

Cracking the Code: Earning Editorials



Editorials are generally the most challenging and, if written in your favor, helpful type of media coverage you can earn. Generally, editorials appear after several months of relationship building with editors.

Editorials are only written on topics of broad interest that have wide community impact. So your job is to make building energy codes have mass appeal. Often, editorials are written as a result of an editorial board meeting with experts and community interests that you can organize.

TIPS FOR MEETING WITH EDITORIAL BOARDS:

- ✓ **Recruit supporters to meet with editors:** Supporters could be local builders, building code officials, home energy auditors, homeowners, or an energy efficiency advocacy organization. Pick 2-3 people to attend the meeting.
- ✓ **Send editors a pitch letter:** A [pitch letter](#) is a short (no more than 1 page) email that explains why your issue is important to their readership, how it impacts them, what is at stake, and provides a list of issue experts who can meet with the board.
- ✓ **Keep meetings short and to the point:** Meetings are generally no longer than 1 hour. Each person should be prepared to talk for five minutes, but understand that they may be interrupted with questions. Prepare a single leave-behind sheet of information with everyone's contact info.
- ✓ **Follow up right away:** Follow up with a phone call 2-3 days after the meeting. If editors say they are not interested in writing an editorial at this time, offer to submit an op-ed.
- ✓ **Keep codes on editors' radars:** Continue to look for opportunities to bring editors' attention to the issue – e.g. when a major story breaks or when proposed code policy takes a major leap forward (or backward).



WHAT EDITORS WROTE ABOUT UTAH'S OUTDATED BUILDING CODES:



“There is always a cost for energy efficiency. But it is far more cost-effective to reduce consumption than to produce more power. Electricity costs between 6 cents and 14 cents for one kilowatt-hour. The cost of building energy efficiency into a home is about 2.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. Less energy used means lower power costs for everyone.”

- [“Saving energy: Utah should adopt building code”](#) Sept. 9, 2010

“There is no good reason why Utah should be behind the times in abiding by the new normal of energy-efficient home building practices. Yet the bill to adopt the latest version of the International Residential Code has come out of the House of Representatives with a needless exception that will cost homeowners, and the whole of the planet, a lot more than they will save by skimping on building costs.”

- [“Green house effect: Utah should keep to the code”](#) Feb. 17, 2011

“By clinging to outdated building codes, the Utah Legislature is caving in to one powerful lobby while ignoring the needs of Utah families who buy new homes and then find they are energy hogs that cost more in utility bills than the owners can pay. Failing to adopt 2009 energy standards — already 3 years old! — is an inexcusable dereliction of our legislators' duty to act for their constituents.”

- [“Energy code: update is long overdue”](#) March 4, 2012