

## Tips for Calling a News Desk

If you have something you want to share with your local media, like a news tip or story idea, you should take the initiative and reach out to them. In fact, your local media typically is very interested in receiving tips and story ideas that can enhance their news coverage of the area. They want to hear from members of the community and often count on the public to help serve as their eyes and ears regarding what's happening around town. However, it's important to follow a few guidelines when preparing to "pitch" your news or story idea to the local media:

- **Be prepared:** You may want to write down an outline or "script" of the story you want them to cover. This will help you to be succinct and to the point. Editors, reporters and producers have multiple deadlines, so you will need to pitch your idea and make the case for covering it quickly.
- **Local! Local! Local!:** Make sure to tailor your pitch to include local information that is relevant to your community. This will increase your chances of the story being covered.
- **Do your homework:** You will increase the chances of getting your story covered, if you tailor your pitch to fit the reporter's and the media outlet's interests. Try to research the media outlet before you call so you are familiar with the types of stories they cover and their style. Many media outlets post their articles on the Internet, and looking at recently published articles will provide you with a sense of that show or publication's reporting style. You can use the tools available on [TobaccoIssues.com](http://TobaccoIssues.com) to help you identify the right reporter, editor, or producer who would be most interested in your story.
- **Respect deadlines:** Editorial decisionmakers are under tremendous pressure to meet their deadlines. Always ask the media contact if it's a good time to talk or if they're under a deadline. And if so, let them know you will call them back later. Generally the best time to reach the media is between 10AM-2PM (after their morning editorial meeting and before their afternoon deadline). Also, if you are providing the press with information, be sure to ask what their deadline is and be prompt in meeting that deadline.