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OPERATIONS MANUAL	Approved: (By City Council 4/19/00)	Revision: 0
	Virginia Valentine	Effective Date: April 21, 2000
	City Manager	

PROVISIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide information to the public via the news media about the City of Las Vegas to enhance open government.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The City of Las Vegas has for decades had employees designated with the responsibility of providing information to the public via the news media and other means. Employees of the City's Public Affairs Office and public information officers in five high-interest departments – Fire & Rescue, Public Works, Planning, Neighborhood Services and Leisure Services – are today the employees who deal primarily with the media, including journalists, writers and photographers from newspapers, magazines, wire services, television stations, radio stations, internet companies and newsletters. Together they respond to more than 200 inquiries each month from the media alone. As Las Vegas grows and the number of media outlets locally and across the globe proliferates, there is greater demand from the public and the media for accurate and timely information about the activities, programs and services offered by the City of Las Vegas. The City aims to meet that demand by being responsive and providing improved access to government through various forms of media. The purpose of the Public Affairs Office is to ensure consistency and quality in the delivery of accurate and timely information about City government.

EXTERNAL MEDIA POLICY

The external media policy shall be to provide accurate and timely information to journalists and others concerning the operations and deliberations of City government. The intent is to provide information about the City of Las Vegas to enhance open government. As outlined below, the City will provide information to the public via the news media by way of news releases, news conferences, interviews, etc.

PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

1. City-Produced News Releases - The Public Affairs Office prior to dissemination approves all written news releases. Exceptions are made only in cases of emergencies or when time constraints preclude prior approval. News releases are designed to inform the public of services and activities of various departments and provide coverage of issues, news, announcements, and quality of life in the City. All news releases created by the Public Affairs Office and public information officers will be related to City of Las Vegas business or functions. NonCity events, such as personal

appearances by the Mayor, members of the Council or City Staff at nonCity functions, will not be included in City produced news releases.

- A. City-Produced Video News Releases – Video news releases (VNRs) may be provided by the City to assist the television media in disseminating information to the public. These may be requested of the Office of Communications Services by the Public Affairs Office or by individual public information officers. The policies and procedures that apply to written news releases also apply to VNRs. These are designed to inform the public of services and activities of various departments and provide coverage of issues, news, announcements, and quality of life in the City. All VNRs will be related to City of Las Vegas business or functions. NonCity events, such as personal appearances by the Mayor, members of the Council or City Staff at nonCity functions, will not be included in individual City VNRs.
- B. News Conferences – News conferences may be employed as a means of disseminating information to the public. All City-related news conferences should be coordinated through the Public Affairs Office. News conferences are designed to inform the public of services and activities of various departments and provide coverage of issues, news, announcements, and quality of life in the City. All news conferences will be related to City of Las Vegas business or functions.
- C. Special Events - Special events such as groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings and town hall meetings are of interest to the community and the neighborhoods they affect. The Public Affairs Office and public information officers should be involved in the coordination of these events to facilitate dissemination of information directly to the public and via the news media. This applies to City-sponsored events and to City-related events that involve City officials and/or programs.
- D. News Media Interviews – The appropriate Department Director and/or Public Information Officer should approve all media interviews involving City of Las Vegas employees. The Public Affairs Office should be notified of all interviews and requests for interviews involving City employees. Media interviews are designed to inform the public via the media of services and activities of various departments and provide coverage of issues, news, announcements, and quality of life in the City.
- E. Photographs – Photographs may be taken by employees of the Public Affairs Office and public information officers. These are designed to provide a visual means of informing the public of services and activities of various departments and of providing coverage of issues, news, announcements, and quality of life in the City. Such photos may be furnished to the news media and may be used in City publications. All photos taken by the Public Affairs Office and City public information officers will be related to City of Las Vegas business or functions. NonCity events, such as personal appearances by the Mayor, members of the Council or City Staff at nonCity functions, will not be photographed by employees of the Public Affairs Office and public information officers.

RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

1. The Public Affairs Office and public information officers are not intended as mechanisms for building support for a particular political policy, program, issue, party or individual.
2. The Public Affairs Office and public information officers have no obligation to support non-City events.
3. The Public Affairs Office and public information officers are not to be used as campaign tools. Their offices, however, may provide objective information about election procedures,

ballot instructions, polling locations, candidate forums or issue debates. Campaign laws and city policies governing elected-official activities shall be followed. For example, current-term elected officials may receive coverage only to the extent that such coverage is coincident with the performance of their official duties as elected officials. Once a current-term elected City official files for reelection with the City Clerk's office, he/she will no longer have access to the work of the Public Affairs Office or public information officers, other than those activities being consistent with the normal execution of their offices. The Public Affairs office will not use individual pictures and quotes once an elected City official has filed. Outside candidates who have announced and/or qualified for election to any elective office shall not have a presumed right to use any City-sponsored work of the Public Affairs Office or public information officers to make individual campaign statements.

4. The Public Affairs Office or public information officers will produce no campaign advertising or promotional materials for campaigns.
5. The Public Affairs Office and public information officers will not produce:
 - a. Any advertising that promotes the sale of any commercial product or services.
 - b. Any information concerning a commercial lottery, gift enterprise or similar promotion offering prizes in whole or part upon lot or chance.
 - c. Any direct solicitation of funds for nonmunicipal services.
 - d. Any material in violation of federal, state or local statute or law.
 - e. Any material endorsing religious beliefs or religious philosophies.
 - f. The equipment and facilities of the Public Affairs Office and public information officers are to be used only by staff for the purpose of disseminating information for the City of Las Vegas or internal use. No other use is authorized without a rental or intergovernmental agreement.