



AMERICAN
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National Specialty PR Tool Kit

Traditional Media:

Ways to Increase the Chance of Coverage for Your National Specialty

Encouraging local media to cover your National Specialty is a great way to promote your breed and educate potential owners about the type of lifestyle that is suitable for your breed. Aside from inviting the local news station or newspaper reporters to cover your show, there are other things you can do to increase the chances of coverage.



If you are unable to get a confirmation from the crew on whether or not they will attend your event, offer to send a spokesperson to the studio to conduct an interview. Try pitching yourself or another club member specifically as a spokesperson and offer the station the opportunity to cover the show through different angles (see *National Specialty Ideas to Pitch* below). Always offer to bring examples of the breed with you. TV crews love the opportunity to have dogs in the studio.

Tell them how your dog show stands out from other events that take place in your area -- and make sure you follow through with your claims! The more creative you are with your pitching, the more likely you are to pique the interest of the media.

Need assistance with media contact information? Contact communications@akc.org.

National Specialty Ideas to Pitch

- The largest gathering of [BREED] in the United States for 2014
- Meet the Breed
- Breeder referral & how to find a responsible breeder
- Breed rescue efforts
- Responsible Dog Ownership
- Economic benefits of dog shows to local community
- Any issue faced by the local dog community (ex. Dog friendly parks)
- Buyer beware issues, in which puppy buyers are urged to be careful when looking for a dog over the internet has been a popular topic in the news
- Discuss the history of your breed and/or how it came to the US
- If you offer agility, obedience or another special event in conjunction with your show, the media may be interested in learning about it and/or having an in-studio demonstration.



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Social Media:

We recommend that you start a Facebook page dedicated to your National Specialty or add a tab to your club's existing Facebook page as a place to send media and spectators for more information.

On this page or tab, post a spectator-friendly time table. Post the judging program or times when they can see the dogs at different ages (i.e. puppies are on Friday at 9am, older dogs called "Veterans" show Saturday afternoon, etc.). Post the times of other public-friendly activities, including breed parades, activities like Agility or Meet the Breeds times.

[View a Facebook tutorial for clubs.](#)

[View a Twitter tutorial for clubs.](#)

Parent Club Talking Points:

- Your Parent Club is the AKC designated guardian of the breed in the United States
- Your Parent Club exists to preserve and protect the future of the breed
- This breed was developed for X purpose and is ideal for a (busy, quiet, family, etc.) lifestyle
- Your Parent Club members must uphold a set of standards for ethical breeding practices
- Your national specialty is a great way to meet breeders and breed experts and find out more about the breed
 - Last year x # of your breed was registered
 - Your breed is not for everyone because...
- Your breed makes a great pet because...

What to include on your club Web site:

Create a special section for the press called a "Press Center" and include the following

- Club Fact Sheet
- Breed Fact Sheet
- Spokesperson Bio
- Club newsletter

Other ideas and information to share with media:

[AKC Facts and Stats](#)

[Above & Beyond](#)

[Economic Benefits of Dog Shows](#)



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CLUB LOGO

PRESS RELEASE

(SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE: National Specialty)

For Immediate Release

NATION'S LARGEST GATHERING OF [BREED] CONVERGES ON [CITY]

-"[BREED]" Aficionados Travel by Land, Sea and Air to Compete for Top Prize-

City, State (DATE)- It's raining [BREED]! The [CLUB NAME] has announced that [CITY] will be the location of its [xxxTH] annual National Specialty Show. [BREED] breeders and exhibitors from across the nation will be in [CITY], [DATES] to compete for the top prize.

"We expect to see some tough competition with the best breeders in the nation bringing their prized dogs to the biggest show of the year for the [BREED]," said [CLUB SPOKESPERSON]. "This is a great opportunity for current and potential [BREED] owners to seek advice from the breed experts. There is no other time when you will see so many [BREED] gathered in [CITY] at once. This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity for all dog lovers."

Exhibitors are expected to travel from as far away as [STATE] and [STATE] to compete for the top prize. International entries from [COUNTRIES] may make an appearance on the entry list.

