



October 2016

Useful Community Development... quick notes

Fall Newsletter Ideas, New E-Book on Starting a Neighborhood Association, More
Visit us at www.useful-community-development.org.



Autumn Newsletter Ideas

If you're responsible for a newsletter for your neighborhood, community, or association, sometimes you just need a few thought starters. Here are a few favorites:

1. Dig into the history of local holidays and festivals. Maybe you're near an Oktoberfest or Day of the Dead celebration. How did Halloween become such a big deal, U.S. fans, or how did harvest festivals evolve into their present form? Keep it short and breezy.
2. You may be enjoying temperate weather except for storms. Clean-ups are a favorite community activity, due to fast, visible results and capacity to build people into task-oriented teams. Promote a community park or public space clean-up, or just encourage families to clean their junk or wildfire-promoting underbrush. Explain how and why.
3. Take advantage of autumn focus and energy to shine a spotlight on your current major issue. Dig in, get quotes from experts and officials, discover new angles to describe, and magnify your organization's interest in or impact on the issue. Reprise your progress during the past year, with statistics to back up claims. If problems deepened, share that data too, but suggest a positive response to bad news.
4. Feature a business or individual making a difference in your community. Interview

them and others affected by their actions. Talk about the "why." Make your newsletter reinforce key messages about cause and effect in communities.

5. If you have an especially prevalent food item available mostly in the fall, share an awesome recipe, and encourage others to post theirs on social media. Limit recipes to once a year. Challenge yourself to tie this somehow to community assets.

6. New pest control tips are always welcome. Preventing spread of disease by rats, mosquitoes, and other vectors is a community responsibility.

7. Zero in on specific home maintenance tasks that should be addressed this season. Ask a professional for unusual hints. Check with your local hardware store about their most common autumn sales, if you are coming up blank.

8. Remind people of any specific rules for handling fallen leaves or other debris.

9. Describe in detail how residents can support local schools. Publicize school events.

10. Share any photos from summer travels that illustrate terrific approaches to community appearance or improvement. You could keep commentary minimal so as not to appear too critical of your own neighborhood. Photos speak for themselves.

11. Promote your community's social media with a particularly intriguing tidbit recently shared there. People constantly refine their choice of media.

12. Compliment a local official who has helped your community or neighborhood recently. Be specific. Then make sure he or she sees the newsletter.

13. Launch a contest for the best idea about a topic that frequently seems problematic or undecided in your community.

14. Leverage any election or post-election fever gripping your area into a newsletter feature on constructively handling differences, disagreements, and civil discussion. Interview a local university expert, mediator, or organization adept in this subject.

15. List local volunteer opportunities, especially underpublicized ones.

16. Remind people of donations that local charities accept.

17. If people in your community have the means to travel, find perspective-expanding events or sites within 100 miles to describe.

18. Propose a turn-by-turn walking route through your community. Call attention to specific good or bad sites or characteristics to watch for.

19. A Save the Date banner for an upcoming important event builds anticipation without stealing your thunder for a future edition.

Related resources from our website: [homeowner newsletter](#), [cleaning up your neighborhood park](#), [wildfire prevention](#), [asset-based community development](#), [community SWOT analysis](#), [walkable communities](#).

Starting a Neighborhood Association: Our New E-Book

HOW TO START A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Hints on Creating a Process That Makes Sense
for YOU

Nancy Thompson



To date our website has received 19 requests for help with forming a neighborhood association. Our response is a new e-book by one of our authors.

People often want step-by-step directions. Just like life though, this is a messy process, not a one-size-fits-all situation. The book discusses many topics to consider as you start on this worthwhile, frustrating, rewarding project. If you are a leader in such an initiative, the tiny investment in this e-book will simplify your life over the next three to twelve months typically required to set up an organization.

Here's your [link](#) to the description page with purchasing information.

We aspire to several more e-books responding to the most frequently requests for additional depth. We'll let you know.

Newest addition to the website: [Community Development Grant Narratives](#), including commentary on nine terrible sentences actually found in grant application narrative sections.

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