

Date: December 8, 2023

To: The City of Bondurant

From: Grace Heiden, Ella Grzybowski, Chloe Mayfield, Madeline Bollino

Re: Creative Civic Engagement

Appendix: Resource Information

SUMMARY

For the City of Bondurant to maintain its hometown feel as the population continues to grow rapidly, continuing to explore and adopt creative methods connecting with current and future residents is essential. This work means continuous evaluation of communication strategies and exploring new ways to engage different members of the community.

BACKGROUND

Bondurant, Iowa, is in the Des Moines Metro in NE Polk County. The community is younger on average than the State of Iowa and Polk County, with the median age being 32.5 years old.¹ People in Bondurant have a higher-than-average median income of \$88,500. Since 2010, their population has doubled from 4,000 to 8,000 and continues to grow. Two new Amazon facilities have recently been built in Bondurant. This accounts for some of the population growth and the creation of 2,100 jobs. To meet the needs of this rising population, the city must spend more money, time, and effort to civically engage local residents.

We did not discover any existing data regarding how on how citizens would like to engage with the City of Bondurant, but did evaluate existing methods. The City of Bondurant uses multiple forms of communication sites. We looked at Facebook, Instagram, and Bondurant’s website. We found that even with a high following, there was very little engagement with the posts. On Instagram, we found a 15% engagement rate, which is low. Another challenges is that social media sites such as Facebook lack a community-oriented aspect.

CURRENT EFFORTS

The City of Bondurant works hard to provide its citizens with a variety of events and share information to residents through social media. The city hosts and promotes events nearly every month that are designed to increase civic engagement while maintaining a hometown feel. (For a list of specific events found on the Bondurant city website calendar, refer to Appendix A.)

Despite Bondurant’s best efforts to distribute information and build community through social media, the posts do not attract much engagement. On Instagram, the page only receives about 15% engagement, and the City experiences “trolling” on Facebook. The use of social media across all platforms is often redundant and lacks a cohesive theme, which makes it harder for consumers to digest. With rapid growth

¹ “Chapter 3: Community Profile.” City of Bondurant, 2020, www.cityofbondurant.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf2841/f/uploads/chapter_3_-_community_profile.pdf.

in Bondurant and a double in population size, the city recognizes its need for new information regarding how its citizens engage with information.

BEST PRACTICES

Nextdoor for Public Agencies - Newton, Iowa

The City of Newton uses the social media site Nextdoor as a verified Public Agency.² Via this role, their posts appear on the Nextdoor feed of every Newton resident. A benefit of using Nextdoor as opposed to other social media sites is that only residents of Newton can engage with these posts. Additionally, public agencies can upload GIS data to Nextdoor, allowing them to push out content to specific neighborhoods or areas of town. This targeted content works especially well to advertise neighborhood events and inform residents of maintenance that is limited in scope, such as sidewalk repair. Newton's Nextdoor page, in addition to its other social media platforms, is maintained by the city's Community Marketing Manager.

Neighborhood Ambassadors - North Liberty, Iowa

North Liberty created a Neighborhood Ambassador Program in 2020.³ Prospective ambassadors fill out an application with demographic and neighborhood information, with a goal toward one ambassador for each of the city's 35 neighborhoods. Once selected, volunteer ambassadors are educated by city staff regarding city events and programs, frequently asked questions, and how to build community. There are quarterly meetings with ambassadors, and they can apply for Great Neighborhood Grants (\$400 maximum) to host events. The entire program's budget is \$5,000 annually, including staff time and the Great Neighborhood Grants, which comes from the Communications budget within the General Fund.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Create and Maintain Nextdoor for Public Agencies

A city official must apply for this profile, but the application process is free and non-intensive.⁴ Once set up, the city posts on Nextdoor would be automatically dispersed to the 1,375 Bondurant residents in four neighborhoods who already have a Nextdoor account.⁵ Since Nextdoor is a resident-only platform, the content shared here can be highly specialized to local goings-on, and feedback (whether via a poll on the app or through a link to another site) can be solicited solely from the people of Bondurant. Nextdoor could be maintained by the Communications and Event Coordinator for the city. If additional assistance is needed, the city could consider hiring an intern or a web maintenance professional for \$18-25 an hour.⁶ For assistance setting up Nextdoor, see Appendix B.

