



Social Media Policy – County Use of Social Media

While social media sites started as informal, unofficial avenues of communication, the popularity and efficiency of this mode of interaction has caused many public sector agencies to incorporate social media as an official part of their overall communications strategies.

Recognizing that social media resources can be an effective way to reach our citizens, it is in the County’s best interest to leverage the social media resources available to us.

However, it is extremely important that the county take a measured, strategic approach to the implementation of social media to avoid potentially damaging consequences such as the presence of out-of-date information, the failure to provide appropriate information to citizens who have requested it or the misrepresentation of Harney County policies, services or values.

Accordingly, this policy addresses how and when social media sites should be established, and procedures for ensuring that information on those sites is accurate and timely.

DEFINITIONS

Social Media

Generally, social media is any site or online process designed to facilitate simple and streamlined communication between users. Social media sites differ from conventional communication media such as online newspapers and magazines in that they tend to be less structured and complex, and more friendly, personal, and intimate in nature, and they tend to offer tools which allow for quick, unfiltered, and often spontaneous communication opportunities.

Social Network

For the purposes of this document, the term “social network” or “social networking” refers to any interaction between a participant and any site deemed by Harney County to be social media, including, but not limited to: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. Interaction is not limited to accessing the website of such social media sites, but also sending to or receiving from such sites any emails, text messages or any other electronic interaction.

Official



In terms of this policy, ‘official’ refers to any site or process set up by Harney County, its employees, agents or contractors, which serves to communicate sanctioned county information or engage citizens in discussion about topics, services or processes under the auspices of the county.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

An official Harney County social media site may only be established with the approval of the County judge or designee. This helps to ensure that information posted on official county social media sites or tools meet all applicable codes, policies, procedures and laws pertaining to them, and that the structure of the official social media site or tool is consistent with the strategic goals of the county.

It is important to note that simply because the ability exists to create a presence on a social media site, that it is by no means immediately appropriate to do so. An official presence on a social media site should only be considered when the message and the audience are appropriate to the social media environment. It is also good to realize that more is not necessarily better. A single well designed social media site can be much more manageable and considerably more effective at communicating a range of information that multiple special-purposed sites.

GRANT OF ACCESS

Any official Harney County social media site may be accessed by a county information officer, technology services personnel or other authorized parties to communicate official information or to make corrections to inappropriate or inaccurate information. The county reserves the right to temporarily or permanently disable any social media site which is in violation of any county network security policy or otherwise causes a threat to the security of county systems.

APPROPRIATE USE

Social media sites offer a wide variety of communication options, some of which may quickly become complex in the light of First Amendment rights, public records laws, Freedom of Information Act requests, and others.

With that in mind, the following shall apply to any official social media site.

- **Advertising.** Whenever possible, third party advertisements are to be disabled on any official county social media site.
- **Comments.** On any social media site where members of the public may comment, it is understood that an official reply to such comment is not required.



Further, any comment that is profane, threatening or otherwise inappropriate may be removed from the site.

- **Photos, Videos, and other Multimedia.** No photos, videos or other multimedia files may be posted to an official social media site unless the county or its agents have expressed permission by the copyright holder to do so, or ownership of said files belongs to the county. Unless properly disclaimed on the official social media site, no such files may be contributed by users without expressed written permission of the copyright holder of said files.
- **Alerts and Emergency Information.** All information of an emergency nature must be approved by a department head, manager or emergency coordinator before it may be disseminated on an official social media site.
- **Personal Information.** Official social media sites shall not be used to send out or promote any information of a non-county-approved nature. All information posted by the county or its agents must be for the purpose of communicating county information or services. This does not preclude the county from posting information on general community items of interest or events.
- **Prohibited Information.** No content may be placed on an official county social media site which violates existing county policies including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination and harassment, workplace violence, or other adopted county policies. This includes content that is sexually explicit, that creates a hostile work environment, or that promotes hatred or violence. As allowed or required by law, comments or other materials placed on a county social media tool or site which violate any of these policies must be removed immediately.
- **Disclaimers.** All official county social media sites must prominently display applicable social media disclaimers and legal statements as determined by the county's legal counsel.
- **Branding.** All official county social media sites must maintain county branding. At a minimum, the county logo shall be prominently displayed on each site and there will be a statement proclaiming that each site is the "official [insert name of social media platform] of Harney County."

LOCATION OF INFORMATION

The Harney County website located at www.co.harney.or.us is to be the primary source of information of a County nature. Supplementary sites, such as social media sites and



tools, should introduce information, and link to the Harney County website for complete and detailed information.

Departments or divisions who have official websites other than www.co.harney.or.us must use their official site as the primary source of information.

APPLICABILITY OF OTHER POLICIES

Harney County employees, agents, volunteers, and contractors are still bound by all other applicable policies, procedures, and laws (including public records law) pertaining to the creation and maintenance of an official social media site or tool.

Harney County Court

January 6, 2016

Judge Steven E. Grasty

Commissioner Dan Nichols

Commissioner Pete Runnels

[original signed]