

How to Create a Unit Recruiting Plan



Maj Barb Buckner, CAP
Recruiting & Retention Manager
CAP National Headquarters
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Citizens Serving Communities

Aerospace
Education



Cadet
Programs



Emergency
Services



The best way to get people interested in CAP is not to just tell them “what” we do, but how they can be a part of it.

Help them “picture” how they would fit in and they will want to learn more. Share your own story with them on why you joined and why you have stayed a part of it. The less it comes across as just a sales pitch, the more attentive they will be to the conversation.

Recruiting doesn’t mean just setting up booths and handing out applications – it is letting people know who you are and that your Unit is active in their community.

The more exposure your Unit takes advantage of with events such as parades and press releases, the easier it will be to get people to want to hear about CAP and attend events such as Open Houses to learn more.

Everyone will have a family member, friend or co-worker that they will think about talking to about CAP after they see your Unit in action.

We all recruit for CAP - whether you intentionally set out to do so or not.

When you wear the uniform, when you post a comment or a picture to Social Media about your involvement in CAP activities, when you just talk to friends/family/co-workers about why you joined and what you are doing...you are recruiting. This is how we have gained the most members in our organization through the years - the "word of mouth" technique.

But in order to be successful at increasing and retaining new members, we need to start doing two things:

- 1) Make sure your Unit has someone assigned as your Recruiting & Retention Officer to focus on the Unit’s efforts.
- 2) Have a “year-round” recruiting plan.



Why You Need To Staff a Unit RRO Full-Time

Why have someone dedicated to Recruiting & Retention?

This is the staff member that plans/conducts/monitors your Unit's recruiting activities (such as Open Houses), talks to the prospective members about joining, monitors your new members during their first 90-days to make sure they are engaged in the program and makes phone calls to those members that haven't been showing up for a couple of weeks.

If you don't have enough staff at the moment, giving your Public Affairs Officer this role as an additional duty would be your best choice since the two roles will be working closely together.

For Commanders who need to fill Staff positions, this is where having a Unit RRO comes into play!

When RROs talk to current and prospective members, they uncover talents/skill sets that the member already has and how they could use them to help your Unit. A mistake that occurs too often: Some members do not want to do the same job in CAP that they do as their day job...and this is where members will lose interest in CAP as time goes on. If the Commander asks them to take on the role, they may feel obligated. If the RRO asks them, you have a better chance of finding someone who both wants and can do the role.

The only way to successfully turn around Recruiting and Retention in your Unit is to make someone, *other than the Unit Commander*, responsible for planning and making it a priority.



Step One: Unit Assessment

Before you can start to develop any sort of "plan," you first need to look at the status of your Unit, what it has to offer and what you want to accomplish.

Why do you need a Recruiting Plan?

A well-planned out initiative will yield higher results for recruiting...and retaining those members...versus just "hosting an Open House." Know why you want to add members to your roster, what type of members you want to target and if you Unit can handle adding new members or needs help from Group or other units.

There is a common theme from the National Exit Surveys as to "why" members leave:

- 1) Experience wasn't what they were told it was going to be
- 2) Lack of activities and training
- 3) Lack of communication
- 4) Not feeling needed or appreciated

By taking the time to do an assessment of the current standing of your Unit and not going right into "recruit" mode, you will put yourself in a better position to retain these members that you will put so much effort into recruiting.

The rest of this booklet is to be used as a workbook so that you can immediately write down any thoughts or ideas to help you better formulate a plan for recruiting year-round in the blue boxes on each page.

So, let's ask our first question:

Who will you include on this planning process and when will you have the first meeting?



Step One: Unit Assessment

Here are some key questions to ask when putting together a recruiting plan specifically for YOUR Unit:

1) Why are you trying to recruit?

You can better focus your recruiting platform when you know who and why you are recruiting. Is it to add members? Is it to help fill staff positions? Is it to expand the Unit to include staff in other areas?...i.e. building ES teams, finding more members to manage Cadet programs, etc.

2) What type of recruiting do you want to focus on?

Are you looking to increase the number of cadets, the number of seniors, or both? Don't recruit just to build a roster! Remember that once you "recruit" the new member, you automatically have to start working on "retention." So if you bring on too many members at once, you may not be able to get them through the training in a timely manner or have enough to get them involved to keep their attention.