² Heiden, Grace, et al. "Interview with Danielle Rogers, City of Newton." 7 Nov. 2023.

³ Bollino, Madeline, et al. "Interview with Jillian Miller, City of North Liberty." 9 Nov. 2023.

⁴ Nextdoor. "Nextdoor for Public Agencies Executive Overview." Nextdoor, business.nextdoor.com/en-us/public-agency/resources/executive-overview. Accessed 28 Nov. 2023.

⁵ "Bondurant, IA." Nextdoor.Com, Nextdoor, nextdoor.com/city/bondurant-ia/. Accessed 28 Nov. 2023.

⁶ "2023 Website Maintenance Pricing: How Much Should You Pay?" WebFX, 1 Mar. 2023, www.webfx.com/web-development/pricing/website-maintenance/. Accessed 28 Nov. 2023.

2) Create an Internship

The position should be modeled on Ankeny Community School District's posting for a Communications Intern and would help relieve the workload of civic engagement (see Appendix). This position could also aid city employees in developing and distributing a survey to research how citizens living in Bondurant interact with and receive city information. Potential applicants for the internship could be recent high school graduates to better connect youth with city work, a recent undergrad, or a currently enrolled college student. The intern could develop the survey and distribute it through direct mailings, QR codes around the city, NextDoor for public agencies, and physical copies available at community events.

The cost of this survey distribution would be around \$4,500 based on information from the US Census Bureau.⁷ In modeling the position after Ankeny's, we also recommend that the internship be a part-time summer position at \$12 an hour. The overall cost we estimate would be \$2,880, although this would vary depending on the amount of money and time for an internship or position. Ankeny's position listing is included in Appendix C for further information regarding this policy recommendation.

3) Explore New Community Events

We recommend creating more community events that have clear intended audiences and incorporate and implement feedback from citizens through a neighborhood ambassador program. Bondurant has a young median age and around 35% of the population is under 18. Our recommendation is to take this audience into account with every event whether it be to advertise events through child-based channels such as public schools or create intentional age-appropriate activities. Another barrier to adult participation could be childcare. Obstacles to childcare could be solved by providing live streams or recordings of city meetings or contracting childcare through local daycare businesses or the public school system (hourly workers, after-school programs, etc).

4) Consider a Neighborhood Ambassador Program

If Bondurant would like to create a neighborhood ambassador program, we recommend following the model used in North Liberty. Through an application, included in Appendix D, residents of each neighborhood can apply for the position and once selected by city officials, will meet with all other ambassadors. The city could host quarterly meetings where residents learn more about the processes and services of Bondurant. Ambassadors can then relay this information to their neighbors and answer questions when they arise. To allow for neighborhoods to host small events and community activities we recommend offering small grants, anywhere from \$200-400, for citizens to coordinate their ideas. The overall estimated cost for Bondurant is around \$2,000 total, based on estimates of around North Liberty's budget of \$5,000 for a larger population.

⁷ United States Census Bureau. "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Bondurant City, Iowa." Census.Gov, www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/bondurancityiowa/PST045222. Accessed 28 Nov. 2023.

NEXT STEPS

Apply for and create a Nextdoor for Public Agencies account

- Decide what content will be utilized
- Coordinate who will operate and update the account
- Advertise the new platform to citizens through the website, city meetings, and community events

Create an intern position

- Examine the current needs and goals of civic engagement for Bondurant
- Create a model and position qualifications for carrying out the goals
- Advertise position on Indeed, social media, and to local high school and college students

Begin planning events with new outline and data gathered

- Consider providing childcare to adult-oriented events such as city council meetings
- Utilize a free survey platform to get quick feedback after city events
- Decide whether or not the city is interested in implementing the Neighborhood Ambassador program and decide who will manage it

APPENDIX I

Appendix A: Bondurant Events Inventory (2023)

January

No events on calendar

February

No events on calendar

March

No events on calendar

April

4/8: Trout Stock at Lake Petocka

4/15: Live Healthy Iowa 5K

4/22: Keep Bondu Beautiful (Earth Day Community Clean-Up)

