Tips for Writing Effective Press Releases

♦ Use a creative headline that will draw attention. Keep it short, catchy, and descriptive. Sub-headlines work well for adding information.

♦ Lead with the most important information. The reason for the press release should be included in the first paragraph.

♦ Use action verbs and clear language. Don't overwrite or engage in hyperbole.

♦ Limit the length. A release should be no longer than two pages. The ideal release will fit on a single page.

♦ Avoid jargon or acronyms. Using terminology that your reader doesn't understand will alienate him/her and limit your chances of coverage.

♦ Highlight the benefits. Explain the importance of your message and how others will benefit from hearing it. Avoid hype.

♦ Stick to the facts. Do not editorialize or include unsubstantiated claims.

♦ Know your audience. Target journalists carefully and know the kinds of stories they're interested in covering.

♦ Include full contact information. Your release is no good if the journalist doesn't know who to call for additional information. Include your e-mail address as well.

♦ Elect a spokesperson. Have someone on hand in case an interview is requested.

♦ Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Elements of a press release
1. The phrase "For Immediate Release"
2. The contact person's name, phone number, and e-mail address
3. The date of the release
4. A dateline – this would be your city & state. If you live in a major city, you will not need to include the state.
5. After the body of the release, centered at the bottom of the page, include ### or –30–. This lets your reader know that he/she has reached the end of the release.