

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**DATE ISSUED: DECEMBER 18, 2012**  
**ISSUED BY: BRENDA GUNN, CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

## **PURPOSE**

Social Media can be a powerful and efficient way to communicate a message to a large audience in a short amount of time, and to highlight the work and mission of various City departments. The purpose of this policy is to set out expectations and best practices for using social media tools and methods at the City's disposal and capitalize on the benefits of Social Media while minimizing the risks to the City.

## **GOAL**

To establish official City Social Media channels that will be used for limited purposes of facilitating dissemination by the City of information, including the promotion of events, programs and services such as park use and recreation programs, conveying information such as emergencies, street closures, and public meetings, and obtaining feedback regarding particular topics as determined from time to time by the content periodically posted by the City.

## **DEFINITIONS**

"Social media" refers to media designed to disseminate content (information, images, audio, video) through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable Web-publishing techniques.

"Social media tools" are programs, typically Internet-based, commonly used for social media and include, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Google Plus, Skype and MySpace.

"Web Team" refers to the group of City employees who serve to ensure the City's online presence, including social media, is professional, up-to-date and technologically current; to establish consistency throughout the City's Web site and social media accounts and to ensure staff redundancies across the organization.

"Work time" refers to the period of time during any day of the week when a City employee is performing official duties and is being paid to do so.

"Non-work time" refers to the other times during the week when a City employee is not performing their official duties and is not being paid.

## **PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is essential for employees of the City of La Vista to recognize that the proper functioning of any government organization relies upon the public's confidence and trust in the individual employees and the organization to carry out its functions. Therefore, any matter which brings individual employees or the City into disrepute has the corresponding effect of reducing public confidence and trust in the City, thus impeding our ability to work with and serve the public. Professionalism is the most significant factor in high level performance which in turn builds the public confidence and trust. While employees have the right to use personal social media accounts and sites, as employees of the City of La Vista, they are public servants who are held to a higher standard than the general public with regard to standards and ethics. As such, the policy of this City is to maintain a level of professionalism in both work and non-work times that fulfills the mission of the City. Any publication, through any medium which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale or efficiency of this agency will be deemed a violation of this policy.

The City will maintain and promote a consistent image online through a limited number of social media opportunities. The City will maintain and promote a small number of accounts for each social media site, as deemed appropriate by the Web Team (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). These accounts will be the exclusive way to convey official city-related information in a social media context. Only the Web Team and personnel appointed by their department head will be authorized to post information to official city

social media sites. At the effective date of this policy, personnel authorized for social media use will determine the best methods of posting content (from a computer, mobile device, etc.)

This policy is meant to be general to the entire City organization. Departments with specific social media requirements for their personnel shall develop their own operational procedures, subject to the approval of the City Administrator.

### **Establishing a Social Media Presence**

Use of social media will support the objectives of the City and present the City in a positive, professional manner. The Web Team is responsible for overall management of the City's social media presence.

The best, most appropriate City uses of social medial tools generally fall into two categories:

1. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (i.e. emergency information).
2. As marketing/promotional channels, which increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

Members of the Web Team will monitor content on all City of La Vista social media tools.

At the effective date of this policy, the Administration, with the Web Team, will determine which existing social media accounts will be allowed to continue and which will be discontinued.

City personnel authorized to post and edit information on official social media accounts communicate on behalf of all City personnel, appointed officials and the Mayor and City Council, therefore they have the duty to represent the City professionally and positively. Failure to do so could result in revocation of social media authorization and/or other disciplinary action, up to and including termination. When possible, authorized City personnel will also be members of the Web Team.

When the City has multiple accounts on one channel, all accounts will follow a template-based appearance as determined by the Web Team.

Whenever possible, City information posted to a Social Media account must follow a content schedule developed by the Web Team. The goal of this schedule will be to have a post at least every other day per Social Media Tool. All departments and events will be included on this schedule, which will be designed to be a fluid document. Deviations from the schedule are expected, especially in emergencies. If regularly scheduled content is preempted, it will be posted as soon as possible.

Departments will use proper grammar and standard AP style, avoiding jargon and abbreviations.

### **LIMITED PURPOSE FORUM**

The City, in the interests of public health, safety and welfare and promoting good government, is establishing a social media presence for the limited City purposes of facilitating dissemination by the City of information and obtaining feedback regarding particular topics as determined from time to time by the content periodically posted by the City. Sites generally are available and might be used by persons of all ages. For these reasons, content posted to City social media sites shall be limited accordingly. Any content that is unrelated to the purposes stated in this paragraph shall be subject to removal. Prior to removal, the person removing such content will take a screen shot of the content to be removed and send the screen shot to all City administrators for that social media tool.