May

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

5/1: Bondurant-Farrar Jazz Band Concert

5/20: Spring Cleanup (Curbside disposal)

June

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

6/3: Youth Fishing Derby

6/12: Summerfest Carnival and Parade

6/13: Summerfest Carnival and Fireworks

6/24: Battle of the Bands

July

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

7/15: Bondu Blues and Brews

7/28: Touch A Truck

August

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

8/12: Movies in the Park

8/12: Ava's Birthday Bash Blood Drive Celebration

September

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

9/16: Movies in the Park

October

Wednesdays: Bondurant's Farmer's Market

10/7: Movies in the Park

10/21: Bondu Spooktacular

November

11/3: Home Alone Awareness Workshop

December

12/2: Christmas in Bondurant

Merry and Bright Parade

Tree Lighting

Ending with the Santa Social

Appendix B: Nextdoor for Public Agencies Executive Overview

<https://business.nextdoor.com/en-us/public-agency/resources/exective-overview>

Appendix C: Ankeny Community School District Communications Intern Job Posting

Communications Intern

Ankeny Community School District [Ankeny Community School District](#) [★★★★☆ 23 reviews](#)

406 SW School St, Ankeny, IA 50023

\$12 an hour - Part-time, Internship

Apply now



Profile insights

Find out how your skills align with the job description

Skills

? Videography ? Supervising experience ? Social media management

[+ show more](#)

Do you have experience in Videography?

Yes

No

Education

? High school diploma or GED ? Bachelor's degree

Do you have a High school diploma or GED?

Yes

No

Job details

Here's how the job details align with your job preferences.
Manage job preferences anytime in your [profile](#).

Pay

\$12 an hour

Job type

Part-time Internship

Shift and schedule

Choose your own hours Monday to Friday

Benefits

Pulled from the full job description

- Dental insurance
- Flexible schedule
- Health insurance
- Paid time off

Employment Term: Spring 2024 Internship (January 2024 - April/May 2024)

- Hours can be flexibly scheduled Monday-Friday between 7:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. to accommodate the students' class schedule. 400-hour goal will accommodate most university internship requirements

Reports To: Chief of Communications

Minimum Qualifications:

- Major or Minor in Public Relations, Journalism, Marketing, or some other form of communications
- Strong writing skills
- Strong grammar and proofreading skills
- Strong research skills
- Strong journalistic interviewing skills, preferred

Desired Qualifications:

- Experience with Adobe Creative Suite
- Experience with website navigation/design or theory
- Experience with social media such as Facebook, Twitter, HootSuite, or other platforms
- Experience with photography or videography

Education:

- High school diploma or equivalent, required
- Bachelor's degree (or working towards) in Public Relations, Journalism, Marketing, or related field, preferred

Essential Functions

Under supervision of the Chief of Communications, and dependent upon demonstrated skill in various areas, the intern will:

- Create drafts of communications identified by the Chief of Communications. This may include interviewing staff members to gain information. Editing of subsequent drafts supervised by the Chief of Communications. Communications may include:
 - Internal staff emails
 - Press releases & district website "news" stories
 - Communications to parents and the public
 - New web pages (and editing of existing pages)
 - Fliers
 - Weekly staff e-newsletters, using information sent by various district departments
 - Stories for the Ankeny Schools Snapshot newsletter
 - Other non-recurring communications
 - Proofreading for grammar and punctuation
 - Upon final draft approval by the Chief of Communications, assist in execution of:
 - Posting Web pages and new stories
 - Monitoring Website for functionality
 - Formatting and distributing emails in templates
 - Formatting print materials in InDesign and Word templates
 - Collaboration with the print shop to print materials
 - Other duties may be assigned (may include filing, researching, and clerical tasks)
-

