

Preparing Photo Captions

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Photographs

- ✦ Effective publicity tool
- ✦ Must tell a story worth using in a publication
- ✦ Must interest publication's editor and audience
- ✦ Photo + good caption = relive story

Caption / Cut Line

- ✦ Provide photo's context
- ✦ Information not readily available from photo on its own
- ✦ Writing: four to six types lines
- ✦ Provide: 5 w's and how.
- ✦ Photo + caption = all the essentials of story

Use Active Present Tense

NOT:

The park gates were opened by Mayor Jones.

BUT:

Mayor Jones opens the park gates.

Elements to exclude:

- ⚡ "Pictured above" and "This picture shows..." both delay the message
- ⚡ "From left to right..." we read that way

Caption Format

- ⚡ Letterhead or news release letterhead
- ⚡ Contact information
- ⚡ "Photo Caption" vs. headline
- ⚡ Body copy
- ⚡ End mark (-30- or # # #)

Caption Format Tips

- ⚡ Set up like a news release at top
- ⚡ Use headline or "Photo Caption"
- ⚡ Do not indent, captions are flush left
- ⚡ Only use one side, one sheet of paper

Attaching the Photo (Hardcopy)

- ⚡ Cement photo to caption hardcopy
- ⚡ Label back of photo to correspond with caption hard copy
- ⚡ Send snail mail to media outlets

Attaching the Photo (Electronic)

- ⚡ Attach 300 dpi photo to e-mail
- ⚡ Color or black and white? Find out!
- ⚡ Copy text of caption from word processing and paste into email's body

Remember...

- ⚡ Some publications do not accept photos and captions.
Example: The Star-Ledger

Associated Press Caption Rules

- ⚡ Describe and explain picture to reader
- ⚡ Write in active present tense

AP Caption Test

- ⚡ Complete?
- ⚡ Identify fully and clearly?
- ⚡ Tell when?
- ⚡ Tell where?
- ⚡ Tell what is in picture?
- ⚡ Names spelled correctly?
- ⚡ Names associated with correct people?

AP Caption Test (continued)

- ⚡ Specific?
- ⚡ Easy to read?
- ⚡ S-V-O?
- ⚡ Suggest another picture?
- ⚡ Never write caption without seeing picture!

Questions?
