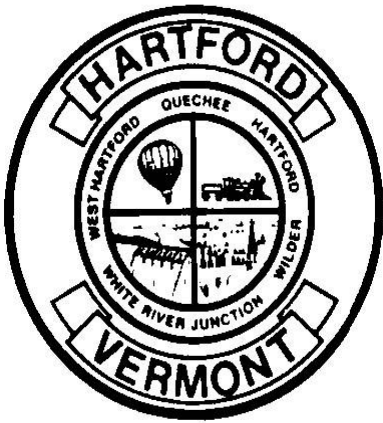


**HARTFORD, VT
PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT**



**MARKETING / COMMUNITY
RELATIONS PLAN**

“Our mission is to serve the recreational needs of the community by offering lifelong learning through recreational and educational programming utilizing existing parks and facilities.”

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Hartford Parks and Recreation Department Marketing / Community Relations Plan

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Hartford Parks and Recreation Department Marketing / Community Relations Plan

Introduction

The department is dedicated to providing citizens with accurate, up to date and relevant information about programs, special events and facilities. The department will strive to inform the public of current news relative to on-going programs. The marketing efforts will include a variety of mediums to ensure the department provides Hartford citizens with a variety of opportunities to discover the many services offered by the department. Implementation of the Marketing / Community Relations Plan is based on the department's vision and mission statements.

Vision Statement

The residents of Hartford and the surrounding communities recognize the vital importance of natural places and recreation. Through diverse programming that aims to reach all, regardless of age, gender, race, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background, the Hartford Parks & Recreation Department cooperates with community groups to bring a variety of recreational opportunities to local residents. The department is committed to maintaining the highest quality parks and facilities while dedicating itself to improving its program offerings and practices to meet current and future needs.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve the recreational needs of the community by offering lifelong learning through recreational and educational programming utilizing existing parks and facilities.

I. Administration

A. Review

The Hartford Parks and Recreation Commission, Director, Superintendent of Recreation Programs, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities, Administrative Assistant and Town Manager will review the plan yearly. The review will consist of evaluating marketing promotional material, sequence of distribution and methods of distribution.

B. Staff Responsibilities

The Director will be responsible for updating the plan, distributing the plan and overseeing the administration of marketing activities for the department. The Administrative Assistant and Superintendent of Programs will develop the seasonal program guide, event fliers, press releases, website, and online presence.

II. Marketing Tools

The following tools will be implemented to announce programs and special events:

A. News Releases / Feature Articles

When appropriate – news release will be sent out announcing activities of the department (new programs, capital improvements, etc.) All news releases will be submitted through the appropriate media choices at least three weeks prior to the program, activity, and/or event date. Reminders will be sent weekly prior to events using Constant Contact, websites, and social media.

B. Web

All activities and general information about the department will be maintained and updated on an “as-needed” basis on the Town’s official web site and on www.hartfordrec.com. The seasonal program guides will

be posted on the town's website and on www.hartfordrec.com, which allows participants to view or print out the document. All social media platforms will also be utilized for promoting events, deadlines, and notifications.

C. Bulletin Board

Communication information will be maintained at the entrance bulletin board at the Parks & Recreation office in the Municipal Building, the WABA, the pool and all schools. When appropriate, fliers/posters will be distributed to local bulletin boards and storefront windows.

D. Recreation Telephone

The phone line (802) 295-5036 –will be maintained as a direct contact to the Department.

E. Paid Advertising

Advertising will be utilized for season openings of major facilities and announcements of special events.

F. Internet - Email

Emailing and use of social media platforms will be used to engage potential participants. This format will be utilized to directly target the appropriate market that we want to reach. Marketing documents and press releases to every household in our database, through both www.hartfordrec.com and Constant Contact mailings.

G. Direct Mail

Direct mail marketing is an option for the department to use for marketing of programs and special events. However, in today's technologically advanced world, the department finds it more beneficial to market via social media, emails, and websites. Due to social media and our available technology, cost prohibitive direct mailing is being phased out as a means of marketing. We do, however, mail promotional materials upon request.

H. Seasonal Program Guide

Two program guides will be developed and published: One in late February and the other in late August. The February guide will announce the spring / summer information and the August publication will announce the fall / winter information. The publications will be distributed to the schools (copies for each student, faculty and staff), village post offices, libraries, WABA, municipal pool, general stores and municipal offices.

I. Facebook, Twitter, Text Messages & Instagram

Social media posts are utilized for program marketing by creating events and posting status updates to inform people of announcements, cancellations, and programming. Facebook and Twitter are linked, so that anything added to Facebook is automatically added to Twitter. Twitter links are embedded on the website, as are links to Facebook. Social media posts will show up on all social media platforms.

