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**STOREY COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**NUMBER: 300.003  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/17/26  
LAST REVISED: 02/20/18**

**AUTHORITY: BOCC  
COUNTY MANAGER: AO**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA**

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**I. PURPOSE:**

Departments are encouraged to collaborate with the Storey County Public Relations Officer to leverage social media technologies for business purposes effectively. This cooperation aims to facilitate engagement with customers and employees in appropriate ways while ensuring that social media use aligns with the county's policies and guidelines. However, addressing and mitigating potential risks associated with social media use is essential. These minimum requirements will help mitigate such risks.

This policy establishes uniform guidelines for disseminating Storey County information through social media channels. These guidelines outline procedures for assessing and managing comments and replies, as well as maintaining social media records in accordance with public records regulations. This policy is designed to be consistent with relevant state, federal, and local laws, as well as County policies, ensuring compliance and promoting effective communication.

**II. POLICY:**

Social media encompasses a range of activities that combine technology, social interaction, and content creation, often involving photo and video sharing, links, podcasts, blogs, commercials, and other forms of digital communication. Examples of Storey County's social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and any other social media platforms that may emerge following the adoption of this policy. These platforms serve as essential tools for engaging with the public, fostering community involvement, and disseminating important information.

When used in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, social media tools can enhance the speed, reach, and targeting of communications, including during disaster/emergency incidents. Social media can also facilitate collaboration, increase resident engagement, and streamline and increase the County's ability to broadcast messages to the widest possible audience.

This policy applies to all County staff including employees, department heads, supervisors, appointed and elected officials, and operates in accordance with all appropriate Storey County policies and procedures. This policy also applies to members of the public, such as contracted individuals or consulting agencies, who use the County's social media.

### **III. PROCEDURE:**

#### **A. SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY AND ON BEHALF OF STOREY COUNTY**

##### **1. Application**

- a. The County uses social media as a method to disseminate public information and as a promotional tool to increase the County's ability to broadcast its message to the widest possible audience.
- b. The County's official website, <https://www.storeycounty.org>, shall remain the primary source of Internet information dissemination.
- c. Whenever possible, County social media should link back to the official website for further in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services relating to County business.
- d. Only authorized County staff, contractors, or consulting agencies may post on County social media platforms.
- e. All County social media will remain public in nature.
- f. Given the immediate nature of social media, the County will take a controlled, strategic, and respectful approach to the use of social media to ensure information is current and appropriate, and to respond to comments, requests, and questions in a timely and accurate manner.

##### **2. General Responsibilities:**

- a. Prior to authorizing and enabling Internet access to Social Media websites, Storey County will conduct a formal risk assessment of the proposed connections.
- b. The assessment will include an analysis of the risks (including risk mitigation strategies) involved in providing Users with access to Social Media websites, including:
  - i. The network bandwidth requirements and impacts
  - ii. Reputational risk to personnel, the department, and Storey County
  - iii. Potential avenue for leakage of sensitive or protected information such as intellectual property, personally identifiable information, etc.
  - iv. Potential avenue for malware introduction into the organization's IT environment and

- v. Potential use of “other than government” sections of Social Media websites.
  - c. Limit Internet access to Social Media websites according to any acceptable use policy in place
  - d. Allowing access to Users who are specifically authorized
  - e. Preventing unnecessary functionality within Social Media websites, such as instant messaging (IM) or file exchange
  - f. Implement processes to minimize any risks associated with social media activities while allowing employees to use best practices in maximizing the effectiveness of social media activities
  - g. Enable technical mitigation controls to the extent possible which may include:
    - Filtering and monitoring of all Social Media website content posted and/or viewed
    - Scanning any/all files exchanged with Social Media websites.
3. Selection of Social Media Accounts
- a. Accounts set up for the purpose of communicating with the public on behalf of the county must be approved by the County Manager, and Public Relations Officer, or designee. All accounts must be identified as a department of Storey County and use either the logo of the County or of a County elected office (e.g., Assessor, Clerk/Treasurer, Recorder, Sheriff, Justice Court, District Attorney, Sheriff).
  - b. County social media must be accessible to anyone above the age of 18 and available free of charge. No site that limits access to service based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability may be used by the County.
  - c. Any administrator of an account must be familiarized with the terms of service for individual social media platforms, as each site has its own unique terms of service that regulate how users interact with that media.

