



Public Relations Department - 2018 Year in Review

News Releases & Media Pitches:

The Public Relations department actively and consistently reaches out to local print and broadcast news media to gain positive coverage of our growing community. In 2018, the P.R. department:

- Posted **18** news releases to website. (19 in 2017; 21 in 2016; 10 in 2015 end of April - December; 1 in 2015 January - April)
- Crafted dozens of media advisories or targeted media pitches, often resulting in positive news coverage
- Whitestown stories were mentioned AT LEAST **66** days in 2018 (all positive except for 2 instances of crime reported from P.D. news releases; suspects caught in both cases) between the 5 Indianapolis television stations: FOX59, CBS4, WISH-TV, WTHR & RTV6 (sometimes multiple stations each day) plus WIBC and WFYI radio, IBJ and IIB print, and several national magazines and publications, including U.S. News & World Report. That number does not include local print coverage in Lebanon Reporter, Zionsville Times Sentinel, and Current in Zionsville which all cover Whitestown nearly every edition. IBJ alone reaches 502,600 readers per month through all of their different platforms, which includes 350,000 unique visitors to IBJ.com each month, 29,352 print readers, and 45,000 eNews subscribers. Readers include the top business executives and influential decision makers in the state.

Videos Produced & Shared:

The Public Relations department shot, edited & shared **75** promotional videos in 2018, compared to 37 between May & December of 2017 after adding a videographer to the staff. Our videos have gotten us increased attention across the state and strengthened our branding and messaging. Our major Town promotional video, released in 2018, was the first such video ever produced in Whitestown's history. It was written, shot, and edited in-house. It was used as

an economic development tool by the Indiana EDC and Boone County EDC and was shown at the Boone County Chamber of Commerce’s annual banquet. A special video was also created to be shown at the Whitestown Parks and Recreation’s annual Sponsorship Breakfast to help attract sponsors. Our new ‘Behind the Badge’ video series was launched in 2018, with eight Behind the Badge videos shared. Other public safety videos produced in 2018 include: Officer of the Year, Meet the Chief, Firefighter Experience, National Night Out, Lip Sync Challenge, and a county-wide School Bus Stop Arm Safety video which was a multi-department collaboration. Video news releases (VNRs) were distributed several times in 2018, helping Whitestown receive television news coverage when news stations were interested in covering a story here in Whitestown, but didn’t have a crew available to send. In those cases, we provide the stations with edited video and a script ready for air.

Live Streaming & Video Viewership:

The P.R. Department continues to promote Whitestown’s transparency messaging by live streaming several monthly meetings. We now live stream the following meetings: Town Council, Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Police Board. We purchased a GoPro in 2018 and have used our GoPro and time lapse cameras to greatly enhance the creativity of our videos and give us shots that were not possible before this year. The P.R. Department works hard to continually update and manage our Town’s YouTube channel.

Top YouTube Videos in 2018 and Times Viewed:

- 1. Deputy Pickett Remembered.....8.4K
- 2. Town Promotional Video.....2K
- 3. Vets Roll.....1.2K
- 4. School Bus Safety PSA.....1K
- 5. Deputy Pickett Procession.....993
- 6. NNO Tease833
- 7. Moontown Construction Time Lapse....751
- 8. Pet Supplies Plus Ribbon Cutting.....662
- 9. Lincoln Funeral Train.....612
- 10. Noble Roman’s Ribbon Cutting.....569
- 11. Grinch Spotted in Whitestown.....548
- 12. Chick-Fil-A Council Vote535
- 13. Panda Express Ribbon Cutting505
- 14. Industrial Growth.....451
- 15. Whitestown 2017 Officer of the Year...428
- 12. Main Street Park Ribbon Cutting.....385

Continued Website Maintenance:

The P.R. Department was in charge of a complete website redesign in 2017, which added an interactive calendar and sliding images to the homepage and added several new sections to the interior pages. The P.R. Department continually updated the website throughout 2018, adding

new businesses and new neighborhoods as approved, maintaining the calendar on the home page, and continually updating the sliding images to correspond with upcoming major events and the changing seasons.

