

Media Coop Minutes – March 18, 2004
Roanoke Times

Members Present:

Shelly Alley, Roanoke Police
Lindsey Nair, The Roanoke Times
Laird Manlove, Crime Line
Mike Stater, VDH
Kimberly Ortiz, Channel 7
Jennifer Faulkner, Roanoke Fire-EMS
Mike Green, Salem Police
Ray Clark, Salem Police
Donna Wilson, US Forest Service
Lee Linkous, Crime Line
Jennifer Conley-Sexton, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Chris Slemph, Franklin County Public Safety
Ewell Hunt, Franklin County Sheriff's Office
Erin Barnhart, Roanoke Sheriff's Office
Meg Hibbert, Salem Times
Larry Brown, City of Roanoke
Amanda DeHaven, Roanoke Regional Airport Commission
Shane Moreland, NewsChannel 10
Rich Martin, Roanoke Times

The program for March's meeting was a tour of The Roanoke Times' new Heidelberg Mainstream 80 printing press facility.

Prior to the tour, business was conducted as follows:

- Donna Wilson of the U.S. Forest Service thanked the media for coverage of the Holiday Tree kickoff event.

- Jennifer Conley-Sexton, spokeswoman for Roanoke County Fire and Rescue, said she has been using the paging system a lot lately and wanted to make sure that it has been working well for all of the media outlets.

Kim Ortiz of Channel 7 News said she had not heard any complaints from co-workers there. No one else present had any concerns either.

Shane Moreland of Channel 10 News inquired about progress with getting previous customer service issues settled. He said they at WSLs have not noticed any problems with the pages they have gotten but stressed that he still thinks the pager could be used more.

- Jennifer Faulkner of Roanoke Fire-EMS said when a fire is first dispatched, she knows about as much as the media knows at that time and so she cannot offer much more than she has been offering until later.

- Public Safety Director Chris Slomp and Lt. Ewell Hunt from Franklin County attended the meeting. We asked them if they have ever used the pager. When they said no, Shelly Alley of the Roanoke Police Department said she'd get them the information for how to leave messages. They inquired about whether the Franklin County newspaper could be involved, as well.

- Lindsey Nair of The Roanoke Times asked whether the Roanoke Police Department had any concerns about the media's behavior during a recent tactical situation at Ramada Inn on Franklin Road. Alley said police found it unnerving that the media had swarmed in when the man was being taken into custody, but overall everything worked out well.

Alley stressed that the department's main concern is that the media will broadcast information about the incident while the suspect was still inside the hotel room. If he watched TV he would know that police were lurking outside, waiting for him to come out. Media indicated that they understand this concern.

Moreland said WSLS policy is to assume that the suspect has access to television.

- Laird Manlove, Chairman of Crime Line, thanked the media for referencing Crime Line in stories. Lee Linkous, board member, said Crime Line is made up of all volunteers trying to make the area a safer place.

Moreland asked Manlove and Linkous whether the media can be informed when Crime Line leads directly to an arrest. They replied that they have to be judicious about that because a perpetrator may guess who called in the tip. But they said they would try to do a quarterly report with feedback on how Crime Line has done.

- It was decided that a program about Crime Line would be interesting for the next meeting, which is scheduled for May 20. Roanoke County Fire and Rescue has offered to host the event at the training center.