3) What are your Unit's "prime" activities?

If you are going to recruit people, you will need to have on-going or frequent activities/training to keep them engaged.

*What regular activities does your Unit have planned for the upcoming year?

*What training does your Unit conduct or needs to conduct for new members?



Step One: Unit Assessment

4) What is your plan for on-boarding the new member?

Yes, you need a plan. Don't just invite them to a meeting, have them fill out an application and then tell them they "need to study to get their Curry" or "need to complete Level I."

Questions to develop an on-boarding plan:

*Who is the member that will be assigned as this new member's "buddy"?

*Do you have an "announcement" process in place to introduce the new member to the rest of your Unit?

*How will you help them get through their first 90 days? Great Start for Cadets and Seniors provides a guided process but you need to integrate that with your Unit's weekly meetings.

*Who is going to track the new members progress to make sure they are getting through everything they need and staying engaged?



Step One: Unit Assessment

5) Is your Unit setup to advertise and publicize itself?

While 50% of all members who have joined CAP did so from word-of-mouth, we live in a world where social media has become a dependent part of our everyday lives. Its not just Cadets that "text" or use Facebook and Twitter – it's the Seniors as well.

A) Does your Unit have a webpage?

You can easily set a simple one up using Google and it won't cost the Unit anything. Be sure to use your Unit name in the web address so it shows up in "searches." Using your Unit charter number won't help you pop up on the first search page.

B) Make sure your "Home" page includes two vital things:

- 1) What your Unit does...not just the standard "what does CAP do." You are trying to attract people to YOUR Unit – include photos from activities to catch their interest.
- 2) List contact information! People today spend less than 30 seconds scanning a page to see whether or not they will look for more information or move on. If they don't have to "click" somewhere else or scan to look for who to contact, they will be more inclined to reach out for more information.

C) Does your Unit have a community Facebook page?

Having a "community" page is the easiest advertising tool your Unit can set up and maintain for ongoing recruiting purposes!

In 2012, it was estimated that Facebook had 1.2 BILLION users world-wide! According to a Nielsen Media Research study from 2011, Facebook is the second most-accessed website in the U.S. (second only to Google). If your Unit has a Facebook page open for the public to view, your "page" will probably show up in the top 5 results thanks to Facebook's rating on Google.

You will want to make sure you post information about your Unit that can easily and quickly be found: Where do you meet? When do you meet? Who can they contact for additional information? What kinds of activities does your Unit do?

Because Facebook allows the option to "share" interesting articles, status updates and photos with their "Facebook friends" which now may draw more interest to your page. Now people who may never of heard of CAP- and never thought to search for it - see what their friends share and may go to check it out for themselves....curiosity will want them learning more - or just trying to find out "what is CAP? and why do they keep posting about it?"



Step Two: Unit Goals – Get Everyone Involved

You have put a team together to discuss what direction you want your Unit to take for this next year. You identified what type of recruiting you want to do, what activities your Unit can speak to and what activities/training your Unit needs to start looking into now in order to be more attractive to new members and keep them active after they join.

Now, it's time to inform your whole Unit of these new plans and new direction so they all understand what the next year is going to entail and how they will fit into the plan.

In October: Have a Unit discussion

Pick a meeting and schedule 30 minutes with all your members (include the Cadets if you have them) and have a camp-fire type of discussion. Let all your Unit's members know about the meeting – especially those that haven't been attending consistently. Let them know the purpose of the meeting is to talk about the status of the Unit and what activities/direction everyone would like to see for the next year.

Remember: The Unit is only as strong as the members that are involved – so we want them to take ownership in its future success.

In November: You put your plan together:

- a. Work with the Command Staff to put together a preliminary schedule for the next calendar year. This isn't a meeting-by-meeting calendar – but more of an overview of what Unit training schedule could be set up, when will the window for o-rides be open, when will there be Wing/Region/National activities that they could participate in...things that will help your members start to look forward to and start planning their next year with the Unit.
- b. Work with your PAO to gather photos and news releases from activities that your Unit has already participated in this past year. These highlights will be used to show (and remind) your members what benefits they have had for being part of your Unit.
- c. Take both sets of information and create a PowerPoint presentation to present to the whole Unit.

