

# NORTHEAST REGION

Civil Air Patrol



## **Public Affairs Plan**

**2016**

Revised 30 December 15

*Citizens Serving Communities*

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS MISSION**

**“The mission of the Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs (PA) program is to inform internal and external audiences of Civil Air Patrol’s national importance, safeguard the image and assets of the corporation, and strengthen relations with key audiences and customers, which enables the organization to grow.” (CAP Regulation 190-1)**

### **I. Introduction**

This annual plan, required to be prepared annually by CAPR 190-1, represents the plans of Northeast Region (NER) for its Public Affairs Program, including regular marketing communications, mission communications, and crisis communications.

### **II. Public Affairs Needs and Opportunities**

The Northeast Region of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) encompasses the nine states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. The region is diverse geographically ranging from major metropolitan areas to some of the most rural, low population counties in the United States. The area also encompasses mountainous areas such as the Catskills, with many open waterways to the Atlantic Ocean and rivers up through Canada, and some of those areas actually border Canada. Since several wings making up Northeast Region comprise the northern Atlantic coast, those wings' became involved in coastal patrol and rescue operations starting from World War II.

The region’s nine wings consist of 8,150 members (3,895 cadets and 4,255 seniors). Approximately 79% of the units have a PAO assigned, not many of the PAO’s are PIO qualified (10 to be specific). The region headquarters organization based out of Augusta, ME, is responsible for program management in the wings and coordination among the wings and units.

- **Strengths:** The region has a diverse, experienced staff that is committed to the highest ideals of volunteer service. The staff makes excellent use of technology to promote collaboration at a distance, such as the Internet and teleconferencing. The region is an acknowledged leader in all of its missions and is serving the local communities and the nation. The office of Public Affairs has been stable for several years now.
- **Weaknesses:** The staff is decentralized, with members in every wing of the region, so it is rare that staff members can meet and interact with each other in person. Hence, conference calls and emails are the main method of communication, aside from annual region conference. The distance also hampers the process of mentoring and supporting staff in subordinate units. Furthermore, the wings within the North East Region need to work towards certifying more Public Information Officers (PIO’s) through their Emergency Services (ES) programs.
- **Areas for Improvement:** Areas for improvement include increasing the effective members of the wings, attendance at routine wing PAO conference calls, furthering interoperability within the region and inter-region communication.  
The region PAO needs to focus on the recruitment, training and retention on highly motivated members to serve as PAO’s and PIO’s. The website has been updated to a more

“modern state” which has enabled the region to better communicate information with members and the general public.

- **Opportunities:** CAP in the region is very much involved in Emergency Services and Homeland Security and has been involved in many missions in the last year that reflected well on the organization. The region has made strides in putting mutual support, interoperability and joint training into effect. In fact, the region continues to hold Joint Wing TRAEX's. Region wings continue to work with local and state agencies as well as the various National Guard units within their borders.

The wings within the Northeast Region have participated in many missions and performed many tasks including but not limited to Operation Fertile Keynote, the Long Island Sound Patrol, Photo Recon, Fire Patrol and Operation Pictomaty.

- **Threats:** CAP units in the region vary in their health from active dynamic teams to small units that struggle to survive. The need for further training and professional development is constant. Many local unit PAO's are relatively new members who are inexperienced at the functions of the program, this seems to be a familiar theme in other wings across the nation.

- **Major Events:** Each year the region conducts a Region Conference, Region Staff College, Chaplain Service Staff College and numerous training opportunities, such as the Region-wide TRAEX/COMEX and inter-Region exercises. In 2015, the region planned a Search and Rescue Competition (SARCOMP) for the first time since 2009. Each wing also conducts many of these activities in addition to its own emergency services training & operations, flight encampments, SAR academies and bivouacs with ES or leadership themes for seniors and cadets alike.

### **III. Effectiveness of 2015 Goals**

The goals that were established on 1 January, 2015 and their corresponding measures of success are as follows:

- **Goal #1: Identify eligible PAO's who could be groomed to assume greater responsibilities including wing and region PAO duties. Seek out members in the media business.**

Measure of Success: A new region PAO has been appointed. Part of the responsibility is to liaise between the region commander and subordinate PAO's. The search continues to seek out members in the media business to contribute to the PA effort.

- **Goal #2: Publish NINER magazine at least once if not twice a year in hard copy format.**

Measure of Success: The NINER was published and is available on the Region website. Hardcopies were made available and distributed during the NER conference.

- **Goal #3: Hold region-organized PAO/PIO Workshops.**

Measure of Success: No region-organized PAO/PIO workshops were held.

#### **IV. Public Affairs Objectives**

Northeast Region has established the following PA Objectives for 2016:

- A. Support the PA/Marketing Plan, Strategies and Goals of CAP National Headquarters.
- B. Recruit more talented members to the PAO ranks from media and like mind business/industry.
- C. Support and mentor the PAO's of the region, especially new PAO/PIOs
- D. Increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions and its contributions to our nation.
- E. Promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry, and civic groups within the territory of Northeast Region.
- F. Conduct more Wing-wide PAO Workshops the region.
- G. Increase conference call meetings with subordinate unit PAO's.
- H. Foster better communication with the wings and the NER PA office.
- I. Promote support for group/wing/region/national hosted activities as requested, including preparations for CAP's 75th anniversary.

#### **V. Public Affairs Goals and Strategies**

The NER Public Affairs effort rests primarily in the role of program management and support. While most external media and public contacts in CAP occur at the wing and local level, NER's PA effort is one of monitoring implementation of the program in subordinate units, and providing PA services that support the wings and the region headquarters.

