

ANNE KLEIN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Winning Community Support Through Education

One in a Series of Award-Winning Solutions

The Challenge:

Gain community support in two counties for New Jersey-American Water Company's construction of its new pipeline and booster stations as necessary for public welfare.

Results:

- The pipeline project was completed in both counties with the support of local communities and officials, and with no major issues or problems reported.
- More than 75 residents and business owners attended open houses to learn the facts.
- Exit surveys revealed that attendees felt their questions and concerns had been addressed, which led to the re-establishment of a positive relationship.
- The media focused on the need for the project and provided accurate information on project logistics.
- The program received a Pepperpot award from the Philadelphia chapter of PRSA for Special PR Programs; a Jersey Shore PR & Advertising Association JASPER award for PR Campaigns; and Honorable Mention in Community Relations from the N.J. chapter of PRSA.

Background:

NJAW needed to install a new water pipeline and two new booster stations in Morris and Somerset counties in New Jersey. The \$6 million project was necessary to provide the area with a reliable source of clean drinking water. Community hostility existed toward the company because of misperceived "facts" Residents feared traffic and other problems the project could cause. The company had faced some tough public meetings resulting in poor media coverage.

The Campaign:

Even with a short amount of time to act, Anne Klein Communications Group knew it was essential to conduct in-depth research to determine the nature and extent of the real issues. AKCG teams drove the proposed construction route identifying potential traffic and environmental problems that could inconvenience residents and businesses. AKCG interviewed local government officials and police, reviewed previous construction projects in the area and spoke with NJAW meter readers in order to gain insights into the customer base.

Based on the research, AKCG developed a proactive communications program. Target audiences, including local media, received personal letters inviting them to attend one of two open houses. NJAW representatives and police officers attended to answer questions, and provide maps and descriptions of the project. Attendees completed an exit survey and received "request for information" forms with the promise of a timely response by NJAW. AKCG developed a kit for the media and local officials detailing the construction and providing contacts for questions or problems.

To learn more about how Anne Klein Communications Group can help gain community support for your special project, please call and ask for Anne Klein or Chris Lukach.