Social Media Growth & Engagement:

Social media remains one of our top avenues for communicating with our residents. We post content to our social media pages every day, often several times a day, using the most popular digital platforms to share important messages and information, reinforce and strengthen our brand, and build a stronger sense of community. We post regularly to: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We continually work to post relevant content to strengthen our presence and increase engagement on all of our social media platforms.

Facebook Posts with Highest Reach in 2018: (over 15K highlighted)

1/2/18 – Extreme Cold Weather - 11.6K
1/3/18 – Friendly Market Now Hiring - 7.8K
1/26/18 – Viking Fest Flyer - 7.4K
2/1/18 – Friendly Market Opens - 8.6K
2/6/18 – Jimmy John’s Opens - 7.5K
2/12/18 – McAlister’s Deli Now Hiring – 6.8K
3/1/18 – So Big Ribbon Cutting – 14.67K
3/2/18 – Blue Lightbulbs for Dep. Pickett - 16.3K
3/2/18 – Dep. Pickett Photo – 90K
3/6/18 – Dep. Pickett Remembered Video – 10K
3/7/18 – Dep. Pickett Stickers – 18.6K
3/8/18 – Flags Along Whitestown Parkway for Procession - 14.3K
3/9/18 – Dep. Pickett Funeral Procession - 9.2K
3/12/18 – McAlister’s Deli Ribbon Cutting - 6K
3/15/18 – Moontown Opens - 5.8K
3/26/18 – UPS Store - 6.9K
4/3/18 – New Businesses Coming to Whitestown - 46.4K
4/16/18 – Indianapolis Rd. Roundabout Construction Update - 5.4K
5/20/18 – Vets Roll Cell Phone Video - 7.3K
6/18/18 – P.D. No Solicitation Stickers - 7.4K
6/25/18 – Town Promotional Video - 6.8K
7/3/18 – Fireworks Finale Cell Phone Video - 9.4K
7/16/18 – P.D. Lip Sync Video Sneak Peek Cell Phone Video - 15.2K
8/3/18 – New Roundabout Aerial Photo - 6.3K
8/3/18 – School Bus Safety PSA Video - 5.5K
8/13/18 – Roundabout Almost Complete - 6.6K
8/9/18 – National Night Out Video - 4.6K
8/15/18 – Panda Express Sneak Peek Inside 14.6K
8/17/18 – Qdoba Sign Is Up - 6.5K
8/20/18 – Panda Express Ribbon Cutting – 6.8K
8/25/18 – Little League Headquarters Announcement - 9.3K

