**General Guidelines for Media Interviews**

1. Respond promptly to any and all media inquiries.
2. Convey a genuine sense of understanding, appreciation and respect for the reporter’s public service role.
3. Ask the reporter when the deadline is to show your concern for his or her schedule as well as providing you with some idea of how much time you have to prepare.
4. Be as cooperative as you can in terms of answering questions. If reporters feel you are trying to help them get it right, they will portray you more positively in their coverage. This may include referring them to other more appropriate sources.
5. When you can’t answer due to ethical restrictions, take the time to explain why you can’t answer directly instead of the flat “no comment.”
6. Answer all questions in terms of how the public is affected, not how you are affected.
7. Try to keep your answers concise. Lengthy responses increase the risk of the reporter not understanding the statement fully and make it more difficult to take accurate notes. Particularly with respect to electronic media, lengthy responses can be edited down in ways that distort or mislead what you are trying to say.
8. Try to avoid negative words in responding to a question.
9. Try to keep the interview focused on three or fewer points that you want to stress. All answers should circle back to those limited number of points. Repetition helps ensure the reporter gets them down and gets them right.
10. Maintain your composure no matter how provocative the question or the reporter’s style.
11. Show your compassion as a human by acknowledging the concerns of the average viewer and let them know that as you take your job seriously in providing public service, you also “feel the pain” of those affected.