

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline to all departments, employees, appointed and elected officials, the protocol and procedures for use of social media to provide public outreach and communication of official City services and events. In addition, this policy addresses the responsibilities of individual employees and City officials with regard to social media and the use of City resources (time/equipment), as well as responsibilities related to public records and open meetings law.

II. DEFINITION:

A. **Social Media** - a term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. Social media uses the "wisdom of crowds" to connect information in a collaborative manner online. Through social media, individuals or collaborations of individuals create web content, organize content, edit or comment on content, combine content and share content. These take on various forms of discussion and dissemination, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards and online forums. Technologies include: RSS and other syndicated web feeds, picture-sharing, wall-postings, fan pages, e-mail, instant messaging and music sharing. Examples of social media applications include, but are not limited to, Google and Yahoo Groups (reference, social networking), Wikipedia (reference), MySpace (social networking), Facebook (social networking), YouTube (social networking and video sharing), Flickr (photo sharing), Twitter (social networking and microblogging), LinkedIn (business networking), and news media comment sharing/blogging.

B. **Social Networking** – the practice of expanding business and/or social contacts by making connections through Web-based applications. This policy focuses on social networking as it relates to the Internet to promote such connections for official City business and for employees, elected and appointed officials who are using this medium in the conduct of official City business.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A. Administration

1. All official City social media sites will be administered by the City Manager's Office. These social media sites shall be used for the limited purpose of informing the public about City business, services and events. The City Manager's Office may designate members of City staff to monitor and administer all official City social media sites. Individual departments, Commissions, Committees or Boards may not have their own pages/sites. Individual departments wishing to add content to official City social media sites may submit a request to the City Manager or designee.
2. The City's Web site, www.cottonwoodaz.gov, will remain the official location for content regarding City business, services and events. Whenever possible, links within social media formats should direct users back to the City's Website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Cottonwood. Each social media site used by the City shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose of the site and directs the user back to the City's website.
3. City of Cottonwood employees and appointed and elected officials shall not disclose information about confidential City business on either the City's social media sites or their personal social media sites. In addition, all use of social media sites by elected and appointed officials shall be in compliance with Arizona's open meeting laws. Employees and elected or appointed officials' posts are a reflection of their own views and not necessarily those of the City.
4. Posting/Commenting Guidelines - All postings made by the City to social media sites will contain information and content that have already been published or broadcast in an official manner. All official social media postings by the City will be done solely on the City's social media sites or in response to postings made on the City's social media sites.
5. Responses to Comments and Messages - The City Manager's Office will determine whether the City will engage in responses to comments on social media sites. The City Manager's designee will be responsible for responding to comments and messages as appropriate. Whenever possible, the designee will direct users back to the City's official Web site for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Cottonwood.

The City may invite others to participate in its social media sites. Such invitations will be based upon the best interests of the City as determined by the City Manager or designee.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

6. Department Requests for Posting to Social Media Sites - The City Manager or designee will determine if a request is appropriate and adheres to the guidelines of this policy.
7. Requests for Pursuing/Using New Social Media Sites - All requests for new social media sites and services to promote City business, services or events must be submitted to the City Manager's Office and will be reviewed by the IT Department and the City Manager's Office for approval. Requests should be accompanied by an explanation of:
 - a. the purpose of the social media site or service;
 - b. primary audience served;
 - c. the reason internal or existing resources will not meet these needs; and
 - d. a date range for the project (i.e. when will it launch, how long will it be in effect). Requests should identify appropriate resources, including staff and funding for production and management of services, when applicable.
8. All content posted on official City social media sites must comply with City Web standards, unless otherwise agreed upon between the requesting department/division, the City Manager's Office and the IT manager. Employee or City confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and City policies. If a question arises regarding the use or posting of confidential information on a social media site, the matter shall be referred to the Legal department office for review. The information in question shall not be posted, or if already posted, shall be removed until an opinion is rendered by the Legal department. Notwithstanding the opinion of the Legal department, the City Manager's Office reserves the right to restrict or remove City information from an official City social media site if the City Manager believes that the information does not serve the best interests of the City.
9. All social media-based services to be developed, designed, managed by or purchased from any third-party source for use requires appropriate budget authority and approval from the IT manager. The requesting department will be responsible for all costs related to the purchase, maintenance and support of third-party products.
10. IT Procedures - IT will work with the City Manager's designee to ensure that new social networking sites and proposed content meet City standards. Once a new request is determined to meet technology guidelines and City policies, it will be forwarded to the City Manager's Office for review. If the request is approved, the IT director will allow open Internet access to the applicable social media site for the Communications manager and designee(s).

11. City Manager Office Procedures - The City Manager's office will review requests approved by IT and the Communications manager and authorize final approval. In addition to the City staff provided by this policy, the City Manager's Office shall determine/approve additional employee access to social media sites from City computing equipment.

B. Rights and Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of employees, and appointed and elected officials to understand the procedures as outlined in this policy.
2. Designated staff for City social media sites will be trained regarding the terms of this policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the policy.
3. Employees who are not designated by the City Manager's office to access social media sites for official business are prohibited from accessing social media sites utilizing City computing equipment and/or the City's Web access. While at work, employees who are not granted access via City systems and computing equipment may use personal computing devices and personal web accounts to access social media sites only during nonworking hours such as lunch periods and breaks.
4. Postings and comments (if City Manager's Office has determined that City will engage in responses to comments) to City of Cottonwood social media sites containing any of the following forms of content will not be allowed:
 - a. Comments not topically related to the administrator's posting.
 - b. Content that violates City policy, including abusive, harassing, intimidating, vulgar, obscene and offensive communications; communications that defame or libel others; and communications that infringe upon the privacy rights of others.
 - c. Disparaging communications or jokes that are based on race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or any other characteristic protected under federal, state or local law.
 - d. Communications of any copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary information, or any other highly sensitive confidential information.
 - e. Solicitation of others for commercial ventures or religious, social or political causes.
5. Content that is in violation of the City's Internet use policy The City of Cottonwood reserves the right to remove content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Any participants on the City's official social media sites who are in continual violation of the posting/commenting guidelines may be permanently removed from the City's site.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

6. The City will only post photos for which it has copyright or owner's permission to use.
7. Direct messages sent to social media accounts will be treated as general correspondence and kept in accordance with retention schedules provided by the Arizona State Library and Archives Records Management Division.
8. Chat functions in any social media sites will not be used.
9. Links to all social media networks to which the City belongs will be listed on the City's official Web site. Interested parties wishing to interact with these sites will be directed to visit the City's Web site for information on how to participate.
10. The City of Cottonwood reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend access to official City social media sites at any time.