In December: Announce the plan to the Unit

Before everyone starts to take time off for the holidays, and host a "Year in Review" party with the theme = "Where we are now and where we are headed next year."

Invite all your members, and their family and friends, and share with them that PowerPoint that shows what the Unit has already done this year. Then, have the Commander take over the second half of the PowerPoint to talk about what ideas/activities the Unit has discussed and will focus on in the new year.



Step Two: Unit Goals – Get Everyone Involved

This is all about Unit Pride!

The reason why you include family and friends is to not only show them what their member has been doing but to help understand that while CAP training and activities may take them away for periods of time, the end result of their participation is worthwhile.

What does your Unit get out of this?

- 1) Opens communication between leadership and the members.
- 2) The Unit puts together a game plan for the next year that they can now build upon.
- 3) The Unit will have more training and activities to help attract, and keep, new members when recruiting.
- 4) A renewed sense of accomplishment and pride will be instilled in your current members – reminding them why they want to stay in CAP.



Step Three: Creating a Month-to-Month Plan

Where to start?!?

*“Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.”
- John F. Kennedy*

Up until now, most Units have simply hosted an Open House once a year and participated in a couple of parades or community events in the hopes that they will gain members. But recruiting, like any activity, needs to be thought-out and planned in order to truly bring in the members you are expecting.

We have compiled a list of suggested activities for each Unit to consider for every month of the year. As something catches your eye, write it down. If another idea pops into your head, write that down. At the end of the 12 months of suggestions, you will be compiling those thoughts and ideas into a preliminary schedule of activities for the entire year. You will then build upon the baseline by focusing on the needed contacts, details and exact dates to make them happen.

Most organizations and community events (such as Air Shows and EAA Fly-Ins) are posted well in advance so do some research on their websites for dates and how to apply to secure a booth space. The bigger the event, the earlier they plan, so it's best to reach out to those events and organizations as soon as you decide you want to participate.

Look at Community Calendars, local school events, parades and places where your Unit can hold recruiting events. Start making contacts now before you get too busy and forget or the events fill up.

Get everything together into a calendar, start pulling materials/pictures/personnel for the events, and notify your PAO so he/she can help advertise as the event dates get closer.



January

Send out a Press Release to local media outlets (see example)

Work with your PAO to get the word out to your community about your Unit. Be sure to always include meeting and contact information.

Create an internal contest for your Unit

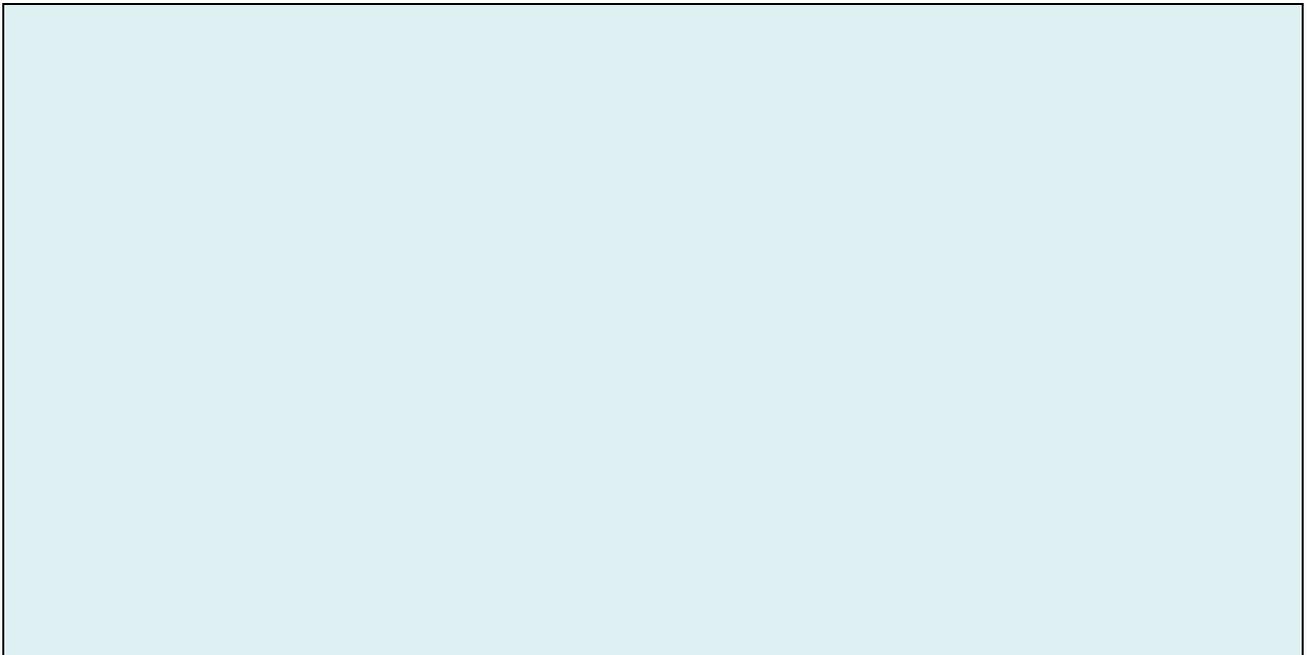
Everyone likes a contest and when you give your members a reason to actively recruit, they will make it a personal goal.