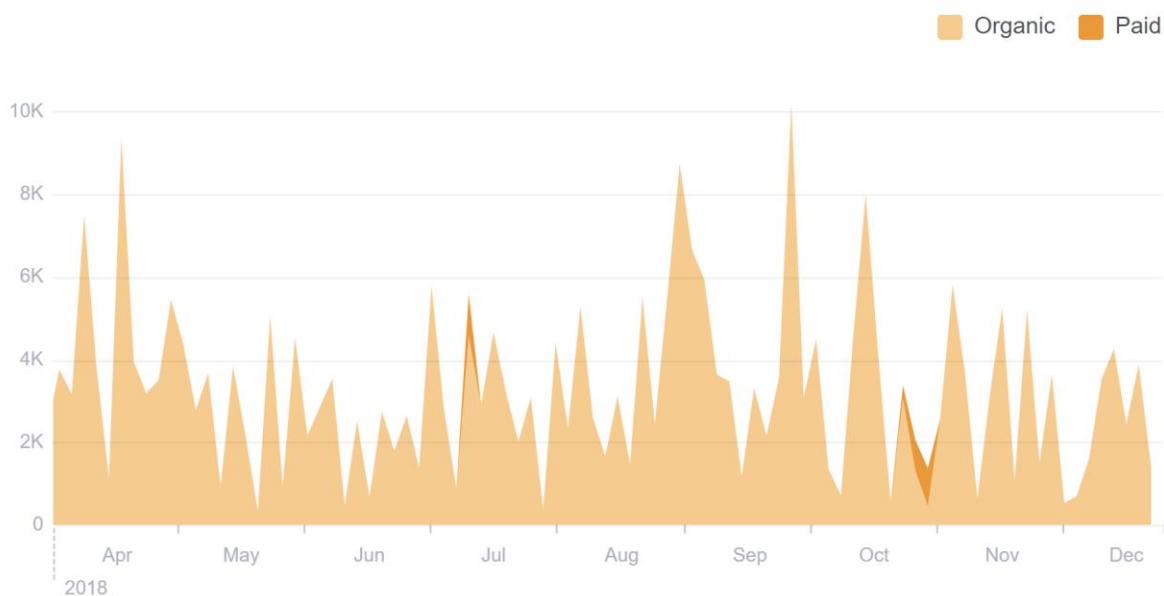
- 9/5/18 – Main Street Park Groundbreaking Info - 6.3K
- 9/11/18 – Main Street Park Groundbreaking - 9K
- 9/12/18 – Little League Headquarters Location Announced - 12.5K
- 9/17/18 – Qdoba Now Open - 6.9K
- 10/1/18 – IBJ Article about Maurer Commons Project - 8.2K
- 10/10/18 – Festival of Lights Tickets - 5.8K
- 10/11/18 – Sweet M’s Boutique Coming Soon - 8.3K
- 10/22/18 – HotBox Pizza Open - 6K
- 11/3/18 – Sweet M’ Boutique Opens - 6.6K
- 11/7/18 – Burlington Sign – 19 New Businesses Coming Soon - 5.5K
- 11/8/18 – Meet Nessie, Our New P.R. Dog - 7.4K
- 11/26/18 – Hobby Lobby Now Hiring - 5.5K
- 12/12/18 – Texas Margaritas Mexican Bar & Grill Coming Soon - 7K
- 12/15/18 – Facebook LIVE of Grinch’s arrest – 8.7K

Facebook Reach Summary:

In 2018, Deputy Pickett posts got the highest reach, by far. As was true in 2017, posts about new businesses and major construction projects performed extremely well, followed by posts having to do with police, fire, Town history, and major Town events and new amenities. Posts about the new P.D. K-9 units and the new P.R. dog also performed very well. Interestingly, *announcements* of new businesses often outperform the actual grand openings. The same seems to hold true for preview or behind-the-scenes videos. A couple of the top-performing posts included links, but most were photo or video posts. All were P.R. Department-created content. (The graph below shows our Facebook reach from April to December 2018)

Post Reach

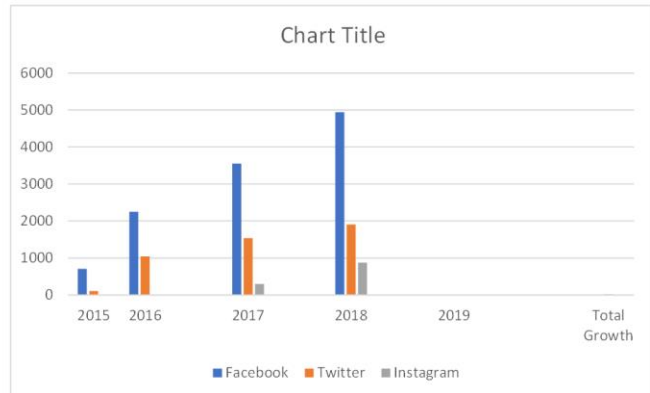
The number of people who had any posts from your Page enter their screen.



