

# Social Media Policy

## I. Policy

The Town of Crested Butte will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication strategy. Town-related social media web resources approved and administered by the Town Clerk or designee, may be modified or removed by the Town at any time and without notice as necessary to maintain the integrity of both communications and information technology functions.

## II. Purpose

The Town of Crested Butte social media sites wish to present themselves appropriately and consistently on the internet as a means to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens and visitors. The purpose of this policy is to define social media, as well as establish procedures for creating an overall social media presence. Social media websites offer substantial opportunities to communicate with the public. However, posting information on social media websites is not without risk. Use of social media sites for official Town purposes raises legal issues that are unique to local government that generally do not affect private persons or entities. When posting on social media websites on behalf of the Town, employees are, in effect, serving as the voice of the Town. Therefore departments and individuals must not create social media accounts themselves for the Town, but must follow the provisions of Section V-General Conditions and Restrictions, included herein.

The mission of any Town-related social media site is to improve communication with the Town's constituencies and to inform and engage citizens, residents and guests on Town issues and events. Social media sites are used to connect with the community by posting relevant and timely information.

## III. Scope

The policy applies to any pre-existing or proposed social media networking websites sponsored by the Town or its departments.

## IV. Definitions

**Social Media Websites**-Social media websites focus on creating and fostering online social communities for a specific purpose and connecting users from varying locations and interest areas. Social media websites can offer many different ways for users to interface such as instant messaging, blogging and commenting, online forums, status updated (microblogging), website link sharing, video conferencing, sharing pictures and videos, etc...

**Blog**-(an abbreviated term for "Web Log") is a website where a blog author can post information on a specific topic targeted to a specific audience. A blog, if commenting is enabled, allows registered members of the public (called blog commenters) to post comments about posts by the blog author.

**Microblogging**-Microblogging is a form of blogging that allows registered users to post short updates (140 characters or less) about themselves and their activities.

**Social Bookmarking**-Social bookmarking is a method of taking pre-existing web pages and posting them to popular news sharing websites. The more a particular article has been bookmarked, the higher on the list it appears at the news sharing websites.

**Discussion Forums**-A discussion forum is an online bulletin board that may also be referred to as a discussion group or board, a message board, or an online forum. On a forum, a registered user can post a message and receive responses to the message on the bulletin board from other registered users.

**Social networking**-Social networking websites offer a way for registered users to communicate with each other on the internet. They usually offer many ways to connect to other registered users such as status updates (microblogging), instant messaging, blogs, polls, photo sharing, video sharing, etc...

**Photo-Sharing Websites**-A photo sharing website gives registered users a method and location to store their digital videos on the internet and share them with others.

**Wiki**-A wiki is a website that allows visitors to add, remove, edit and change content, with or without the need for registration depending on the settings. A wiki also allows for posting links to other web pages in order to connect the information.

**Virtual Worlds**-Virtual worlds are websites and/or software that allow registered users to create a presence in a simulated community through the use of a graphical identification tool known as an avatar. They can then use the avatar to interact with others in the online world. The virtual work is a computer-simulated environment that attempts to mimic the real world.

**E-Alert**-Email sent from the Town containing information related to health, <sup>[mp1]</sup>safety and local road closures e-mail from the Town of Crested Butte. Recipients need to sign up from the Town website page to receive the emails.

**Facebook**- is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work , study and live around them.

<sup>[mp2]</sup>.

**Twitter**- is an online social networking service and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages.

## **V. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS**

### **General Standards**

The Town of Crested Butte's social media websites and their associated content should focus on significant areas of Town interest and be organized in a manner that avoids

duplication, ambiguities and/or conflicting information across the Town's various communication mediums. Creation of new Town-sponsored social media sites is subject to the review and approval process outlined below in Section VII.

1. Social media websites are to be consistently branded in order to communicate a clear association with the Town, and must contain a Town-standard disclaimer (see section XII). Branding should include the inclusion of the Town logo. The naming and contact information used for social media websites should be "Town of Crested Butte." Individual employee names are not permitted and should not be included. The Town name and general office phone number should be used for contact information. For birth date, use the date that Crested Butte was founded (July 2, 1880). All approved social media websites must be linked with the Crested Butte's official website, [www.crestedbutte-co.gov](http://www.crestedbutte-co.gov).

- a. Facebook will be used for Town E-Alerts and Town promotions or other time sensitive information.
- b. Twitter will be used for Town E-Alerts and Town promotions or other time sensitive information

2. The Office of the Clerk is responsible for managing the use of communication tools, like social media, by Town departments. The Clerk's office oversees social media adoption and implementation and assigns spokespersons who function as administrators on social media sites. Unless a staff person is a designated spokesperson for the Town, or is a part of a designated Committee, Town staff should refrain from posting or responding to comments on the Town's social media profiles; social media postings should only be done by authorized spokespersons.

3. Social media networks used by the Town should be in compliance with web accessibility rights governed by Section 508 for individuals with visual and hearing disabilities by providing assistive technology.