## **B. CONTENT/USE BY STOREY COUNTY**

1. All uses of County social media comply with applicable state, federal, and local laws and Storey County Administrative Policies.
2. County social media sites are subject to State of Nevada public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to County business, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is public record.
3. Whenever possible, sites will indicate that any posted content, or content that is submitted for posting, is subject to public disclosure.

4. State of Nevada records retention schedules apply to social media formats and content. Direct messages sent to social media accounts will be treated as general correspondence and kept in accordance with the retention schedule provided by the Nevada State Library and Archives.
5. County social media posts may not be commercial or political in nature.
6. Department heads shall be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media that each respective department creates and posts.
7. Emergency Manager, County Manager, Public Relations Officer, or designee, is responsible for disseminating emergency management social media messages and warnings.
  - a. Content related to crisis or emergency communications must conform to the policies and procedures contained within the relevant emergency operations plans. Public safety messages, warnings, and emergency alerts will be published on county-owned and operated pages to ensure that contents are recorded.
  - b. The Sheriff's Office will also be authorized under this subsection as related to law enforcement and Sheriff's duties.
8. The District Attorney's Office, upon request, is responsible for reviewing the legal terms and conditions required for creating social media accounts and for determining what information is confidential, privileged, or otherwise exempt from public access and disclosure.
9. Users and visitors of social media sites must be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between Storey County and members of the public. County social media articles, posts, and comments containing any of the following are prohibited:
  - a. Comments not typically related to respective posts.
  - b. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
  - c. Profane language or obscene content.
  - d. Comments or information which promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status regarding public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.
  - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content or other "adult" material.
  - f. Conduct or encouragement of activities which are illegal or may appear to be illegal.
  - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public, public facilities, County systems, or County employees.

- h. Confidential personal and/or personnel information including, but not limited to, dates of birth (including indication of one's "birthday"), home address, any other personnel records.
- i. Material or information that is known to be copyrighted, a trade secret, proprietary, protected by a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), is highly sensitive, or that infringes on the legal rights of any other party.
- j. Solicitation of others for commercial ventures or religious, social, or political causes.
- k. Comments or information which is or could be controlled or prohibited by the County in a non-public forum.
- l. Comments or information which would otherwise violate state, federal, local laws, or County policies.
- m. All employees will be required to sign an acknowledgement form indicating that they have been provided, read, and understand the county's social media policies. This requirement will be administered by the Human Resources office.

### **C. CONTENT USE ON BEHALF OF STOREY COUNTY**

- 1. Social media content encompasses any information, media, or message shared on various platforms (e.g. Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.) used to engage, inform, or entertain audiences, and can include text posts, images, videos, stories, or live broadcasts.
- 2. Information posted or pages created on behalf of the County must:
  - a. Directly relate to Storey County, its departments, or services.
  - b. Contain information which is not considered confidential under County, State, or federal laws or policies.
  - c. Confidential personal and/or personnel information including, but not limited to, dates of birth (including indication of one's "birthday"), home address, any other personnel records.
- 3. Images, photographs, sound, audio, and videos of a public place, person in a public place, or public event participants may be published or posted so as long as the media are associated with County news, public event, service, activity, program, or other affair of legitimate public interest without the expressed permission of the person being imaged, photographed, or audio or video recorded.
- 4. Administrators of social media sites must not post or publish images or photographs on County social media if:
  - a. The photograph or recording would be highly offensive to a reasonable person.
  - b. The photograph or recording would intrude on a reasonable person's expectation