NER/PA has set the following goals for its Public Affairs Program. Each goal is described, the measures of success are provided and each goal lists which objective it supports.

As part of his routine reporting the Region PAO will summarize these measures and report to the Region Commander and the Wing Commanders/PAO's on progress and successes/failures to date.

- **Goal #1:** Routinely Publish a News Magazine – NINER.

Description: The region Public Affairs staff under the guidance of Captain Bob Stronach (Editor) will produce a professional news magazine telling about CAP success stories and role models across the region and previewing upcoming activities, communication of significant missions, esprit de corps, and professional development.

The news magazine will be posted on the region website where it can be viewed by both CAP and non-CAP members. The magazine was published for the first time in 2010 and the PA staff has continued to produce this publication on a routine basis ever since and NINER has won several Balsem Awards over the years. It will primarily be an internal communications and

retention tool however it will be available for distribution to community partners, prospective members, and other interested parties outside of CAP.

Measure of success: A newsletter is produced and distributed electronically via the web.

- **Goal #2:** Ensure that every wing has an active, engaged and trained Wing Public Affairs Officer.

Description: The success of the CAP Public Affairs program rests with each wing having an active and Engaged PAO. NER/PA will work with the Wing Commanders to identify candidates for this position and assist where desired by the wing in finding a Wing PAO for each NER Wing, currently there is one opening. NER/PA will work with the wing PAO's in order to develop training goals for their programs and that of their groups and squadrons; this will include the establishment of PAO Workshops and PIO classes.

Measure of success: Each wing has an assigned PAO that is or will be enrolled in the PAO Specialty Track. Data comes from the monthly report issued by the Region IT Officer. The number of wing PAO's that attends these workshops and the wing conference will be one of the measurements.

- **Goal #3:** Ensure that each wing has a cadre of trained and active Public Information Officers.

Description: Having qualified members working this function can mean success or failure during a mission.

Measure of success: An increase in the number of PIO's assigned to each wing. This data comes from WMIRS. NER Conducts a PIO Workshop within the region and provides support materials via [www.ner.cap.gov](http://www.ner.cap.gov). In 2009, the NER PAO, Maj. James A. Ridley, Sr. chaired a national committee for the purposes of redefining the MIO (now PIO) requirements which was adopted in subsequent years. This goal will be successful when the PAO has evaluated the effectiveness and success of the previous year's public affairs goals and submitted the evaluation to the wing PAO no later than 1 December.

- **Goal #4:** Promote and create regular submissions to the CAP's Volunteer NOW News Online Service.

Description: While most news releases within the region will originate from the wing or local levels, appropriate NER news articles and other releases will be adapted and delivered to the Civil Air Patrol Volunteer Now publication via eservices submissions.

NER/PA will promote the distribution of news stories and releases to Volunteer Now and the NER News Magazine. This will be included in appropriate training and conference updates.

Measure of success: NER/PA will develop a semi-annual spreadsheet that tracks the number of releases/stories published in the National and NER News. This will be reported to each Wing Commander, Wing PAO and the Region Leadership.

- **Goal #5:** Ensure the NER Website is a valued source of information for CAP Members.

Description: The region Public Affairs staff will collaborate as needed with the region webmaster/IT Officer to ensure that the website's direct and subconscious messages for the general public all reflect positively on the unit and the organization.

Measure of success: The website is regularly updated with current content (such as the NER News Magazine) and meets the needs of the region staff and commander.

- **Goal #6:** Promote the recognition of PAO's by wings and recognizes outstanding wing and unit PAO's in the region.

Description: The Region PAO has established a process to implement the PAO Recognition program as outlined in CAPR 190-1. The Region PAO will submit the name(s) of a Wing PAO who based upon their performance during the previous year, will be designated as the Region PAO of the Year.

This award will be presented at the Region Conference that year. Since 2010 and with the support of NHQ, NER PAO's have sent submissions to the NHQ Balsem Awards program and have won in various categories ever since.

The Region PAO will also promote the Balsem Awards in the Region and make the maximum number of nominations allowed in 2016.

Measure of success: Each wing submits a nomination for the Wing and Unit PAO of the Year Award. NER/PA promotes nominations for the Balsem Awards when they are viable.

- **Goal #7:** The Region PAO will create an annual public affairs plan detailing the objectives and goals for the upcoming year and will also create an annual crisis communications plan for the upcoming calendar year.

Measure of success: This goal will be successful when the Region PAO has submitted both an approved annual PA plan and an approved annual crisis communications plan.

## **VI. Summary**

This plan provides an overview of the current squadron public affairs program, observations of the current PA environment, and goals and strategies for the program for the upcoming year. It is not meant to be a final plan, but one that will evolve as needed.

## **VII. Annual Review**

This plan will be reviewed each year in the month of January. This review will consist of a comprehensive review of the PA program as outlined in this plan. This review will go over successes, failures, areas for improvement and update goals/objectives for the next year. The review will serve as the annual report of the Region PAO. Wing Commanders and PAO's will be asked for input prior to implementation of the revised plan of action.

### **VIII. Promulgation**

This plan upon approval of the region commander will be communicated to every commander and PAO in the region via [www.ner.cap.gov](http://www.ner.cap.gov).

**APPROVED:**



DANIEL LECLAIR, COLONEL, CAP  
NORTHEAST REGION COMMANDER

**//Signed Warren Weiss, Capt, CAP//**

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WARREN WEISS, CAPTAIN, CAP  
NORTHEAST REGION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Certified 9 January 2016

**DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)**

NER Wing Commanders  
NER Staff NER Wing and Unit PAO's  
CAP NHQ/PA  
NATIONAL PAO