

2025 Challenge Award: Your County, Your Heroes Video Series

Executive Summary

Overview

“Your County, Your Heroes” [is a video series](#) showcasing the dedicated County employees who serve our community every day. By highlighting their work and contributions, this series provided residents with a deeper understanding of the heroes that work in our County. This effort fostered appreciation for our local heroes and strengthened the connection between the County and the community it serves.

Challenge

Many residents are unaware of the daily contributions of County employees and volunteers, whose work ensures safety, health, and essential services across the community. Without visibility, the public often underestimates the complexity and impact of their efforts. The County sought an engaging, accessible way to highlight these heroes, build community understanding, and strengthen trust in County services. A story-driven video series became the ideal tool to illuminate these contributions and celebrate the people behind the work.

Solution

The County produced the “Your County, Your Heroes” video series, profiling staff and volunteers across departments. Examples include:

- The Animal Services Team responding to evacuate animals during the Lake Fire on Fourth of July weekend 2024, showcasing employee dedication and community cooperation.
- Margie Hunt, 24/7 Access Line Supervisor for Behavioral Wellness, linking callers to mental health services and assisting people in crisis.
- Florice Soto, Custody Deputy at the County Jail, highlighting the critical work behind the scenes and the positive impact she is making in the lives of the incarcerated.
- Nelson Trichler and the all-volunteer Santa Barbara County Search and Rescue team, who rescue community members from trails or the ocean, or help find a missing person.

- Monica Hernandez and Nelson Maldonado from Lompoc Probation Office, who help support community members on probation in rebuilding their lives and achieving long-term stability.
- Alex Doran from the Public Works Department, who goes out in all weather conditions to make sure the County's rain gauges are working to track storms in real time to provide lifesaving information.

The videos are shared widely: on County Channel 20, in the monthly County newsletter, on the CSBTv YouTube page, and across social media channels in English and Spanish. This multi-platform approach ensures maximum reach and engagement.

Innovation

While many counties issue press releases or reports, the County's innovative use of a video series turns traditional communications into an immersive storytelling experience. By showcasing individual heroes in action, the series humanizes government work, highlights complex service delivery, and fosters emotional connection between employees and the community. This approach creates both awareness and appreciation in a way traditional communications cannot.

Results

The series has reached tens of thousands of residents, increasing understanding of County operations and staff contributions. Employees featured report greater recognition and pride, and the series has strengthened community trust, inspired volunteerism, and encouraged public engagement. The videos also serve as an internal morale booster and a tool to reinforce the County's commitment to transparency and service.

Replicability

Other California counties can replicate this model by producing short, engaging videos that spotlight employees and volunteers, highlighting both program impact and individual dedication. Sharing these stories across multiple platforms builds community support, raises awareness, and fosters trust. This approach offers a best-practice framework for connecting government operations to the public in a meaningful, human-centered way.

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Additional Materials

Video Playlist: [Your County, Your Heroes - YouTube](#)