so of the roughly five-day incident. A surprise finding came in learning that the weekly "throw away" newspaper, the Santa Barbara Independent, ranked second in a long list of information sources. Also a surprise: a local web site aggregator, EdHat, ranked number two when respondents were asked to state the most helpful source, behind KETV-TV. Every PIO needs to be aware of these types of non-traditional sources and ensure they are part of the media outreach effort.

Generally, media web sites tended to receive a higher number of mentions as sources of information than government agency web sites; however, the County of Santa Barbara ranked fourth in a list of information sources.

## **. . . And What Didn't**

Less than 10 percent of respondents found any radio source to be their most helpful place to go for information, another surprising find.

While Twitter did not rank high as a primary source of information, more than 50 respondents (7 percent) listed it as a source of information during the fire. We see this type of service only growing as public agencies adopt this invaluable tool during future incidents.

An amazing failure to be of nearly any help during the fire was the local daily newspaper, the Santa Barbara News-Press. Just **two people** listed the paper as their most helpful source of information!

## **Frequency and Types of Information**

While just more than two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents feel they received information on a timely basis, only half feel they received **enough** fire related information. This points out there is a high demand for information during a major incident and that using technology which helps quickly send information can help fill this gap.

The type of information most readily available pertained to evacuation and shelter sites, while information regarding where the fire was burning and an easy-to-read map showing burning or threatened areas was deemed most lacking.

Interestingly and a major change from just a few years ago, 40 percent of respondents received updated

information via a computer, with 35 percent via television and only 11 percent via radio.

### What Does it Mean To PIOs?

Several interesting trends emerged from the survey results and the responses to the open-ended question offered to those taking the survey, including:

- Your daily newspaper may not be the primary source of information during an incident
- Don't lose site of the ability of your weeklies to cover major incidents (in Santa Barbara, the Independent used a wide variety of news sources, from government PIOs to person-on-the-street interviews to Twitter; their web site was one of the most-looked-at sites)
- Rethink the direct distribution of incident news via emails or text messages via computer or cell/smart phone in addition to using intermediaries, such as the news media (begin collecting email addresses and cell phone numbers into an incident database now)
- Using tools such as Google Maps, the electronic distribution of incident boundaries is one of the of the most sought-after types of information
- Press releases tend to be relied upon by government communicators; however, residents seem to want more information and in more detail. More information is the norm in this Web 2.0 world
- You need a crisis web site that doesn't crash when a few hundred thousand people from all over the world descend on it
- Consider the role of your elected officials during an incident; sentiment expressed in the open-ended comments showed little patience for elected officials who appeared at press conferences without delivering any hard news
- PIOs need to keep their ears to the concerns of the community during and after the incident. Some respondents in the region seemed to believe the fire departments let the fire burn unchecked for a few hours before aggressively fighting it, which certainly was not the case. Yet this perception emerged strongly in the survey results.

[CLICK HERE FOR SURVEY RESULTS](#)

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***Sheri Benninghoven, APR***, is the former Communications Director for the League of California Cities and PIO for the City of Anaheim. ***Scott Summerfield***, a former CAPIO president, previously served as PIO for the City of Newark and was the Director of Communications for the Oakland Chamber of Commerce. Both are recipients of the Paul B. Clark Award from CAPIO.

### Save the Date: 2010 CAPIO Conference in Santa Barbara



CAPIO is already looking ahead to the 2010 conference in beautiful Santa Barbara, scheduled for April 13-16. The location will be Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort, located only steps away from the beach and a half-mile away from historic downtown Santa Barbara, Stearns Wharf and the Santa Barbara Zoo. Stay tuned to the *CAPIO Communicator* for more information.

## Get 'LinkedIn' with other CAPIO members



CAPIO is now on LinkedIn! If you're a member of LinkedIn - or thinking about joining - we'd like you to join our LinkedIn group. It's a great way to start or join a discussion within the membership, share news or just put a face to the CAPIO membership. The service is free. Search for "The California Association of Public Information Officials" in the groups directory after you log in. We look forward to seeing you -- [click here](#) to get started!

## Career Corner



In a tough economy, it's more important than ever that employers make the right choices when it comes to hiring. Be sure to list your job openings and professional growth opportunities in the *CAPIO Communicator*. Send your job listings to **CAPIO Executive Secretary** [Emily Cole](#) for inclusion in future issues. Also, please send news of CAPIO member promotions, retirements and other career information to share in future issues of the newsletter.

## About the CAPIO Newsletter

The *CAPIO Communicator* was relaunched in 2009 as an electronic-only version to bring CAPIO members regular news and information about the organization. Our goal is to keep members up-to-date on CAPIO events, workshops and conferences, as well as provide professional growth and development opportunities. To make this newsletter the best it can be, we need your help! We are looking for "how to" articles, case studies, lessons learned, success stories, professional development opportunities, job listings and more. Please contact **CAPIO Secretary** [John Pope](#) to submit an article.