Other Functions

- Demonstrate curiosity, initiative, and the ability to work without close supervision.
- Demonstrate integrity and maintain confidentiality.
- Respectfully and appropriately interact with staff, community members and visitors.
- Uphold and adhere to safety rules and policies for Ankeny Community School District.
- Support the goals and objectives of the school district and follow all district policies.
- Demonstrate the ability to attend work on a regular and routine basis to avoid disruption to District operations.
- Perform all duties in a safe manner to avoid injury to oneself and/or others.
- Respond to emergency situations for the purpose of resolving immediate safety concerns and/or directing appropriate personnel for resolution.
- Perform other related duties, as assigned, for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the work unit.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Specific **knowledge** based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include:
 - Strong writing skills
 - Strong grammar and proofreading skills
 - Strong research skills
 - Review and interpret highly technical information
- Specific **skill** based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include:
 - Interacting effectively with district staff
 - Operating standard office equipment
 - Preparing and maintaining accurate records
 - Adhering to safety practices
- Specific **ability** based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include:
 - Ensure the quality of work output by displaying a keen attention to detail
 - Ability to write technical materials
 - Ability to routinely gather, collate and/or classify data
 - Ability to adapt to changing work priorities
 - Ability to communicate with diverse groups
 - Maintaining confidentiality
 - Working as part of a team
 - Working with constant interruptions

Working Environment

Mental Demands/Physical Demands/Environmental Factors:

The usual and customary methods of performing the position functions require the following physical demands: significant lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, climbing, reaching, driving, standing and walking. Working conditions may include extreme temperatures and humidity. Hazards may include exposure to communicable diseases. This position requires one to maintain emotional control under stress.

Responsibility

Responsibilities include: working independently under broad organizational guidelines to achieve unit objectives; utilization of some resources from other work units is often required to perform the job's functions. There is a continual opportunity to significantly impact the organization's services.

Terms of Employment

Work year established by the Superintendent; Salary according to schedule adopted annually.

Clearances

Background Clearance

Evaluation

Job performance will be evaluated annually, as per district policies and procedures

The foregoing statements describe the general purpose and responsibilities assigned to this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and duties that may be assigned or skills that may be required.

Purpose Statement

This Communications Internship is primarily focused on Public Relations for the school district, but would also be beneficial to Journalism, Marketing or other Communications majors.

Job Title: Communications Intern

Pay: \$12/hr.

Employment Term: Spring 2024 Internship (January 2024 - April/May 2024)

- Hours can be flexibly scheduled Monday-Friday between 7:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. to accommodate the students' class schedule. 400-hour goal will accommodate most university internship requirements

Reports To: Chief of Communications

Minimum Qualifications:

- Major or Minor in Public Relations, Journalism, Marketing, or some other form of communications
- Strong writing skills
- Strong grammar and proofreading skills
- Strong research skills
- Strong journalistic interviewing skills, preferred

Desired Qualifications:

- Experience with Adobe Creative Suite
- Experience with website navigation/design or theory
- Experience with social media such as Facebook, Twitter, HootSuite, or other platforms
- Experience with photography or videography

Appendix D: North Liberty Neighborhood Ambassador Application



Neighborhood Ambassador Application

Contact Information

So you're interested in becoming a North Liberty Neighborhood Ambassador – fantastic! First, please share your contact information below so we can circle back with you with more information.

Name *

First Last

Email *

Phone *

Address *

North Liberty Neighborhood Ambassadors must reside in the City of North Liberty.

Street Address

Address Line 2

Tell us about yourself

The next four questions mirror what was asked in the 2020 US Census. We strive to have an ambassador program that reflects the diversity of North Liberty's population. If you are not comfortable sharing, just select "I prefer not to answer."

What is your age? *

Ambassadors must be at least 18 years of age.

What is your sex? *

Male

Female

I prefer not to answer

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? * No, not

of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin Yes, Mexican,

Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin I

prefer not to answer

What is your race? *

White

Black or African American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Some other race

I prefer not to answer

How long have you lived in North Liberty? *

Less than one year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16+ years

Currently, how satisfied are you with your neighborhood? *

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very satisfied

Do you own or rent your primary residence? *

Own

Rent

Describe your past and current community involvement, whether as a volunteer, a professional or as a hobby *

What do you do for a living? Do you coach, serve on a board, or volunteer somewhere regularly? Maybe you aren't involved currently, but have been in the past, or maybe being a Neighborhood Ambassador would be your first volunteer experience. There is no wrong answer here.

Do you speak languages other than English?

We're looking for language ambassadors to help strengthen the city's communication with residents who are English language learners. Please list any languages you speak here.