- of privacy (e.g., patient room, restroom, locker room, or any other place traditionally associated with a legitimate expectation of privacy).
- c. The photograph or recording is published solely for commercial or political purposes.
  - d. The photograph or recording depicts the person in a false light.
5. The County reserves the right to suspend access temporarily or permanently to social media at any time.
  6. The County will not re-post or respond to election campaign content coming from people who have filed as candidates for public office for the duration of their election campaign. The County will not re-post entries from users with objectionable profile pictures and, otherwise, whose activities reflect poorly on the county. The County encourages re-posting of content about County activities, services, programs and content that aligns with the County's mission and goals (e.g., non-profits, other government agencies, etc.).
  7. All social media content posted by the county will (when feasible) adhere to accessibility standards, such as providing alternative text for images, subtitles for videos, and ensuring that content is usable by people with access and functional needs.
  8. Additional Requirements:
    - a. Users shall not speak on social media or other on-line forums on behalf of Storey County, unless specifically authorized by the County Manager or the Public Relations Officer.
    - b. Users shall connect to, and exchange information with, only those social media sites that have been authorized by Storey County in accordance with the requirements within this and other County policies.
    - c. Users shall not post or release confidential, sensitive, personally identifiable information (PII) on social media sites.
    - d. Users who connect to social media sites through County information assets, who speak officially on behalf of Storey County, or who may be perceived as speaking on behalf of Storey County, are subject to all County requirements prohibited or inappropriate behavior in the workplace, including acceptable use policies, user agreements, sexual harassment policies, etc.
    - e. Users who are authorized to speak on behalf of Storey County shall identify themselves in their official county capacity including name and official job title as appropriate, or by: 1) Full Name, 2) Title, 3) Department, and 4) Contact Information as needed, when posting or exchanging information on Social Media forums, and shall address issues only within the scope of their specific authorization.

- f. Users who are not authorized to speak on behalf of Storey County shall clarify that the information is being presented on their own personal behalf, and that it does not represent the position of Storey County or in their official capacity with Storey County.
- g. Users shall not utilize tools or techniques to spoof, masquerade, or assume any identity or credentials except for legitimate law enforcement purposes, or for other legitimate County purposes as defined in policy.
- h. Users shall avoid adding and/or mixing their professional information with their personal information.
- i. Users shall not use their work password(s) on social media sites or to access social media sites, other than to access Social Media accounts for official county business purposes.

#### **D. DUTIES OF DESIGNATED ADMINISTRATORS**

1. The County Manager and/or Public Relations Officer may appoint administrators, as set forth in this policy, for individual County department social media.
2. Designated administrators must:
  - a. Oversee and manage department social media accounts, including authorization and approval of posts.
  - b. Evaluate and accept or deny requests for usage (followers, friends, etc.).
  - c. Authorize editors to use social media and confirm each employee's receipt, understanding, and duties pursuant to this policy.
  - d. Maintain a list, in writing, of social media sites, logins, and passwords and store it in a secure location in the department.
  - e. Change passwords and usernames, if necessary, in accordance with Storey County Administrative Policies.
  - f. Consult with the County's Public Relations Officer and ensure that social media is archived in accordance with Nevada public records retention requirements.
  - g. Coordinate with the County Manager and/or Public Relations Officer, as appropriate, regarding questions, posts, responses, and removal of information.
  - h. Ensure that all statements are official and made on behalf of Storey County.
  - i. Use discretion before posting and commenting and avoid engaging any person in an argumentative or offensive manner.
  - j. Respond as appropriate to comments or questions within two business days, or more immediately as for which the situation calls. Whenever possible, responses should be made on the same day. If additional information is needed for a full response, a full response should occur within five business days.

- k. Check social media sites for new activities and violations of this policy at least once per business week.
- l. As appropriate, immediately hide or delete, after archiving, any post or comment which violates local, state, or federal laws regarding discrimination, harassment, or violence; or which contains obscene, threatening, harassing, malicious defamatory, copyrighted, or commercial content.
  - i. The First Amendment prohibits the government from censoring differing viewpoints.
  - ii. Administrators must not respond to these materials on the social media site.
  - iii. Third-party advertising will be removed or disabled from County social media sites. If this is not possible, a statement should be made to the effect that the County did not authorize, nor did it endorse any advertising on County sites.
  - iv. Comments made to sites will not be edited or modified but may be removed in accordance with section C above.
  - v. Hyperlinks may be prohibited, deleted, or removed where the linked site includes materials which would otherwise violate this policy.
- m. Monitor the effectiveness of social media channels through analytics, such as engagement metrics, reach, and sentiment analyses.
- n. Conduct periodic audits of all Storey County social media accounts to ensure compliance with these policies and to evaluate their effectiveness.
- o. Maintain a social media plan and content calendar to plan and schedule posts systematically.
- p. Facilitate annual, or more frequently as needed, training for all designated administrators and employees utilizing county social media to ensure conformance with best practices, and policy and statutory requirements.

