

Setting up a Section-Wide Speakers' Bureau **-- The basics of getting started --**

A good public relations program includes various methods to inform and educate the public about Amateur Radio. Forming a speakers' bureau is one way to raise awareness about Amateur Radio in the community. There are plenty of local groups and organizations that look for speakers regularly.

One of the responsibilities outlined in the PIC job description states:

“Establishes and coordinates a section-wide speakers' bureau to provide knowledgeable and effective speakers who are available to address community groups about Amateur Radio, and works with PIOs to promote interest among those groups.”

All PICs are encouraged to take on the speakers' bureau project. The local PR effort will surely benefit.

Here are some suggested steps to get started:

1. PICs and SMs need to identify people in their sections who are willing to speak. For starters, they should contact the ACC and the ARRL affiliated clubs within the section, promote the formation of a bureau at all section events and hamfests, in Section News and all other available information outlets. Ask for volunteers and for names of hams who are already speaking to non-ham audiences. Listen at club meetings to determine who would be a good spokesperson and approach him or her about being a speaker. (Many people won't volunteer but will say yes when asked).

Here are some qualities your bureau members should have:

- Interest and willingness to devote the necessary time
 - Friendly and self-confident personality
 - Involvement with civic, political and/or religious organization is an asset but not required.
 - A better than adequate knowledge of Amateur Radio
 - Some speaking experience, if possible.
2. Speakers need not be professional speakers, nor do they need to be technically proficient. Other amateurs in the section can provide technical or mode-specific information to the speakers.
 3. The PIC and the SM should decide if the speakers will book their own engagements or if the PIC, or a regional delegate, will make the arrangements for all area speakers. In sections that are geographically, there may a need for regional speakers' bureaus or regional coordinators.

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4. The PIC or the delegated chairman should be able to provide speakers with videos, PowerPoint presentations and ARRL brochures. The SM and PIC should arrange for speakers bureau member recognition.
5. If funding and manpower allow, training workshops can be held once or twice a year for the speakers. A member who is a professional speaker, a member of Toastmasters, or someone with extensive public speaking experience could conduct the training. If training cannot be done in person printed materials can be given to speakers.

Training materials should include:

- Instruction and practice in presenting the formal prepared talks
- Speech delivery: voice quality, eye contact, posture, etc
- How to handle question and answer sessions
- Personal appearance/wardrobe
- Importance of practice and preparation

6. Interested speakers should be given a list of non-ham audiences, and a list of topic areas to choose from. Suggestions for places to speak can be found in the “Groups Looking for Speakers” document. Speakers should understand what the speakers’ bureau is about and what is expected of them.

Suggested Topics: (Other Ideas can be found in the Talking Points documents.)

When normal communications fail – the story of Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

Emergency preparation in the community

Direction finding

Satellite operations and tracking programs

The history of Amateur Radio

ARRL

International Space Station contacts (ARISS program)

Ham radio events for young people (Kid’s Day, JOTA)

Amateur Radio contesting

Building international friendships

Travel the world without leaving your home

Amateur Radio – the original chat room

7. PICs must obtain permission (in writing) to post a speaker’s name on any Web site, along with the person’s e-mail address and phone number/s. An alternative is to have only the PIC and/or the regional contacts listed.

8. Each PIC should keep his or her Section Manager up-to-date on the project during the information gathering stage. SMs may have additional speakers in mind, along with other suggestions to make the bureaus section-specific.
9. The PIC, in coordination with the SM, will be responsible for gathering all necessary information and maintaining the speakers' bureau. Keeping the speaker contact information up-to-date is imperative. The PIC should keep a record of speakers' bureau activities.
10. Consider giving the Bureau a name such as "Project Education," "Talking to the World" or whatever fits for your section or area.