



Fuel Station Grand Opening Guide

Background

- Oregonians are attracted to the idea of local ownership but are largely unaware and have trouble distinguishing locally owned stations from “big oil”
- Highlighting investments made by local owners is important and reassuring to consumers— they often want to feel good about their purchasing decisions
- Consumers greatly appreciate fuel station owners who make investments in their stations— especially when upgrading or renovating dilapidated or abandoned locations
- It’s important that station owners recognize that, in small markets and with suburban news publications, this is news

Objective

- Provide OFA members with a toolkit to help fuel station owners draw attention to grand openings and remodels/upgrades/rehabilitations— and highlight local ownership

Strategies

- Plan— develop a timeline to execute plan
- Lists— research and build list of local media
- Announcements— create pitch and news release
- Events— this could be a ribbon cutting with the local chamber or any promos/giveaways
- Tours with media— showcase new technology, upgrades, leak detection, innovations and investments
- Social media— share photos and news
- Display OFA locally owned signage

Execution

It is important to set a date for your grand opening and then plan backwards. The outline below provides you a sample of what the workback plan might look like.

Task	Due Date
Decide on a grand opening approach based on the fuel station market (i.e. social media, media advisory, press release)	T-2 weeks

Determine fuel station highlights (i.e. new technology, upgrades, leak detection, innovations and investments, etc.)	T-2 week
Draft social media post, media advisory, or press release	T-1 weeks
Create pitch for media outreach	T-1 week
Create media list based on fuel station market	T-5 days
Finalize materials (i.e. pitch, media list, press release)	T-4 days
Pitch media	T-2 days
Field media inquiries and coordinate interviews/tours	ongoing
Display OFA signage throughout so media are aware of the local ownership	ongoing
Monitor for coverage and share stories with the OFA team for website and social media promotion	ongoing

Process

1. Based on the media market of the fuel station (i.e. Corvallis, Albany, Lincoln City, Madras, etc.), determine if a social media or media relations-based approach is best. Some items to consider when determining approach:
 - a. Is there a local newspaper or media outlet?
 - b. Is the fuel station in a highly trafficked area (i.e. off a highway)?
 - c. Are there any unique or exciting changes (i.e. coffee station, new technology)?
 - d. Is this a brand-new fuel station or a remodel to a dilapidated one?
2. Finalize details for the grand opening
 - a. Is everything on schedule and functioning as expected?
 - b. What’s the time and date of the ceremony?
 - c. Is there a ribbon cutting or any special giveaways?
 - d. Have any legislators, chamber of commerce members or other significant community members been invited to the ceremony?
3. Based on the information determined in steps #1 and #2, create a full press release, media advisory, or social media post focusing on the highlights of grand opening.
 - a. Consider creating a press release if the grand opening takes place in a mid-sized market with a solid media presence. The press release should include details on the grand opening, highlights of the fuel station, and a quote from yourself or the fuel station manager.
 - i. Please note: a quote should convey excitement for the opening and highlight a few of the new features or technology. Quotes should be customized for every grand opening and for every spokesperson.
 - b. A media advisory works well in small to mid-sized markets with a local media presence. Make sure to include the grand opening information, along with the fuel station highlights.
 - c. If the fuel station is on the outskirts of a small town with little to no media presence, then a social media approach may be best. Snap some photos of the new fuel station

along with the highlights so that you and your employees can share via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If the fuel station has its own Facebook page, make sure to share it there as well.