For Cadets: To receive the Recruiter ribbon, require that they not only have to bring a new cadet into the Unit, but they must also help the new cadet successfully achieve their Curry before their receive credit for the new recruit.

For Seniors: The Recruiter Ribbon is less of an incentive for the adult members so you can create a little competition with a monthly rank posting of who has recruited the most people that month. Post the totals on your Unit's Facebook page, in a newsletter or just in a simple email to members of the Unit.

Register your Unit for Wreaths Across America

While primarily thought of as a fundraising tool, having your Unit actively involved in Wreaths Across America can also help you recruit new members. Contact local businesses, VFW halls and American Legions - let them know about CAP and this wonderful event. Register at: www.wreathscrossamerica.org





January – Sample General Press Release

Air Force

Print News **Today**

Air Force news from around the world

Civil Air Patrol recruiting new members

Commentary by Capt. Gail Harper
Edwards AFB Composite Squadron 84

8/19/2014 - EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. - Today, Civil Air Patrol is over 72 years old, growing stronger each and every day. This is due to enthusiastic individuals willing to carry on the mission's core values: integrity, volunteerism, excellence and respect.

The CAP owes gratitude to the 1930s' legendary New Jersey aviation advocate, Gill Robb Wilson, who visualized general aviation as a potential supplement for United States Military operations. With the help of New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, the Civil Air Patrol was formed Dec. 1, 1941, just six days before the United States entered World War II.

Today, CAP is an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and is currently known for its three main missions: aerospace education, cadet programs and emergency services.

During WW II, CAP flew 24 million miles and found 172 submarines, attacking 57, hitting 10 and sinking two. By the end of the war, 64 CAP members were killed in the line of duty. After the war, the nation thanked and recognized CAP's value to its local and national agencies.

President Harry Truman signed Public Law 476, July 1, 1946, enabling the Civil Air Patrol as a charitable, nonprofit organization. On May 26, 1948, Congress passed Law 557 permanently establishing Civil Air Patrol as an auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

Today, Civil Air Patrol has a national count of more than 34,000 volunteer adults, senior members mentoring cadets and young adults.

The organization has broadened the horizons of many young students and adults through its cadet programs, which include aerospace education, leadership, character development and physical fitness. The organization provides unlimited opportunities and experiences for interested new members and its legacy paves the way for successful years in the future.

Presently, Edwards AFB CAP Composite Squadron 84 of the California Wing has an advantage over other CAP squadrons in the area because of its unique historical, aerospace education and experiences. The Edwards AFB flightline offers a lifetime of aeronautical testing and training. Our squadron has had the privilege to fly aboard the C-17 cargo aircraft and the KC-135 refueling tanker, as well as observing a midair refueling mission with the B-2 Stealth Bomber. Flightline tours, including NASA and Global Hawk are other opportunities on Edwards, which have been appreciated by current members.

Individuals interested in joining the Civil Air Patrol may attend a Squadron 84 weekly meeting, which are held Tuesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. We are located at 1518 Forbes Ave., bldg. 1850.

For more information, contact Maj. Brian Bauer, CAP squadron commander at (505) 980-1496; or email bauerb.cap@gmail.com.



