



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 18, 2019

TO: WACO Board of Trustees

FROM: Timothy Grisham, Communications Director
Washington Association of County Officials

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Background and Summary:

The nature of our business meeting being held during the first part of the final quarter of the year means some of the information our members may be interested in over the course of the past year can be found in the previous year's annual report. The Washington Association of County Officials 2018 Annual Report can be found at: <http://bit.ly/WACOAR2018>. This report serves as an addendum to the annual report detailing the trends from January 2019 through Mid-September 2019.

Much like the past five years, WACO's communications initiatives continue to grow both in reach and the diversity of methodology. Our social media presence continues to grow in both followers, and most importantly impressions (reach). The Courthouse Journal has experienced growth in trackable readership, and our web traffic continues to grow in unique visitors, as well as a reduction in the number of pages visited. This points to an increase in visitors, who are finding information for rapidly through a variety of means.

Our median monthly impression on Twitter has grown by 5% over 2018 (to date). While this growth is slower than previous years' more exponential growth, it is due in part from being part of a five year long run of giant leaps in reach. The growth rate is positive that after five years of launching social media we have yet to begin a downward trend.

We have for the fourth year in a row grown our trackable readership percentage of the Courthouse Journal. The growth of readership has been consistent, and at 42% average opens we are well above the industry standard of 21% for a government newsletter.

The WACO website continues to experience growth in both views and users. Since its launch in 2015, the website has also incorporated the WSACT website, Clerkshare site, and County Scholarship Fund website, plans are also on the way to incorporate the Assessors' website in the next year. Website views have increased by 51% over 2018, and we have experienced 38% growth in users.

Several initiatives over the past five years have contributed to the growth of our platform, and our ability to share information both internally and externally. From a revamped website,

launching social media platforms, reviving the Courthouse Journal, and providing online training videos, WACO has continued to be focused while nimble with how it rolls out new tools for our office and our members.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The 2014 plenary session identified legislation, education, and communications as WACO's priority areas. These areas are expanded on in the current strategic plan and accompanying work plan. This memo outlines the work that WACO staff has conducted since the last communications report in alignment with the Strategic Plan 2017-2019 and its work plan.

Strategic Plan 2017-2019 Goal 1: Increase Membership Participation and Demonstrate the Unique Value of WACO to Members

Objective D. Maintain the “Courthouse Journal”: Since relaunching the Courthouse Journal WACO staff has migrated it from a PDF sent via email to a newsletter service delivered email with analytic tracking. This service is also used for other important all member emails including conference planning emails, legislative reporting, and more. Readership of the emails has risen by 10% over the past few years with current readership levels ranging from the high 30s to low 40s (percentage). Additionally, WACO staff launched the Courthouse Journal blog to offer a diversified method of info sharing, and features highlighted info on WACO's front page.

Strategic Plan 2017-2019 Goal 3: Increase Awareness about County Officials and Their Functions

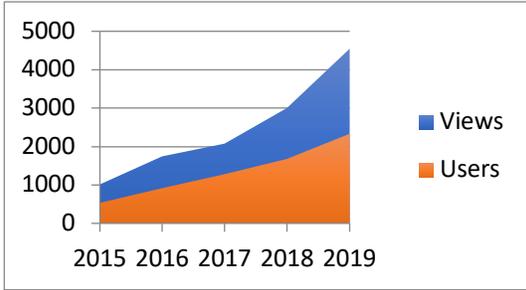
Objective A. Develop materials to effectively describe the work of county officials and county services.

1. Identify potential opportunities that tell the story: Social media has been key to helping share the work of county officials and county services. Impressions on Twitter has exponentially grown over the course of the past five years and the median monthly impression rate for 2019 still shows growth year over year. It is through Twitter that we help share “Know Your County Officials” materials such as video content, stories, and infographics.

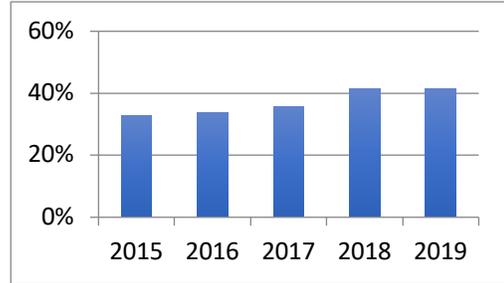
WACO has also leveraged partnerships with TESC and PLU to speak with students at fairs and info days, as well as to gain interns interested in working with county government. At these events we are able to sit down one on one, in groups, or on panels to discuss the work of WACO and our officials' offices.

2. Develop key messages for radio and newspaper communications and social media: WACO currently manages a list of over 375 print, radio, and television media contacts that it provides key messages to for publication and commentary consideration. Each press release to date has picked up media coverage. The range of press releases has covered incoming members to the board, legislative priorities, and more.

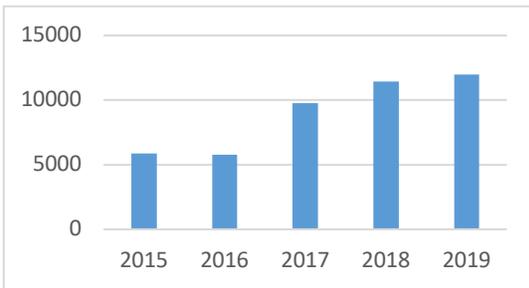
APPENDICES



Website Views/Users



CHJ Open Rate



Median Monthly Twitter Impressions