



**“Citizens Serving Communities: Above and Beyond”**  
**North Central Region News**  
Volume 2009 February

# ***Producing NCR News***

Editor’s Note: This item was produced because of the many requests made for tips on producing a newsletter. So I thought I would outline the entire process used in editing each issue of NCR News. Most of this should apply to squadron and wing newsletters. I tried not to get too technical but instead focus on process.

NCR News is a monthly newsletter that is published electronically for the members, supporters and friends of the CAP’s North Central Region. Here is some basic information regarding the production of this monthly newsletter.

**Newsletter Frequency:** Monthly (since Sept 2006)

**Delivery Method:** On-Line via [www.ncr.cap.gov](http://www.ncr.cap.gov)

## **Key Elements:**

1. Commander’s Column – The Region Commander likes to have a monthly column that communicates his message to the general membership of the region each month.
2. News From NCR Staff – This does not come very frequently, but important examples are regional activities such as encampments, staff colleges and the conference.
3. News from the Wings and Squadrons – most of the stories come from PAO’s in the field and they are about activities, accomplishments and significant events. Our goal is to have each wing represented. Most stories come from squadron PAO’s.
4. Features – We are starting to have a feature in selected issues. A feature is a multi-page story with images. Features can include Region Conference Awards, Wing Conferences, Encampments, Wreath’s Across America, Cadet Competition and the like events.

## **Production:**


*Note: NCR News is edited in MS Word. This software is available on CAP issued laptops and is the de-facto standard for word-processing software. While not as robust as say a Publisher or Quark it does have all the tools needed to create a quality publication.*

1. Items are submitted to [pao@ncr.cap.gov](mailto:pao@ncr.cap.gov) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month for that month’s issue. This is not a hard fast deadline. The goal is to have the issue published by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Almost all items are sent via e-mail. I encourage word files for the submissions (plain e-mail text is ok too.) and separate images (not embedded in the word files) at the highest possible resolution as they may be used in other materials.

2. I try to use the standards for the CAP Volunteer in submissions for NCR News but I am open to almost anything. I try to be flexible. Our PAO's only have a limited amount of time and I try to respect that as much as possible.
3. Other sources for stories are usually e-mail announcements about events/missions and news. These are usually pretty short and usually have a good story behind them. I try to seek it out and flesh it out for the newsletter or a release.
4. Don't forget to check the CAP Online News as well as Wing Websites for stories that may have not made your in box. ☺
5. Cut and paste (to note pad then to word) is your friend (this removes all of the formatting from a webpage or other file type leaving you pure plain text.
6. Items are saved into a folder on my computer that includes the word template, word version and PDF of the previous issue, region commander's picture, wing and CAP logos. A folder is created called "used" this is where all of the used files are placed after they are incorporated into the newsletter.
7. I take the stories and create a list of them in Excel and sort them as to how I want to use them. Normally I try to group similar stories together (Cadets, Operations, AE, achievements) or group them by wing depending on the quantity of stories I have.
8. From that list I select a story to be featured on the first page. This story should stand out and grab you. If no stories like that exist find a really cool picture to use as the "tease."
9. Common Formatting: All headlines are 16 point Ariel, the text is 10 point and picture captions are 8 point. This will not vary so we have a uniform appearance. Ariel is the font as it is a common font on all PC's and translates well when converted to PDF. I chose Ariel also because it is a San-Serif font that looks modern and active. That's just a style choice that the previous editor (Lt Col Mike Marek) made and I kept.
10. Sometimes I will use "Word Art" to create a text graphic for the Headline or a feature headline. It is more eye catching than regular text.
11. Front Page – The front page starts with a table that has the CAP Seal and the masthead info for the newsletter. We keep it basic. If you have access to professional graphics tools or a designer design a "banner" for your newsletter. It looks very professional if done right. Don't forget to incorporate the "Citizens Serving Communities" Tagline in your header.