The [CLUB NAME] is the national club designated by the American Kennel Club as the authority over the [BREED] in the United States. [INCLUDE INTERESTING INFORMATION, HISTORY ABOUT THIS BREED]

Every year, each AKC recognized breed has its own competition called a National Specialty. It's essentially a dog show only for that breed, which is sponsored by that breed's parent club. A National Specialty is a great way to get to know the players of a particular breed because all the top breeders gather in one spot. For more information about the [CLUB NAME] or the [BREED] visit [CLUB WEBSITE]

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Jane Doe



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Phone:

E-mail:

CLUB LOGO HERE
(Media Alert Template)

*****MEDIA ALERT*** PHOTO OPPORTUNITY*****

[INSERT CATCHY HEADLINE HERE]

WHO: [List who will be attending- list club name(s) and names/titles of important individuals only]

WHAT: [Describe what will be happening in a succinct manner]

PHOTO OP: [Tell the media who/what they will be photographing]

WHERE: [Give event Location, Street address, City and State]

WHEN: [Give Date of event and time for press arrival/check-in and time for start of event. If you have room, you may include a brief schedule if more than one thing is happening]

MEDIA CONTACTS:

[Name for reporters to contact up for questions/interviews] [day time phone number]

[day of event phone/cell number]

[Email or fax]



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The Irish Wolfhound Club of America received a proclamation from the Missouri governor proclaiming it Irish Wolfhound Week at their recent National Specialty. See more [here](#).

HOW TO GET AN OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION

A great way to gain publicity for your ***national specialty*** event is to obtain an official Proclamation from your Mayor/Commissioner/Governor. Proclamations are given in recognition of a special event and can help you get media coverage.

STEP 1: Identify the right person to assist with the Proclamation – it may take time so start early!

- Identify the appropriate contact at least 8 weeks in advance.
- Check your local government website or the white pages under city or state government for addresses and phone numbers to write or call for information on requesting a Proclamation. If no one deals exclusively with Proclamations, try a public relations or public information officer contact. An office manager or an aide/admin might be able to help as well.
- Be prepared to highlight the significance of the event and its impact on people in the local area.

STEP 2: Ask questions!

- Do they want you to draft a Proclamation ready for signature or do they want you to provide just the text for them to format in their style?
- May you include in the Proclamation the special naming of the day/date? For example, **“In honor of responsible dog ownership, I _____ (Mayor/ Commissioner/Governor) proclaim [DATE] _____ (City/County/State) Irish Wolfhound Week, etc.”**
- Do they want a hard copy of the text, electronic copy or both?
- Could you arrange a signing ceremony and invite media? (See below for details)

STEP 3: Draft necessary documents and submit to appropriate person.

- Draft a cover letter and the text for the Proclamation. Address the official correctly and explain that club is holding its National Specialty. Include the theme, the date, and your goal to increase awareness of and recognition for responsible dog ownership.
- Include interesting facts - and a brief description of plans for the event. Ask for his/her help by proclaiming a Breed Week for the city or state and include a draft Proclamation for consideration. Include a contact number for additional information. Close sincerely with name, credentials, and title.
- Mail or hand deliver your cover letter, draft Proclamation and support materials. Offer information that might be helpful to the politician – brochures, statistics, or other items – which describe and explain responsible dog ownership.
- Once signed, pick up the Proclamation in person – that way, it can't be damaged or lost in the mail and you can personally thank the person who helped you out – you may want to do this again!

STEP 4: Arrange a "signing ceremony" at the official's office and invite media.



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A “signing ceremony” is a great way to get media to cover your event. Ask your contact if he/she can assist you in getting the mayor involved in the presentation of the Proclamation or make an appearance at the event itself. If they can’t help, they can tell you who can.

- Confirm all details, including whether or not media and photographers can attend.
- Be sure to ask if well-behaved dogs are allowed at the ceremony – dogs are a great visual for media! If dogs are not allowed inside the offices, ask if the ceremony can be held outside on the city hall steps.
- Draft a one-page media alert with all event details and distribute to your local media. While print media may require more advanced notice, a television station may only need the media alert two or three days in advance. A follow up call is always a good idea.

STEP 5: The AKC is here to help!

Let us know if you are planning to request a government-issued Proclamation. We can provide you with a sample, which you can use to draft the text of your Proclamation. Keep in mind that it may be easier and faster to get a signed Proclamation if you draft the language.