## **E. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY STOREY COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

- 1. This policy is intended to work in conjunction with the County's adopted personnel rules and regulations and is not intended in any way to interfere with employees' Collective Bargaining Agreements, e.g., any activity by an employee or group of employees by which they seek to improve pay and working conditions, regardless of whether they are already unionized. Further this policy is not intended to limit employees from discussing wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with fellow employees and with non-employees. Finally, this Policy is also not intended to limit employees from speaking with the media regarding their employment in an individual capacity regarding wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

2. To ensure social media use is consistent with this policy, employees are expected to carefully read the guidelines presented in this policy, as well as Policies 202 Anti-Harassment, 204 Employee Bullying, 209 Prohibition of Workplace Violence, 212 Code of Ethical Standards, and all policies pertaining to the use of County information technology resources. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence or similar unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
3. Employees may have their own personal social networking sites; however, employees must not use County emails or passwords in conjunction with a personal social networking or social media site. Exceptions may be approved by the County Manager when separate accounts are created to facilitate use of County social media and when passwords and access keys are managed in the Information Technology Department.
4. Employees must not create links from personal blogs, websites, or other social networking and social media sites and post them to the County website, County social media pages, or other webpages of the County or its offices (e.g., Storey County Fire District, Storey County Sheriff's Office, Storey County DA's Office, etc.) without identifying themselves as a Storey County employee as specified in Section C.8.f.
5. Employees who publish a blog or post online related to work done for the County or subjects associated with Storey County or its affiliates, must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of or representing Storey County or its affiliates. Best practice is to include a disclaimer such as, "The views and content on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Storey County or its affiliates."
6. Employees are advised to conform to the following on social media:
  - a. **Be respectful.** Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, businesses, residents, vendors, and people who work on behalf of the County. Resolving work-related complaints and issues by speaking directly with co-workers, the Human Resources office, or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is more likely to be successful than posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if deciding to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating; that disparages customers, associates, or suppliers; or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or County policy.

- b. **Be honest and accurate.** Be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if an error is made, correct it promptly. Be open about any previous posts that have been altered. The Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that are known to be false about Storey County and its associates.
  - c. **Post only appropriate content. Maintain the confidentiality of Storey County,** its associates, businesses, residents, vendors, and people who work on behalf of the County. Confidential information may include trade secrets, technology, processes, contact information, emergency procedures, security, and other such information about private businesses in the County; personnel and medical information of County employees and associates; emergency management and security processes of the County; and other information that could result in the harm of the County or its associates, or breach of security and safety of the County.
  - d. **Respect financial disclosure laws.** Sharing or providing a 'tip' based on confidential or non-public information so that others may buy or sell stocks or securities is strictly prohibited. As a public employer, Storey County employees may encounter sensitive information in the course of their duties regarding private companies doing business with the County, and such information must be handled responsibly.
  - e. **Express only personal opinions.** Employees should never represent themselves as spokespersons for Storey County or its affiliates. Be open about County employee status and make it clear that the views presented on personal social media sites do not represent those of Storey County or its affiliates.
7. Employee use of social media at work:
- a. Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment and/or network provided by the County, unless it is work-related as authorized by Department Heads, Human Resources Director, and/or the County Manager.
  - b. Do not use Storey County email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

8. Retaliation is prohibited. Storey County prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**IV. COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA:**

Refer to Policy Media Relations/External Communications for any communication with the media.

**V. RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:**

The Public Relations Officer will review this policy every 5 years or more frequently if necessary.

*\*Previously numbered as policy #17*