12. After the front page (near the bottom of the page) piece I insert a text box with a listing of some of the contents. This allows the reader an idea of what is inside. Note that this should be bullet points and not have much detail.
13. After that include your “Commander’s Column, with a picture of the commander. Try not to edit his text except for spelling and punctuation. Remember these are his words not yours.
14. Then begin placing your articles and features as per your spreadsheet. Format each page individually. Make sure that it is visually pleasing. I usually start with single page columns then 2 columns then back to 1 column.
15. Most editors are concerned about space as in filling the required space. My concern is getting enough quality stories out. I have no problem with editing a story for either brevity or adding missing information. I do find myself re-working to make them better/workable (this is where I spend most of my time editing) I also like to really use pictures to help tell the story. Not only do our members read the newsletter but so do potential members and current/potential partners for CAP. Seeing members doing things is worth thousands of words describing members doing things.
16. Somewhere in the body of your newsletter include your publishing information. This identifies that the newsletter is an official CAP publication and where news items can be sent. I use the CAP seal as this is an official publication. There is no policy behind this just personal preference.

	<p><b>NCR NEWS</b> is the official newsletter of the North Central Region, Civil Air Patrol. The views expressed, either written or implied are not necessarily those of the U.S. Air Force or the Civil Air Patrol. Submissions are welcome and can be sent to <a href="mailto:pao@ncr.cap.gov">pao@ncr.cap.gov</a></p> <p>Col Steve Kuddes, Region Commander    Major Al Pabon, Director of Public Affairs</p>
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17. We also include “ads” for events such as wing and regional encampments, Hawk Mountain, conferences, CLA and the like. These are usually full page ads. These are basically info sheets that can be printed on their own.
18. Sometimes I do banner ads for events and for websites in case I need filler. Sometimes I run out of content and need to make the issue aesthetically pleasing. So an ad for the region website, the new NHQ website or even the latest Volunteer (with a listing of NCR Centric stories) fit the bill.
19. After editing I will put it down and not look at it for several hours. It allows me to take a fresh look at it and (usually) make a few minor changes in style and lock it down.
20. Ask yourself if you feel comfortable with the issue. Remember that it will never be perfect. My guideline is that if you are telling your unit’s stories in an eye catching and appealing way then you have succeeded and it’s ready for distribution.
21. Once the publication is edited and saved I save it as a pdf file then load it to [www.ncrpao.org](http://www.ncrpao.org) I take the pdf file and save the first page as a .jpg file and resize that to the same size as the image of the current issue that is featured on the website. The new file is loaded to the website. See next page:

22. Then I update the region website and [www.ncrpao.org](http://www.ncrpao.org) to reflect that a current issue is available and the past issue archive page is updated. The past issue archive is hosted at [www.ncrpao.org](http://www.ncrpao.org)
23. Next, I let the world (so to speak) know that a new issue is out. This is done in a series of e-mails as it is an electronic pub.
24. The first e-mail goes to the Region Staff, Region Key 3, Wing Commanders, the wing and Squadron PAO's and the wing's distribution lists.
25. The second e-mail goes to the CAP-PAO list, the Region PAO's National PA Staff and selected others that I maintain a private list for.
26. In the e-mail I invite the recipient to go to the website and download the current issue and list some of the stories in it. I also invite submissions for the next issue and thank the contributors. I also ask that the recipient share this info in their unit/organization.
27. I save all of the files in a single folder (NCR News\_200902 as an example) this way I know where all of the files are and I move them to a portable hard drive and to a CD/DVD for archival purposes. You never know when you will want to grab something you used in a past issue or when NHQ wants a particular picture.
28. Then the cycle repeats itself each month. Editing an issue of NCR News is usually an 8-12 hour process spread out over a month. It's not that bad once you get into a production routine. Once you have your news dedicate 4-5 hours of solid time at the computer for editing so you can work at a steady pace. It can be fun if you make it fun!

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at [pao@ncr.cap.gov](mailto:pao@ncr.cap.gov)

AL PABON, Major, CAP  
NCR/PA