4. The Town will receive permission for use of photos with individuals or minors, before posting. All photos should have descriptions. Photos should be named after the description before uploading it to the social networking site. Write text captions and descriptions when the social networking site makes these form fields available.

5. Social media website accounts are considered a Town asset and logins to these accounts must be securely administered.

6. Disable external postings on social media sites. When posting cannot be disabled, then the social media site must archive and have the ability to retrieve posting history. The Town of Crested Butte does not retain copies of posts other than those stored by the social networking site(s).

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Social media use is subject to the Town's standards of conduct relating to internet and computer equipment. Employees, elected officials, and volunteers using Town-related social media sites should have no expectation of privacy as to his or her social media usage on Town computer systems or its sites.

1. Posts and comments must be respectful and not offensive, degrading, or obscene. Comments must be relevant to the purpose of the social media site as defined in XIV Best Practices.
2. Any Town employee or representative shall not use a social media account to disclose sensitive and/or confidential information without the prior express written approval of the Town Manager.
3. Use of social media sites is under the purview of the Code of Conduct and Town Charter. Elected officials should take special care to avoid cross-comments between elected officials and to avoid any official action or appearance of official action.
4. Town social media sites may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues.
5. Town social media sites may not be used to express personal views or concerns pertaining to Town employment personnel matters.
6. Town employees may not use Town social media sites to follow private citizens (except when necessary for police business; prior authorization by the Chief and/or Town Manager must be obtained).
7. Town of Crested Butte reserves the right to discipline and terminate employees for engaging in social media mis-use.

## **VI. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Colorado Open Records act requires that all public records be made available for inspection; this includes digital data, and a timely and efficient response for records is required by statute. Because of this, the creation of new material on social networking sites should be avoided. Instead, use existing material from the Town's existing website or previously published documents. The exception would be special alerts and announcement, which usually have been already created for public use and public dissemination. Original documents should be converted to PDF before uploading to social media websites.

## **VII. REVIEW PROCEDURES**

Town-sponsored social media sites should not be created unless authorized through the following review procedure.

Any department wishing to create, modify or remove a new social media presence must initially submit a request to the Town Clerk. This will initiate a process to ensure that the Town's array of sanctioned social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number, policies are followed, and the Town's internet-based communications are appropriately maintained.

Social media website requests should contain the following information:

- Social media website
- The subject or topic of site
- Addition, modification or deletion of a social media resource or its contents.
- Description of the purpose and/or scope.
- Address the following questions:
  - √What is the objective?
  - √What is the department trying to achieve?
  - √What is the purpose and goal(s) of the social media initiative?
- A draft version of the page which incorporates the general standards as identified in Section V herein.
- Target audience
- Confirmation that the social media site complies with Section 508 accessibility laws.
- Confirmation that the social media site retains posts and historical records and/or confirmation of the ability to turn off external comments.

## **VIII. COPYRIGHT**

The Town's preference is to use only photos and videos produced by the Town or contractors working directly on behalf of the Town. If copyrighted materials are used, physical records of copyright licenses must be obtained and maintained. Any branding or labeling requirements specified in the copyright license should be honored.

## **IX. OWNERSHIP**

Followers, subscribers, and friends of Town-owned social media sites are assets of the Town and may not be lured away, selling competing products or services, or tampered with by employees or former employees.

## **X. TERMS OF USE**

The ability for Town representatives to accept the legal terms and conditions for use on behalf of the Town is part of the process and requirements for creating an account. Those representatives, prior to creating an account, should copy the legal terms of use agreement and forward to the Town Attorney for review and approval before accepting agreement on behalf of the Town.

Some social media sites have pre-negotiated Terms of Use policies for governments; however, Town representatives should still be carefully reviewing the terms of service and forward to the Town Attorney for approval.

## **XI. EXCEPTIONS AND CHANGES**

This policy supersedes all previous policies covering the same or similar topics. Only the Town Manager may grant any exception to this policy. This policy may be reviewed and changed at any time.

## **XII. STANDARD SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITE DISCLAIMER**

In accordance with the Social Media Policy, each approved Town social media website must clearly post the following social media website disclaimer:

“The Town of Crested Butte’s uses of external social media websites are provided as a public service. The Town of Crested Butte disclaims liability for ads, videos, promoted content, or comments accessible from any external web page. The responsibility for external content or comments on external social media web site does not imply endorsement by the Town of Crested Butte.”

“We encourage your comments, concerns, and questions’ regarding any of the topics on our social media sites, but the Town of Crested Butte reserves the right to remove the following types of comments:

1. Comments not limited to the topic or purpose of the site;
2. Comments that include commercial advertisements and spam or promote services or products;
3. Comments that illicit illegal activity;
4. Obscene comments;
5. Comments using profanity;
6. Comments fostering, promoting or perpetuating illegal discrimination;
7. Libelous or defamatory information;
8. Comments containing specific or imminent threats;
9. Comments infringing on copyrighted or trademarked material.”

