



Some Ideas to Help Promote Your Green Stop

Looking for ways to create a bigger impact and increase the attendance at your Green Stop? Here are some suggestions where you might find something to suit your community and available resources.

Use Freebies

Most towns have places where you can advertise events for free. These can include:

- Your local council, town or county website
- Listings magazines
- Local radio stations, which often have a *What's On* or *Coming Events* bulletin once a week or more
- Listings websites – for example, those that list family events, leisure activities or just local events
- Post on a supporting group's website
- Local newspapers through editorial coverage
- Use lawn signs. If politicians can promote themselves with signs on our lawns, why can't you? Ask friends and associates to put a colorful sign on their lawn with very brief information about your event. Remember to ask permission.
- Use the pre-printed poster blanks available from Alberta Environment. Fill in your event information and post them around town.
- Get out and about. Put those posters and leaflets to good use and get them out and town. Distribute them anywhere you can think of where families might go: shops, train and bus stations, nurseries, doctors' surgeries, schools and libraries. And think creatively: Check with your local library to see if they will let you put the leaflets in the information section and a leaflet in every library user's books as they are checked out, or place a pile in the children's book section of the library?



You may need to do a little research to find your local opportunities, but once you have created a list of them, it's easy to get your information out to them all every time you have an event.

Get Creative

Posters and leaflets are important elements of your promotional plans, which you can then photocopy onto coloured paper (for maximum impact) or print out in colour (if you have the facilities).

Make sure your leaflet photocopies well by using black and dark grey in your designs rather than lighter colours.

- Design a quiz for visitors to fill out and bring to your event. Use them as door prize entries.
- Have an Art Challenge, forum, bicycle run, commuter challenge, bag inserts into local grocery store customer bags (one per customer.)

Displays

Use any display space you can get permission to use to advertise your event.

- Ask your local library to display books relevant to the Environment Week theme and put up this year's Environment Week poster.
- The challenge is to be creative enough to create interest in the topic and your event. For example, you could advertise a teddy bears' picnic with a display of teddy bears having a picnic, surrounded by books.
- If you don't have any display space yourself, why not try to get some space at the local nursery or even a local shop window.

Signage

Use large portable signs to promote your event. Make sure you have talked with highways and or the local municipality about proper and safe placement along the highways and major roadways.

Remove all signs and posters after the event.

Multiply Your Efforts

1. Talk to people about your event. People talk to each other, so they will help you spread the word for free!
2. Mail or e-mail information about your Green Stop to members on your mailing list.
3. Offer some products or services as a special door prize or early registration bonus.
4. Place a link on your website so your members can check out your event.
5. Do something at your Green Stop that will get attention. Grant an honorary membership or award to some distinguished member of that community. Get all attendees to sign a gigantic thank you note and present it to the mayor for being such a wonderful host. Think photo opportunity.
6. Local Schools – If you are having a family event, write a short summary and ask the school to publish it in the newsletter that goes home. Or ask the school to send home a sheet to each family about your event.

7. Newsletters - Many religious and civic organizations have newsletters. Send them the press release and ask if they will publish the information or announce it at their next regular meeting.
8. Bulletin Boards - Are there central meeting places with bulletin boards? Post wherever people congregate to read notices: churches, libraries, schools, community centers, outdoor kiosks, or supermarket bulletin boards.
9. Telephone Trees - Some groups have telephone trees to alert their membership. In some areas use of the telephone tree may be a highly effective way to get the word out about your event, carpooling offers and to drum up enthusiasm.
10. E-mail Lists - Many organizations have developed e-mail lists or listservs to communicate with members. You might take advantage of this electronic form of announcing your program.

Connecting With Media

The media can be an integral part of your environment week event. They can assist you in spreading the word about your organization's announcements and events, enabling you to reach a larger audience. Supplying your local media contact with an article, news release, public service announcement or other materials can help you publicize your event or announcement. In addition, supply them with background information on the event.

If you do not have a local media contact, call your local newspaper, radio, and television stations, and ask which reporters cover local or environment topics. When contacting these individuals, be sure to ask them about deadlines, special interests, and informational needs. When possible, offer to arrange for them an interview with someone key to your event or initiative.

The focus in small communities is on local issues; the smaller the publication the more local the news. It is because these newspapers like local stories and they do well in the community. The combination of a provincial campaign that has the added bonus of local interest is a good scoop for local journalists.

You may also choose to contact local or regional magazines, newsletters of the Chambers of Commerce, supporting organizations, local high school or college publications, church or synagogue bulletins and newsletters, and billboards to further spread your important announcements.

1. Invite local reporters to your event so they can experience it.
2. List your event on your cable TV station's event calendar.
3. If your special event is in a city served by major airlines, try to get it listed in the airline's in-flight magazine. But submit it at least six months ahead of time because these magazines have long lead times.
4. Call TV stations the morning of your event and tell them about interesting visuals they can film.

5. Create a fact sheet about your event and send it to media outlets with your news release. Add something that also fits your community, for example: Eight Ways We Can Protect Wetlands in Our Community.
6. Let reporters know who in your organization is an expert, and on what topic. Then invite them to your next planning meeting of a major event to “meet the experts.”
7. Ask local TV anchors, weatherpersons, sportscasters or other on-air celebrities to emcee your event. If they agree to do it, there’s a good chance their station will cover it.
8. Call local radio stations and ask them to do a live remote from your event.
9. Take photos of your event and use them during your publicity campaign the following year.
10. Write letters to the editor after your event thanking sponsors and volunteers.
11. After your event, thank those media outlets that covered your event and share with them exactly how their coverage helped you attract more visitors or raise more awareness in the community.
12. **Television** - Do you have community access TV or a local news program? Send the station news directors a copy of the press release and ask them to feature it. Pitch the story. (While television favors stories with accompanying video, a request by a local person may motivate them to run the story without it.)
13. **Radio** - Many local radio stations like to help nonprofit organizations by announcing their events as Public Service Announcements. It is a good idea to provide a copy of the press release to your local radio news directors with a note asking them to announce it at a time when they know many people will be listening. Commuting time at the beginning and end of the day is almost always the best time to get listeners. However, it may be different in your area. Call your local news directors and pitch the story. Ask them to play it when they think it will reach the most people. (A local request always improves chances that a radio station will carry an announcement.)