Facebook, Twitter & Instagram Growth Year-to-Year:

Social Media Growth

Year	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
2015	705	108	0
2016	2,252	1,046	0
	219%	869%	
2017	3,555	1,536	297
	58%	47%	
2018	4,942	1,902	875
	39%	24%	195%
2019			
Total Growth	601%	1661%	195%



Ribbon Cuttings:

The P.R. Department actively reaches out to new businesses coming to Whitestown to officially welcome them to our community and to offer ribbon cuttings to help promote their new business. We share information about all new businesses coming to our growing community on our social media pages. We also produce a promotional video of the ribbon cutting ceremony for our new businesses. We even sometimes write and distribute news releases and/or seek media coverage for our new, small businesses at their request. Because of this process, we have gotten tremendously positive feedback from local business owners about how welcoming Whitestown is. This forges strong, positive relationships with our new businesses even before they open their doors, helps educate those businesses about the zip code confusion, and helps keep our residents up-to-date about what's new in our community. We also try to help our new businesses with the task of hiring staff by posting about job openings on the Town's social media pages.

We welcomed 26 new retail or restaurant businesses to Whitestown in 2018, compared to 24 in 2017. (This does not include new neighborhoods or industrial businesses.)

Whitestown Quarterly Magazine:

In 2018, the Public Relations Department took over the creation and publication of Whitestown Quarterly magazine beginning with the May issue. We did extensive research to determine ways to reduce costs without sacrificing quality, and in August 2018, Whitestown Quarterly was profitable for the first time ever. The P.R. Department has worked hard to increase the quality of Whitestown Quarterly with each issue. In addition to reaching more than 4,200 mailboxes, we also added a new electronic issue in 2018 to create both cost savings and wider reach. The new digital issue allows us to share our great news about Whitestown happenings with many, many extra eyes outside our community for a very low cost of just \$3 per page, so only about \$90 per issue. Our first electronic issue had more than 8,000 page-clicks and was read across the country and in several other countries. We had about 30 readers in Chicago, plus readers in California, Texas, Florida, New York, Nebraska, Utah Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Massachusetts, Australia and Switzerland.

This new electronic issue also enables us to collect all kinds of data, including valuable advertiser data, so we can show our advertisers tangible proof of how many new page-clicks they are getting on their websites directly from our magazine. Data collected from our digital issue will also help us to make decisions about future content as we learn the kinds of articles and content our readers respond best to. We also lowered the cost of ads in 2018 to hopefully allow more of our small businesses to advertise with us. We will tweak these as needed, but the initial price drop doubled our ad sales from the February to the May issue.

2019 Goals:

- Provide media training to all interested Town personnel who may be required to do on-camera interviews
- Continue building brand awareness
- Continue messaging of: smart growth, excellent schools, safe community, family friendly community
- Continue to promote and strengthen Whitestown's image and brand through timely, relevant and frequent social media posts while also growing our social media audiences
- Continue to actively pitch to local print and television media with the goal of maintaining continued positive coverage of Whitestown
- Continue creating interesting content for Whitestown Quarterly magazine
- Continue live streaming and driving residents to the Town's growing YouTube channel
- Continuously update the Town's website with current and relevant information
- Continue to extend a warm welcome to new businesses choosing to invest in our community by offering ribbon cuttings and promotional videos
- Continue to keep our residents informed about new businesses, events, and issues that affect them and their families
- Continue our mission of being the most responsive and transparent local government in the state of Indiana
- Attend P.I.O. School to be a further resource for P.D. & F.D. if needed
- Attend monthly MESO (Media/Emergency Services Organization) meetings, when possible
- Consider joining Indiana PRSA and attending meetings, when possible
- Attend Indiana Economic Development Course through Ball State University
- Look for other opportunities for continuing education/professional development
- Order & install designed 'Welcome to Whitestown' banners in early 2019 to replace holiday season banners to further promote our brand awareness
- Continue to brand the Big 4 Trail and work to get highly visible crosswalks installed (for branding and safety)
- Work to install signage that will promote our messaging, heritage, and brand