J. Text messaging is an option available within the MyRec system. However, the method of set-up and maintenance require a tremendous amount of administrative oversight. Until the department is able to focus on that means of communication, texting is a method that we'll work toward in the future, allowing for last minute cancellations or updates to programs and events.

Program Guide Time Line

February Publication

Nov – Dec determine programs and gather information
December 2nd week / review with Commission
January 1st week – design layout
January 2nd week – finalize program content
January 4th week – final draft to be edited
February 1st week – make final revisions
February 2nd week – send to printer, upload to website
February 3rd week – print and pick-up
February 4th week – distribute

August Publication

Apr – June determine programs and gather information
June 2nd week / review with Commission
July 1st week – design layout
July 2nd week – finalize program content
July 4th week – final draft to be edit
Aug. 1st week – make final revisions
Aug. 2nd week – send to printer, upload to website
Aug. 3rd week – print and pick-up
Aug. 4th week – distribute

III. Special Events

A. Marketing Tools

Marketing of special events demand a variety of marketing tools to assure significant exposure is created. Along with the Marketing Tools listed in the plan, the following marketing techniques will also be implemented:

1. Poster and Rack Cards distributed throughout Upper Valley
2. Guests on radio and local cable access talk shows
3. Radio Advertising (if financially able)
4. Distribution of fliers at concerts and/or designated public gatherings
5. Event-Specific invitations on all social media platforms.
6. Feature articles and positioning past/post pictures.
7. Constant Contact
8. Promotional flyers submitted to local cable access bulletins boards.
9. Posting HPRD events on partner social media platforms.

B. Special Event Marketing Time-Line

The outline below is a guideline for starting of marketing of annual special events.

Event	Event Month	Kick-Off Marketing
Glory Days of the Railroad	September	November - previous yr.
Halloween	October	1st week of October
Opening of Ice Arena	October	1st week of October
Turkey Skate	November	1st week of November
Elves Workshop	December	4th week of November
Skate with Santa	December	2nd week of December
New Year's Eve Skate Party	December	3rd week of December
RedZone 5K	February	2 nd week of December
Youth Ice Fishing Derby	February	2nd week of January
February Community Entertainment	February	3rd week of January
Boston Flower Show -Bus Trip	March	1st week of December
Lyman and Quechee Concert Series	June	1st week of April
Open of Municipal Pool	June	1st week of May
July 4 th Fireworks Festival	July	1 st week in March
Hurricane Hill Trail Run	July	1 st week in April

*Other events as developed and when fundraising is needed, should kick off marketing at least 8-12 weeks prior. Some events, such as annual road races, require marketing through trade magazines and websites at least 8 to 10 months in advance.

IV. Community Relations Plan "A Work In Progress"

Policy Statement

It is essential for the department to have a "presence" in the community by having an active, on-going public relations campaign. Each of the staff, whether seasonal or full-time, plays a crucial role in representing the department. Whether in the office with patrons or in the parks/facilities with visitors – the staff should reach out to insure positive community relations. The department must create close ties with the whole Town (Town of Hartford) without losing the sense of each village community. A demonstration of caring and follow through of the department's mission and vision must be evident.

V. Staff Responsibilities

The Superintendent of Programs will serve as the public relations liaison to the Hartford School District. The Director is the “point” person for all public relations internal and external of the department with the media, community civic agencies and general public. The efforts of positive “community relations” involve the entire staff, whether working within departments within the Town government and/or the wide spectrum of civic and private groups externally.

The following methods will be used to enhance positive community relations (externally):

A. Weekly Recreation Bulletin

Submission to the Valley News Thursday Recreation Page each Monday for Thursday’s paper and the Thursday Constant Contact communication.

B. Annual Speaking Engagements

Speak at a variety of local civic groups, clubs, schools and service organizations.

C. Parks and Facilities Brochure and Program Guide

Utilize these publications to “thank” volunteers and recognize volunteer service award recipient. Directions to parks and facilities for tourists.

D. Civic Cooperation

The department will work with civic groups within the community and identify needs through collaboration. Department and identified groups/agencies will engage in events and programs as a cooperative sponsor and/or participant. Example: Current relations with WRJ Rotary-Polar Express, Chamber of Commerce-Balloon Festival, Hartford

Community Coalition activities, Hanover School District's Summer Camp Fair.

E. Community Involvement

The department will assist in a variety of community oriented activities, such as; club youth sports organizations, civic organization activities and the like.

