

Introduction

MEMORANDUM

March 17, 2010

TO: County Council

FROM: Neil H. Greenberger, Legislative Information Officer 

SUBJECT: Interagency Public Information Working Group (IPIWG)
Work Plan for FY 2011

The Interagency Public Information Working Group (IPIWG) was established by Council resolution in 1992. The group has been involved in a wide range of projects over the years, coordinating public information functions among various County and County-related agencies. In addition, IPIWG meets regularly to exchange ideas and innovative practices that members are encouraged to “borrow” and build upon in relation to their specific needs. The rapidly changing world of communications has led to numerous changes in the way IPIWG members seek to provide information to residents

IPIWG includes the public information officers of the County Council; the County Executive; Montgomery County Public Schools; Montgomery College; the Housing Opportunities Commission; the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC); the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; and the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville. There also is participation by representatives of County government departments including Police; Fire and Rescue; Recreation; Libraries; and Correction and Rehabilitation. The State’s Attorney Office also is represented.

Since FY 2008, IPIWG has sought to develop revised work plans for the organization that reflect the changes in the way traditional media operates—particularly with the changes in print media. Over the past three years, IPIWG members have devoted much more of their energies to improving involvement and cohesiveness in regard to the PEG television network. Strong emphasis has been placed on having our many entities cross-market their programs, products and goals to gain maximum impact in our effort to keep residents informed. The increasing presence of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and the rise of bloggers, has required all IPIWG members to approach their missions in new ways.

The FY11 IPIWG work plan reflects the combined efforts of PEG network members to produce a weekly, half-hour cable show on Countywide news and events. This show will be broadcast on several PEG channels. It also shows the desire to have prominent members of the media address IPIWG meetings to continue an exchange of ideas.

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee

SUBJECT: FY 2011 Work Plan for the Interagency Public Information Working Group

Background

1. The Interagency Public Information Working Group (IPIWG) was established by Council resolution in 1992. The group has been involved in a range of projects over the years, coordinating public information functions among County agencies.
2. IPIWG includes the public information officers of the County Council; the County Executive; Montgomery County Public Schools; Montgomery College; the Housing Opportunities Commission; the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC); the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; and the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville. There also is participation by representatives of County government departments including Police; Fire and Rescue; Recreation; Libraries; and Correction and Rehabilitation. The State's Attorney Office also is represented.
3. IPIWG members cooperate on a variety of projects designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of communications among government agencies and between residents and their government. Issues dealt with over the past year include coordination between public information functions and cable channels, outreach to non-English-speaking communities, public information experiences and challenges in the wake of storm-related emergencies, web site improvements, joint promotion of events and reaching new audiences via new forms of social media and through blogs.
4. Council staff coordinates the IPIWG program; responsibility for individual projects is delegated to committees or active members.

Resolution No.:

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

For FY 2011, the Interagency Public Information Working Group has the following work plan:

1. IPIWG will continue to bring together public information staff to network and exchange ideas on special needs and situations that cross agency lines and require coordination and communicate on successful strategies to improve the delivery of public information to County residents.
2. IPIWG will continue its efforts to reach out to broader audiences by promoting efforts by agencies to provide public information to persons with limited English proficiency and by increasing outreach to media in other languages. Among the programs to support this is the initiative to increase the number of shows on County Cable Montgomery that are closed captioned in Spanish. All Council evening public hearings on the FY 2011 operating budget are among the broadcasts that will be closed captioned in Spanish.
3. IPIWG will continue to hold joint meetings of IPIWG and the PEG television channels to coordinate a strategic approach for communicating to the diverse public and work to increase the hours of original PEG programming and enhance the formats of programming on PEG channels.
4. IPIWG members will combine to create a weekly half-hour show that focuses on significant news and events throughout Montgomery County. This show will be broadcast at various times on many member channels of the PEG network.
5. IPIWG members will increase their efforts to cross-promote the news and events orchestrated by other entities of the organization through cable, Web and social media.
6. IPIWG will continue to increase use of a "bulletin board" information system that debuted on County Cable Montgomery (CCM) in spring 2010. The bulletin board makes space available to all member agencies and departments.

7. IPIWG will continue to reach younger audiences, in the realm of the first-ever Youth Town Hall Meeting held by the County Council in February 2009. The broadcast of that meeting was shown live, and repeated at later times, by three entities of the PEG network. The setup of the meeting, which was attended by more than 400 students, was successful because of the collaborative effort of IPIWG members to inform potential attendees.

8. IPIWG members will enhance their professional development by having guest speakers appear regularly at IPIWG meetings. Speakers will include reporters and editors from print and broadcast media, account executives from public relations firms, public information officers from governments outside of IPIWG and elected officials.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council