

Colorado County Central Appraisal District

Public Relations Plan

2023 – 2024

GOALS

The Colorado County Appraisal District (District) seeks to inform its constituents through a proactive communications program. These include property owners, civic and professional organizations, lending institutions, developers, attorneys, real estate appraisers and brokers, governmental agencies and policymakers, tax representatives, and the media. This program recognizes that one of the most effective and quickest ways to communicate District policies and activities to citizens is by working in partnership with the news media.

POLICY

The Colorado CAD public relations plan was developed using the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) Standard on Public Relations. This standard outlines the requirements for developing and maintaining an effective plan. The IAAO is the internationally recognized leader and preeminent source for innovation, education, and research in property appraisal, assessment administration and property tax policy. The IAAO website is www.iaao.org.

COMMUNICATIONS

The CAD Chief Appraiser is the spokesperson for responding to the media both verbally and written. In the absence of the Chief Appraiser, the Colorado CAD Board of Directors Chairman may provide information. The Chief Appraiser can be contacted at the following:

Colorado County Appraisal District
106 Cardinal Lane, Columbus, TX
Telephone: 979-732-8222
E-mail address: janea@coloradocad.org
Mailing address: Post Office Box 10, Columbus, TX 78934
Internet Service for public access – www.coloradocad.org

SPEAKING

The District will work in conjunction with government agencies to provide information to constituents on matters related to property tax policy. This may include attending hearings, meetings, or other events scheduled by the governmental body. The District will also meet with neighborhood associations, professionals, and other organizations, as invited.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Chief Appraiser shall establish a communications review process to review and evaluate organization-wide communication efforts and implement improvements where indicated. This review process can include departmental performance statistics, customer service surveys, customer interviews, peer review and direct observations.

In the event of a crisis, the Chief Appraiser shall respond by the following steps:

1. Identify the crisis.
2. Develop a plan to respond.
3. Contact all necessary resources (e.g., Board of Directors, attorney, staff) to develop a final response.
4. Respond quickly with accurate information and provide staff with all necessary documentation.
5. Respond to any media questions.
6. Customer service training will be provided to staff through in-house or offsite training seminars to remind them of the importance of good customer service skills.

MEDIA

The Colorado CAD will strive to develop and maintain a good relationship with all local newspapers and radio stations to provide property owners with important information regarding their property matters.

The following is a list of all local media:

Banner Press - (979) 732-6243 www.bannerpresspaper.com
Colorado County Citizen – (979) 732-2304 www.coloradocountycitizen.com
The Weimar Mercury – (979) 725-9595 www.weimarmercury.com
KLUM Radio 98.3 FM – (979)-732-5766 www.klumradio.com

SPECIFIC PLAN ACTIONS

In general, the District will follow the timeline below; however, the District must remain flexible and react to changes and constituent needs as they arise; therefore, the timeline can and should be altered to respond to individual and special circumstances and additional customer service and public relation needs as they are identified.

January - December

- The Chief Appraiser shall attend the commissioner's court, city council, school board, and other governmental body meetings, and meetings of professional groups, neighborhood associations, and other constituent groups, as invited, to provide information and testimony on matters related to property tax policy.

January

- Review and development of public information literature and other materials related to property exemptions, renditions, and special appraisals. Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation.
- Publish a notice in local newspapers about the availability of Electronic Communications.
- Publish a notice in local newspapers about requirements and availability of

applications for deferrals, homestead exemptions, renditions, and agricultural appraisals.

February-March

- The District shall conduct Open Meetings and Public Information training for all District staff. Training may include training videos and other materials developed by the Attorney General's Office, as well as internally developed materials.
- The District shall conduct Customer Service training for all District staff. Training may include external training courses and internally developed training material.

March – April

- Review and develop public information materials related to appraisal procedures, notices, protests, and evidence production. Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation.

April

- Publish a notice in local newspapers about requirements and availability of applications for deferrals, homestead exemptions, renditions, and agricultural appraisals.
- Prepare press releases for notices of appraised values and protest process. May
- Publish notices in local newspapers about taxpayer protests and procedures.

June – July

- Provide public notice of hearings for annual budget public hearings and approval.

July – August

- During strategic planning sessions - evaluation, review, and planning/implementation of customer service and communication recommendations.

September

- Provide reappraisal plan on even-numbered years

November – December

- Review, update, and develop website content, specifically sections explaining appraisal District policy and procedures, including but not limited to frequently asked questions, tax information, forms, District statistics, and property information.

PERSONAL POINTS OF VIEW

It is recognized that all employees have the right to their personal points of view regarding any issue. However, personal points of view may conflict with the appraisal District's official policy. Therefore, appraisal District employees who write letters to the editor of any newspaper may not use official appraisal District stationery. If an employee chooses to identify themselves as an Appraisal District employee in any personal letter or email to the editor, they must include language that states the views outlined in the letter do not represent the views of the Appraisal District, but rather, are the employee's personally held opinions.

Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program unless the employee officially represents the appraisal District. Employees representing the appraisal District in any of the above formats must identify themselves as an official spokesperson for the appraisal District.

GENERAL OR ROUTINE ISSUES

Broadcast media: Calls from broadcast media (TV and radio) should always be referred immediately to the Chief Appraiser.

Local print media: Calls from local print media regarding most division issues and programs are handled by the Chief Appraiser in conjunction with the division's supervisor. Prior to any responses, the Chief Appraiser will be informed of the media requests, including the reporter and topic, before these interviews.

PERSONNEL POLICIES RELATED TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

Litigation, Closed Session and Personnel Issues

Generally, the business conducted by the District is public and, therefore, is public information. Inquiries regarding pending litigation, matters involving significant exposure to litigation, matters discussed by the Board of Directors in closed session, and certain personnel-related information are exceptions.

Executive session by the Board of Directors will comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code Chapter 551, Subchapters D and E.

Inquiries regarding pending litigation or exposure to litigation should be referred to the appraisal District's attorney and the Chief Appraiser. Inquiries regarding personnel-related information should be directed to the Human Resources Administrator and the Chief Appraiser.