“The public comments expressed on the social media page do not reflect the opinions or positions of the Town of Crested Butte, its officers, or its employees. If you have questions or would like to report a comment in violation, please contact [info@crestedbutte-co.gov](mailto:info@crestedbutte-co.gov) ”

## **XIII. APPROVED SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES**

Note: Town employees are expected to understand and comply with the Terms of Service established by third-party social media host (see links below). As these Terms of Service agreements may change at any time, research the most recent version at the associated websites.

Facebook

Terms of user: <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>

Twitter

Terms of use: <http://help.twitter.com/forus/26257/entries/18368>

YouTube

Terms of use: <http://www.youtube.com/t/terms>

#### **XIV. BEST PRACTICES**

Authorized individuals with administrator rights assigned to manage social media for their departments understand the benefits and risks inherent in social media communication and accept the responsibility that they represent the Town of Crested Butte when posting information on Town social media profiles. Consistency, professionalism and integrity are required of all contributors.

##### **Town of Crested Butte Social Media Goals:**

1. Promote the Town of Crested Butte as a transparent organization.
2. Provide useful and appropriate information based on communication.
3. Engage the community in government.

##### **Social Media Best Practices:**

- One hour per week should be devoted to managing social media sites. This will include updating status, posting photos, and sharing information. Relevant information should include new stories, community events, re-post from others, tips or advice such as safe driving tips, and bear safety practices.
- The Town website should remain the central hub of information and activity. Link back to the website as the centralized source of information.
- Only provide factual information.
- Don't include opinions or speculations when on Town social networks.
- Social media tools work together. For example, "Tweet" a link to the website, post the link on Facebook, and embed videos from a YouTube post in a Facebook post.
- Posts should include as many pictures as possible.
- Use a personal and interactive tone when communicating
- Comments and links should connect and engage with the community. Engage in dialogue that is relevant and friendly.
- Comments should provide value-added feedback, provide local expertise and engender trust.
- Be memorable in comments.
- Don't sell products or services.
- Don't be pushy.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments that promote collaboration and sharing. Do not spam, or make comments that are offensive.
- Always think before posting; if it causes you to pause or question if it is appropriate, it most likely should not be posted.
- Respect proprietary information, content and confidentiality. Give credit to appropriate persons when required.
- Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. Understand that quality communication is important, so engage appropriately.

- Be transparent as to who you are and who you represent. Be clear about your role for the Town of Crested Butte so as to identify your vested interest in the information you share.
- Be aware that just by identifying yourself as a Town of Crested Butte employee you are creating perceptions about yourself and about the Town. Be sure all content associated with you is consistent with your work and maintain the Town's professionalism.
- Add value and excitement to the online community. Your statements and posts should provide the community with information to improve their knowledge, skills, solve problems, or to understand Town government better. Share what you are doing for the Town and its exciting improvements to open dialogs with citizens and/or to learn from others.
- Social media is a conversation, so talk to the community as you would a real person in a professional situation. Be a leader while communicating and do not create incendiary statements to inflame others. Be careful and considerate to other points of view.
- When you link a website on Twitter take out the www
- Beware of accounts that have lots of Tweets, but few friends; it is likely a computer.
- Be consistent.
- Be smart about what you publish on social networking sites. If you question it, don't post it.
- Adhere to area of your business expertise and provide your perspectives on your current activities and those of your industry.

### **Description, Purpose and Policy Recommendations for Specific Social Media Facebook**

Facebook is an online social networking site where members can create videos, update their status, create photo albums, post photos, post videos, write on their wall, instant message with other members, send internal e-mail to other members, find friends, add friends, and become fans of groups and organizations. Facebook integrates the best features from other sites like Twitter, You Tube, Flickr and MySpace.

Effective applications for government use of Facebook would include Town sponsored public outreach programs that target segmented audiences, public service announcements, Town information, emergency broadcasts and other public affairs activities.

### **Twitter**

Twitter is an online social networking site where members can post short updates and keep up with other members through online profiles or cell phone text messages.

Effective applications for government use of Twitter would be to re-broadcast the Town's headlines, news released, statements, public service announcements, accomplishments, job announcements and fact sheets. The emergency management community uses Twitter for local real-time updates and short nationwide

announcements. Other uses of Twitter may be to alert citizens of emergency broadcasts, epidemics, recalls, hazardous materials incidents, national incidents, terrorists' threats and natural disasters.

Legal implications of Twitter relate primarily to the privacy of members that follow government Twitter accounts and the appearance of commercial endorsement. These risks can be mitigated by restricting Settings and use of Follow ability.

## **YouTube**

YouTube is an online social networking site where members can post videos, comment on videos, provide video responses, mark videos as favorites and subscribe to video channels.

Effective applications for government use of YouTube would be Town sponsored public service announcements, recruiting videos, licensed broadcasts, animated instructions, guides or user's manuals and Town produced B-roll (extra footage captured to enrich the story you're telling and to have greater flexibility when editing. Instead of featuring only talking heads on video, you want to have other images you can cut away to that will add dimension to your story. B-roll can include additional video footage, still photographs, animation or other graphic elements).