Not in limitation of the preceding paragraph, following are examples of content that shall be deemed irrelevant to the limited purposes of City social media as described in the immediately preceding paragraph. Any such content shall be prohibited on City social media and any posting containing such content shall be subject to removal:

- Nudity, pornography or adult content;
- Hate speech;
- Content referring to establishments where the distribution or sale of alcoholic beverages is a primary business or function, unless the particular content is directly relevant in response to a topic raised by the City in a posting approved by the Web Team and City Administrator;
- Tobacco or alcohol products or consumption, unless the particular content is directly relevant in response to a topic raised by the City in a posting approved by the Web Team and City Administrator;
- Illegal drugs or controlled substances or any related products, services or devices;
- Firearms or other weapons, unless the particular content is directly relevant in response to a topic raised by the City in a posting approved by the Web Team and City Administrator;
- Any illegal activity;
- Constituting, proposing or promoting violence or threats; or harassment that is not both (i) protected speech and (ii) directly relevant in response to a topic raised by the City in a posting;
- Attacks or discrimination against any protected person or class;
- Sexual, obscene, vulgar, or foul content;
- Content containing sexual overtone or innuendo;
- Content related to products or services with sexual overtones including, but not limited to, escort services or establishments featuring for show or sale X-rated or pornographic movies, materials or performances;
- Solicitations, sponsorships or advertisements;
- Content that is physically, emotionally or otherwise harmful to children;
- Depicting, promoting or proposing cruelty to animals
- Online casino gaming, gambling or betting;
- Information affiliated with, related to, promoting or opposing political campaigns, philosophies or ballot questions;
- Programs or events not officially sponsored by the City of La Vista;
- Solicitations for donations, except for officially City-sponsored activities;
- Any commercial marketing or advertising, or endorsement of specific, commercial brand name products or services for advertising or marketing purposes;
- Infringement of intellectual property rights;
- Any unprotected speech;
- Information about City programs, events, employees or officials that the Web Team determines is false or misleading, except to the extent it is (i) protected speech and (ii) directly relevant in response to a topic raised by the City in a posting; or
- Any content that is subject to removal according to terms and conditions of any social media site, account, page, platform or other medium used by the City.

### Employee Use

Use of social media during work hours by City personnel will conform to the standards set forth in the Computer Use Standard Operating Policy found in the Employee Handbook. It is the responsibility of the Information Technology Committee to administer security and monitoring measures that support this policy.

Employees of the City of La Vista who utilize social media sites in their non-work time shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and appropriate conduct so as not to broadcast in a manner which would have a detrimental effect to the image or operation this City.

Employee references on personal social media accounts that indicate they are employed by the City may include casual references. For example, photos at City events, receiving awards and photos with family members while in uniform. These references will not include:

- Logos, patches, badges or other identifying symbol of the City.

- Accounts of non-public events, which occur within the City's organization, such as personnel issues.

Employees shall not use a social media site to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature, promote violence or weaponry or which would be detrimental to the mission and function of the City.

Employees of the City of La Vista are prohibited from using their title as well as any reference to the City in any correspondence to include e-mails and posts on social media sites unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of the City. This includes signature lines in personal e-mail accounts. An employee may seek City approval for such use.

City personnel are expected to be positive representatives of the City. Knowingly posting inaccurate or confidential information about the City, its policies, contractors or fellow employees is prohibited. Personnel whose online actions violate this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

City personnel who become aware of incorrect, inflammatory or potentially damaging information about the City that is posted to a publicly accessible social media Web site will notify their department head and/or a member of the Web Team as soon as possible.

City personnel should use good common sense when establishing Social Media connections with co-workers, department heads and City elected officials.

If personnel with administrative access to any official City Social Media channel leaves the organization, that access will be cancelled on the effective date of their termination.

If an employee's duties require them to update social media sites during work time and away from their desk, they are expected to abide by the requirements set forth in the following documents: Safety Manual, Traffic Safety Plan and the Cell Phone Usage Agreement while Driving City Vehicles and While Conducting City Business.

All employees shall be briefed by their respective department head upon employment of this SOP and it shall be the responsibility of each department head to insure that subordinate employees are familiar at all times with the content of this Standard Operating Policy.