F. Parks and Recreation Commission

Meetings are posted and the public is welcomed and encouraged to attend. Each member of the commission has liaison responsibilities to a variety of youth sport activities, civic organizations and the school district.

G. Word of Mouth

The power of "one on one" to inform citizens about what's going on in the department is crucial to building a positive public image. If a person has a question that a staff member cannot answer – all best attempts should be made to find and convey the answer.

H. Weekly Program Newsletter

Newsletter is submitted electronically to each of the Hartford Schools which list all of the upcoming programs for the current month. Constant Contact distribution also serves as a weekly Upcoming Program newsletter.

VI. Community Assessment / Quality Assurance

The department will make an effort to assess and evaluate the programs, activities and events offered to the citizens. Citizens input will be obtained to assure the parks are safe and in quality condition.

A. Community-Wide Parks and Recreation Survey

The last community wide survey was completed in 2017. The development of the next survey is scheduled for summer of 2021. The parks and recreation department will administer the survey, with the assistance of various organizations and stakeholders. Survey Monkey or other institutions may be used to collect and validate the data. Results of the survey are used to develop future capital improvement projects and budgets.

Collaboration with other community organizations' surveys assists us in data collection that supports community recreation and parks.

Assessments through the review and updating of the Town's Master Plan also provides input from stakeholders on how the department is doing. Currently (July 2018) the department is participating in an overall Master Plan Update that includes community wide input on parks and services.

B. Community Meetings

The department will collaborate with the Planning & Development Office of the Town and other organizations, such as Hartford Community Coalition (HCC), to address community needs, problems and concerns through community-wide meetings. Past department participation includes HCC events, where various issues and concerns were addressed providing a true voice of the community. Additionally, the department has participated in Planning and Development village meetings and has utilized a collaborative called the Facilities & Field Committee which includes various interests throughout the community to assess and plan for facility and field uses and needs. The committee has representation from all sport and club organizations along with the Hartford Athletic Director and Director of Parks & Recreation.

C. Programming Evaluations

Evaluations are created and maintained through Survey Monkey by the Superintendent of Programs and sent to program participants via Email through MyRec or direct email as needed. All programs are evaluated by the participant and seasonally by the Department. The results of the evaluations are compiled and presented in a program report at the end of each program season.

D. Implementation of Evaluation Procedures

1. Workshops, Classes and Seminars: The data will be reviewed and tabulated by the Superintendent of Programs – to be put into the quarterly program report.
2. Youth Sports/Programs and Facilities: Evaluations will be emailed to all participants using MyRec or direct email as needed. The data will be reviewed by the Superintendent of Programs – to be put into the seasonal program report. The evaluation process is also available via a link on our www.hartfordrec.com website.
3. Ventures Camps: The Superintendent of Programs will distribute camp evaluations via email on the Friday of each respective camp session. The evaluations will be reviewed and tabulated by the camp director and a written report submitted to the Program Coordinator.

VII. Market Research Methodology

The following methods will be implemented to determine the effectiveness of programs and facilities:

A. Program Evaluations

1. All programs will be evaluated seasonally at the end of the program.
2. The results of the evaluation will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Director.

3. The Director and Superintendents of Facilities and Programs will create the evaluation report and maintain the responses for future program offerings.

B. Bi-Annual Program Review

1. Twice a year the Parks and Recreation Commission will review the slate of proposed programs.
2. The Parks and Recreation Director will conduct the workshop session.
3. The School Board and Selectboard liaisons will be encouraged to attend and participate. The session will occur at a regular scheduled commission meeting.
4. This group will review the program line up with the over-all strategic plan.

C. Tracking System

1. The means of how programs are advertised, the registration and evaluation review process will be tracked two times a year as part of the seasonal program review.

D. Community Survey

1. The department will conduct a community survey every five years.
2. The last survey was conducted in 2017.
3. The next survey is scheduled to occur in the summer of 2021.

E. Monthly Program Reports

1. Reports consisting of program attendance, revenue/expense, inventory, evaluation and scholarships given will be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Director by the Superintendent of Programs. This report is also submitted to the Finance Director for review and comment.
2. These reports will be used in evaluating the programs offered.

F. Annual Park and Facility Reports

1. Reports consisting of park/facility practices, preventive maintenance recommendation, the Superintendent of Parks & Facilities and Park Labor staff will meet to discuss needs for the department facilities. The Superintendent will submit the status of facilities and equipment and any revenue/expense reports to the Director when requested.

G. Public Forums

1. Public meetings are held to discuss future programs and park/facilities needs when executed by the Director.

H. Park and Facility Evaluations

1. Through the program evaluation distributed to participants –questions will refer to the park and/or facility being used for the program.