

## NEWSPAPER INSERT STEAMBOAT SPRINGS ROTARY CLUB

### OVERVIEW

The Steamboat Springs Rotary Club and the Ski Town USA Rotary Club produce and distribute a tabloid-sized newspaper insert to some 10,000 readers of the *Steamboat Pilot & Today* newspaper. The publication started in 2004. Three issues are produced each year at an annual cost of about \$5,500. All costs are recovered from business advertisements paid by Rotary members.

Titled **Rotary Action**- the publication features stories about the local, district and international Rotary activities and general news. In recent years a typical issue contains 16 pages to include all of the content that is available. Stories and pictures are done by Rotary volunteers. It is edited by a Rotarian who is also the chief executive of the newspaper. Layout and design is provided by the newspaper's professional staff.

A normal issue features 25-30 stories and/or picture captions. Although all of the news is about Rotary, the stories are written to appeal to the general public.

Stories and pictures used in the publication are also used to generate media news releases and appear on the club's robust website ([www.steamboatrotary.com](http://www.steamboatrotary.com)).

The primary goal for this publication is to create a greater awareness about Rotary in general and our two Steamboat Springs Clubs in particular. It also gives our own members a better appreciation about their club and the achievements of their fellow Rotarians.

The Steamboat Springs Rotary clubs have several unique situations that have made the publication so successful. We have a single newspaper and a confined geographic market and population base. Senior members of the newspaper and broadcast media are Rotarians. And we have several Rotarians with professional writing and/or public relations backgrounds.

### TYPICAL CONTENT

- **President's Message.** Always on the right side of the front page. With both clubs now participating, the message is jointly signed and authored. Themes include major Rotary initiatives (i.e., Polio Plus) and the club's specific goals and strategies.
- **Students of the Month.** A picture and media release is generated for each presentation. These are compiled into a single story for the publication.

- Rotarians in Action. Pictures and a single paragraph about the activities of individual Rotarians. (Community service and other leadership positions, job changes and other important personal news.)
- Introduction of new members
- Appointment of new officers
- Interact Club news on specific projects
- Programs of note. Pictures and stories about newsworthy programs
- District News. (District conferences, seminars and training attended by members.)
- Student scholarships. (The club provides about \$12,000 a year in scholarships.)
- Community grants. (The club provides about \$10,000 in grants each year.)
- Member recognition for RI Foundation giving
- Exchange student program and participant reports and stories
- Projects news. (The club has several ongoing international projects and frequent community projects that make excellent stories.)
- Events news. (The club has a number of fund-raising and fellowship events.)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Good photos are the heart of the publication. A primary and back-up Rotary volunteer takes pictures throughout the year and maintain them in digital files for use in the website and the publication

The club recently purchased a new Canon digital camera (about \$350) that has 8 MB storage, zoom lenses and is small enough to carry in one's shirt pocket. Volunteers are trained to take publication-quality pictures (action-oriented with a Rotary logo in the frame whenever possible and a limited number of "grip and grin" photos of 5 or more people staring into the lens. (See Technical Details below for more specific photo information.)

## PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

The volunteers gather together for a story conference about six weeks before publication. Stories are assigned with copy deadlines about 10-14 days later. (Most

photos are already in the digital files covering all of the Rotary events that have potential for publication.)

The copy is edited and polished by Rotary volunteers and prepared for layout. Professional designers complete an initial layout about 20 days before printing. This is circulated to the Rotary team for review and corrections. A second “proof” is supplied the following week where final changes are made before it is locked in and set up for printing.

The publication is printed and inserted into the Friday edition of the local newspaper. Issues are printed and distributed in mid-December, mid-March and mid-July.

## PRODUCTION COST AND ADVERTISING

The annual cost of the publication is about \$5,500 to \$6,000. Twelve ads costing \$550 each (for three insertions) are solicited from Rotary members. All of the sponsors are featured on a single page featuring the company’s logo, address and a picture of the sponsoring Rotarian. Selling ads to non-Rotarians is not recommended, nor should they be placed throughout the stories, which complicates the layout and puts more demands on our volunteers. (However, some printer/publishers may agree to sell the ads as a part of the overall production contract.)

## WRITING QUALITY

While there are many Rotary stories that are interesting to the general public, readers are used to clear, well-organized writing style. Unless Rotary volunteers have some media or corporate PR writing experience, their stories will lack the level of professionalism that should be attained.

Volunteers often struggle with the “blank screen” and flashing cursor in trying to compose a good lead and a comprehensive story. To relieve the pressure, some of our volunteers will gather the basic information for the story (including reference to the RI website for good background information) and provide this to one of the more skilled writers for completion

Stories also need editing to ensure consistency from story to story in the use of tense, use of titles, etc. This is provided by a volunteer who serves as editor. (Editing and feedback needs to be done diplomatically to encourage volunteers and help train them to be better writers.)

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Photos should be at least 750 KBS and preferably 1MB or larger. Pictures should be cropped to eliminate superfluous background. A basic photo editing program like Microsoft Picture It , Digital Image Pro or a number of others available to the Rotarian in charge of photography.

Stories should be in Microsoft Word if possible.

The Steamboat Pilot & Today staff uses their own proprietary software to layout pages of the publication. A template with the basic layout is available for other Rotary Clubs. The newspaper may also be contacted directly should another club wish to use their printing and design services. (Bear in mind, however, that shipping costs for the final publication may be prohibitive.)

For more information on printing please feel free to call Scott Stanford, Publisher, Steamboat Pilot and Today, 970-871-1502.

Randy Rudasics  
Public Relations Chairman  
Rotary Club of Steamboat Springs  
[rrudasics@coloradomtn.edu](mailto:rrudasics@coloradomtn.edu)  
970-870-4491