

Cracking the Code: Tips for Earning News Coverage



✓ **Do your research.** Know which reporters and bloggers are covering local energy and building industry news, read their stories and follow them on Twitter. Start to build relationships before pitching stories to them, e.g. comment on their stories, re-tweet their tweets, etc. Position yourself as a trusted source.

✓ **Develop a nose for news.** Be on the lookout for opportunities to insert building energy codes into the news cycle - for example, when utility rates rise, at the start of heating/cooling seasons, when home building/buying reports are issued, or when major a homebuilder or energy efficiency conference in town.

✓ **Take advantage of breaking news.** Stay on top of hard news on building energy codes – for example, when state code policies are being proposed or when the new International Energy Conservation Code is approved. Let reporters know when new code policies are being proposed and keep them informed of developments as they makes its way through the approval process.

✓ **Tell personal, compelling stories.** Find homeowners, home energy inspectors or code officials with first-hand experience with the problems that come with inefficient homes. Or find homebuilders that are already building affordable, efficient homes and offer these stories to reporters as colorful anecdotes to illustrate the importance and feasibility of strong energy codes.

✓ **Make stories visual.** Take TV videographers and newspaper photographers on site to tour problem homes and interview homeowners. Or give reporters tours of new affordable, efficient residential developments. If you can't get reporters on site, then take the photos/videos yourself and offer the images along with your news pitches.

✓ **Follow up and respond to coverage.** When a good story comes out, show reporters you are paying attention by posting supportive comments online, submitting LTEs, and sharing stories on Twitter, Facebook and other social media networks. Conversely, when a negative or erroneous story is published, reach out directly to the reporter with a friendly email providing additional background, facts and/or interview sources that will help them get the story right the next time.

WE PITCHED, THEY PUBLISHED

KSL TV

The Pitch:

By day, Shelly Bouvang runs energy efficiency programs at the local utility. By night, she lives in a house so inefficient, her HVAC guy called it the “worst he’s ever seen.” But it’s not her fault. She bought it that way, brand new. [Read the full pitch letter.](#)

The Publish:

Outdated energy codes lead to uncomfortable homes

Shelly Bouvang's beautiful 3-year-old home in Farmington hides a costly secret within its walls.” [Read the full story.](#)



Deseret News

The Pitch:

The nation’s top energy efficiency experts will be convening in Salt Lake City next week at the Energy Codes 2011 Conference. The fact that the conference is in Utah this year is pretty ironic, since the state’s own energy code is so outdated. [Read the full pitch letter.](#)

The Publish:

National energy conference in Salt Lake brings attention to Utah's outdated home codes

“As hundreds of federal energy regulators, building-code industry experts and energy-efficiency company representatives kick off the National Conference on Energy Codes, local energy-efficiency advocates are spotlighting Utah's own outdated building codes.”

[Read the full story.](#)



Salt Lake Tribune

The Pitch:

There are a handful of homebuilders in Utah that are taking it upon themselves to build to higher energy-efficiency standards than what the state requires – and it’s paying off big time – for them and for homeowners. [Read the full pitch letter](#) (which resulted in op-ed below).

The Publish:

Energy-efficient homes

“When you buy a new home, you expect it to be built to the highest standard of energy efficiency and comfort. Unfortunately, that's not always the case in Utah because the state's home energy code is vastly outdated.” [Read the full story.](#)