Leaders of Civil Air Patrol Squadron 84 perform routine uniform checks during a weekly meeting on Edwards Air Force Base. Individuals interested in joining the Civil Air Patrol may attend a Squadron 84 weekly meeting, which are held Tuesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 1518 Forbes Ave., bldg. 1850. (U.S. Air Force photo by Rebecca Amber)



February

Start a new trend in your community: "The History of Civil Air Patrol" month!

If you have members from the community that have been a part of CAP for years, find old pictures of when they joined, interview them asking them why they joined and why they are still a part of CAP and share that with your community. People relate much better when its someone they know (or a prominent member from their community) and shows how involvement in CAP is a worth-while thing to do.

Pick a date and starting planning an Open House for March

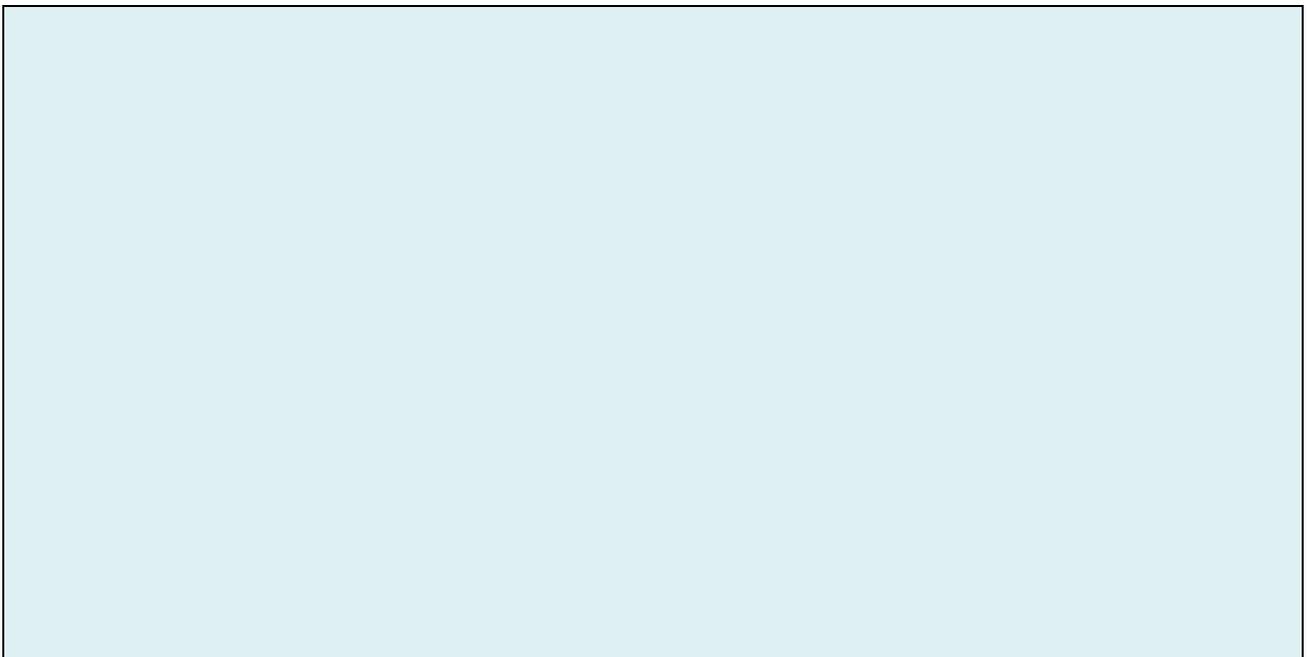
As with any training or activity, you will want to plan out the day far enough ahead of time so that you have enough volunteers and demonstrations/activities for your guests to participate in. Units that provide interactive activities have found they have more people who want to join following the Open House. (see "How to Plan an Open House")

Contact local radio stations for free air time

Work with your Public Affairs Officer to contact local radio stations and inquire about whether they offer non-profits free commercial time. Use it to advertise about your Open House scheduled for March.

Book your Color Guard

If you have a Cadet Color Guard, start reaching out to professional sports teams and local high schools about offering your Unit's Color Guard for their games. Start looking into upcoming community parades as well. The sooner you reach out for application information, the better chance you have of being selected for this year.





March

Unit Open House #1

Historically, March brings in CAP's second largest number of Seniors and Cadets.

