

Communications Strategy for the Village of Croton-on-Hudson

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- Village strives to communicate in a number of ways with residents and visitors.
- These communication channels include:
 - Village Website
 - Social Media Accounts
 - Email Subscription Lists
 - Village Newsletter
 - Public Access Channel
 - Emergency Notification System (Everbridge)

Village Website

- The Village Website was last redesigned in 2018. The website operates on a Drupal-based platform, which allows for ease-of-use in creating and updating content.
- Each department and board/committee has their own page on the website, where news, announcements, flyers, photos, etc. can be posted.
- Other items, such as the property record cards and the Village Code, board minutes and board resolutions, are hosted on third-party websites.
- A review of the website analytics for the past year showed that the three most viewed pages on the website related to train station parking. Also high on the list were recreation, online payments and the website calendar.
- The website is scheduled to be upgraded in the near future (~12 months) to a newer platform. Other municipalities have already completed this upgrade (examples include [Briarcliff Manor](#) and [Hastings-on-Hudson](#)).

Social Media Accounts

- The Village currently maintains accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X.
- X is used to distribute emergency information; Facebook and Instagram are used to provide regular Village updates as well as emergency information.
- In March 2018, the Village's Facebook page had 1,145 followers; today, the page has 5,873 followers.
- The Village's X account was created in 2018 and currently has 958 followers
- The Village's Instagram account was created in 2019 and currently has 2,862 followers.
- The Village has tried to use Nextdoor to reach additional residents but never gained traction on the platform.
- The main challenge with social media is gathering content to post regularly and curating for the appropriate platform.

Social Media Accounts

- The reach of the Village's social media accounts depends on the content and the type of media posted.
 - A recent police blotter posting reached 1,019 people, with 159 link clicks.
 - A recent press release on an arrest had a reach of 16,436 people. It generated numerous comments, which increased its reach.
 - A recent post on a half-staff flag alert only reached 847 people.
- The average Facebook and Instagram post reaches ~1,000 people. It's interesting to note that their reach is about the same, even though we have double the followers on Facebook.

Email Subscription Lists

- The Village maintains 10 email subscription lists through the Village website. Five are for meeting agendas and five are for news/announcements from the website.
- The main email list currently has 3,522 subscribers; in March 2018, it had 1,123 subscribers.
- The website allows interested residents or visitors to subscribe to any/all of the list options.
- In recent months, departments have begun coordinating their email distributions and formatting with the goal of having a unified presence and not to crowd subscribers' inboxes.

Village Newsletter

- The Village maintains the monthly email newsletter through Constant Contact. The switch to Constant Contact from Microsoft Publisher was done in 2023.
- The newsletter email list currently has 4,492 subscribers.
- The last newsletter was opened by 66% of subscribers and had 118 link clicks (3%). The most clicked link was the swim permit for Silver Lake.
- The Village has published the newsletter since 1981 and has shifted between a monthly publication and quarterly publication at times. It has been published monthly since 2018.
- The newsletter was mailed to each household through U.S. Mail for many years. It is currently distributed electronically to all subscribers. Those without Internet access can request a copy be mailed to them directly. About 80 households receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail currently.

Public Access Channel

- Optimum provides a cable access channel (Channel 78) to cable subscribers.
- The cable access channel is separate from the Village's livestream channel.
- The Village presently uses the channel to broadcast meetings of the Village Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board.
- Equipment for the channel was previously housed at the high school; it was relocated earlier this year to the Municipal Building.
- The reach of the channel has steadily declined in recent years as more residents “cut the cord” and cancel cable TV. In 2018, there were 2,257 households subscribed to Optimum; in 2023, that number had dropped to 1,355 households.

Emergency Notification System

- The Village uses the Everbridge platform to contact Village residents in an emergency. The system can also be used to broadcast important non-emergency information (e.g., changes in garbage collection) and neighborhood-specific information (e.g., a water main break).
- The system also sends weather alerts such as tornado warnings, flood warnings and winter storm warnings to subscribers.
- There are currently 3,245 contacts in our system.
- The system also has the ability to contact residents not enrolled in our system through “Resident Connection” (RC) which is data collected by Everbridge such as landline telephones. There are an additional 5,488 contacts in RC.

Other Avenues for Messaging

- Variable Message Boards: The Village has two variable message boards that can be deployed to share important announcements (e.g., road closures). One is usually stationed at the train station, while the other is usually placed at the intersection of Maple and South Riverside.
- Croton Commons Kiosk: The kiosk is used by the Village, Library and School District to share information. Non-profits can also post information through the Library.
- Banners: The Village has a banner sign at the entrance to the train station. Up to two banners can be posted simultaneously. Non-profits and other groups usually make use of this to announce their events/fundraisers.