4. Once the approach is finalized, create a “pitch” and media list to invite media to the grand opening
 - a. A pitch is a brief email to a journalist offering a newsworthy story. The aim of a pitch is to create interest in the story and find out if the reporter is willing to use it. Pitches often include a full press release or media advisory, so the pitch itself should be concise and share the most important information within the first few sentences.
 - b. A media list notes all the significant reporters in the market along with their contact details. In smaller towns, there may be only a few reporters and one editor. In this case the editor may be the best to reach out to. Other markets may have multiple reporters. Select the reporter with the most relevant title (i.e. business reporter, retail reporter, general assignment, etc.). If there is a news desk listed, always CC it on initial outreach to reporters.
5. Pitch media at least one day in advance of grand opening, but no more than five days ahead of time
 - a. If you have not heard back from media leading up to the event, it’s worth calling directly one day in advance to make sure they are aware of the grand opening
6. If media is interested in visiting the station for a tour, make sure yourself or a staff member is able to take them around the station. When talking to the media follow these guidelines:
 - a. Keep the conversation concise and positive; stick to talking points that you prepare for yourself in advance
 - b. Let your excitement for the grand opening shine through
 - c. You can guide the reporter around to the most photogenic parts of the fuel station; you have control over the tour of the station, but remember you are never off the record – so be prepared for anything you say to appear in the news story
 - d. If the reporter asks a question you don't know the answer to or don't want to answer, never say 'no comment', instead let them know you don't have the information readily available and will get back to them
7. If media expresses interest, but is unable to attend, provide them with a few photos and details following the opening
8. Once the grand opening is complete, follow up with the reporter, thank them for their time, and ask them when they expect the article to publish
9. Monitor the outlet for coverage

Sample Press Release

(put on your own letterhead)

Contact:

Name

Phone number

Email

[CITY] [NAME] Fuel Station Remodel Focuses on Convenience, Customer Service

Project is part of NAME's investment in providing efficiency for customers



[include image of fuel station]

CITY, Ore. (MONTH DAY, YEAR) – CITY residents will get their first look at the newly remodeled and locally owned NAME Fuel Station at ADDRESS on DATE, as the much-anticipated project is complete.

CITY residents and customers are invited to celebrate the unveiling of the remodel with food and refreshments, giveaways and samples while supplies last.

“We are thrilled about our remodeled fuel station because of the efficiency and time savings it will provide for our customers,” said NAME, Fuel Station Owner. “Having a refreshed convenience store partnered with fueling area updates will only provide our customers with more options at their utmost convenience.”

Customers will enjoy the following improvements (insert examples – items below only meant to inspire ideas):

- Advanced spill mitigation technology
- Environmental or sustainability features
- LED lighting to reduce energy use and improve safety
- Additional coffee options
- Updated restrooms
- Widened fueling area
- Increased parking

- *Robust convenience store*

The improvements to the **NAME** fuel station are part of **NAME's** plan to remodel **NUMBER** fuel stations throughout Oregon this year. In addition to remodels, **NAME** plans to continue to invest in customers by creating a seamless fueling experience that gives them the options to fuel up how and when they want.

About **NAME Fuel Station**

[Include a boilerplate which should briefly describes your fuel station related above. It's a short paragraph consisting of just a few sentences concisely explaining the company]

Sample Media Advisory

Media Invited: Grand Opening of **NAME** Fuel Station



What: **NAME** is excited to celebrate the grand opening of the its newest fuel station. **CITY** residents and customers are invited to attend the unveiling of the fuel station with food and refreshments, giveaways and samples while supplies last. Media are also invited to attend the grand opening at **TIME** on **DATE**.

Highlights of the new fuel station include **(insert examples – items below only meant to inspire ideas)**:

- *Advanced spill mitigation technology*
- *Environmental or sustainability features*
- *LED lighting to reduce energy use and improve safety*
- *Additional coffee options*
- *Updated restrooms*
- *Widened fueling area*
- *Increased parking*
- *Robust convenience store*

Where: **ADDRESS**

When: **DATE** at **TIME**

Media Contact: **Name, Phone Number, Email**

Sample Social Media Post

Remodel completion/grand opening

Include photo of the updated or new fuel station

We're excited to announce the completion of our remodel! This morning we celebrated the grand opening, sharing new features of the remodel with **CITY** residents and customers. Updates include wider fueling area, increased coffee options, and an express convenience store. As always, we are committed to providing our customers with convenience and efficiency!

Sample Pitch

Subject: **NAME** fuel station celebrates its grand opening this **DATE**

Hi **Reporter**,

I'm reaching out to share the news that locally owned **NAME** fuel station is announcing completion of its much-anticipated remodel focused on customer convenience and efficiency. The remodel features several front-end transformations including a widened fueling area, a robust convenience store and new sustainability features.

As part of the celebration this **DATE NAME** fuel station will host a grand opening event for **CITY** residents and customers. The celebration will include food and refreshments, giveaways and samples while supplies.

Please let me know if you'd like to take a tour of the station or interview the station manager about the improvements. I've attached the full **press release**.

Best,
NAME