This is an ideal time of the year if you are looking to recruit new cadets. They are still in school and parents will be looking for something for them to participate in over the summer, especially if they don't plan on taking a family vacation. This gives you enough time to get them recruited by April and through their Curry Award before the summer hits – getting them "into the groove" with meetings and activities so that they will stay engaged over the summer and want to stay active once the new school year starts.

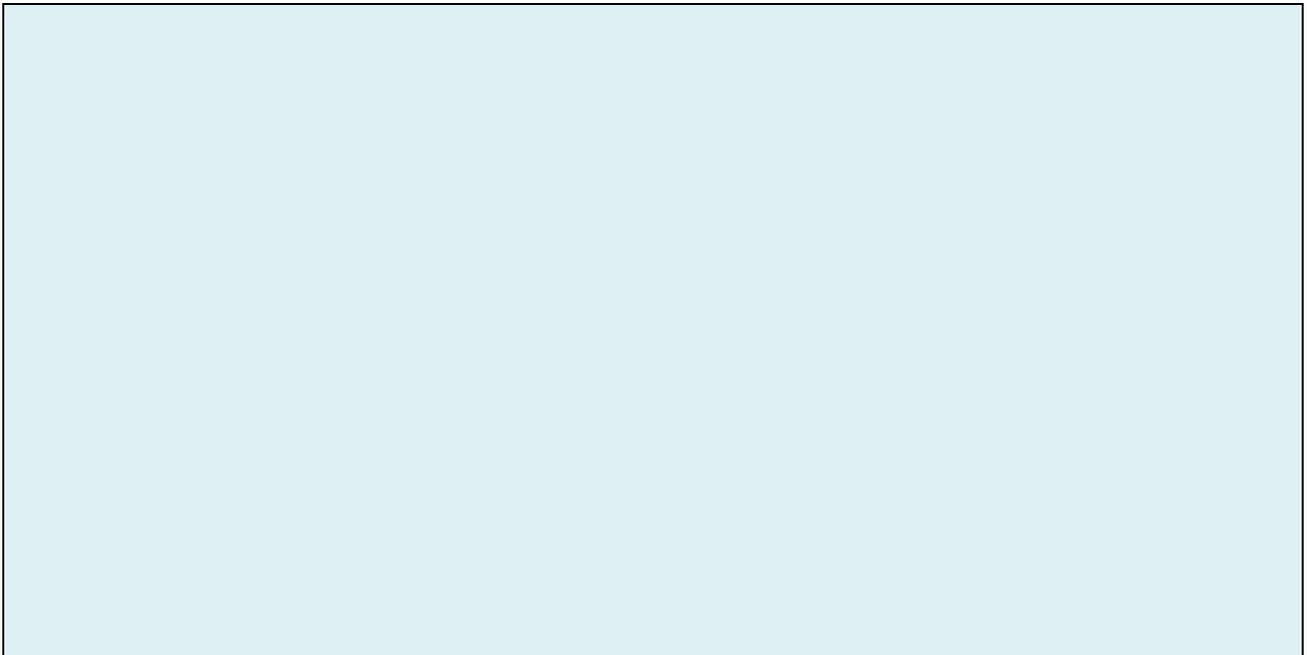
Start scheduling Orientation Rides

The Spring months are the prime time to get our Cadets up flying. It grabs their interest so that they start looking for more activities to get involved in over the summer. Try to arrange a full day of flying (include some Emergency Services training in between flights) and invite friends/family to come watch and join in on the ES training...it may generate their interest in CAP.

EAA Fly-ins

While these events occur throughout the year, reach out to your local EAA chapters about assisting with their fly-ins at local airports. Cadets can help with parking and aircraft marshalling. Seniors can assist with aviation education or classes for the youth in attendance, while also talking with other pilots about joining CAP.

EAA Calendar of Events: <https://www.eaa.org/en/ea/events>





April

Continue scheduling Orientation Rides

April signals the start of "glider" season. If your Wing doesn't have a glider, CAP does have an agreement with Soaring Society of America. As with powered orientation rides, may it into a full day activity with some emergency services training in between flights and invite family/friends. And don't forget to have your PAO send out a press release!

CAP Glider program:

http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/CAP_Glider_Program_Procedures_B73BAD6A4C1AB.pdf

Soaring Society of America: <http://www.ssa.org/WhereToFly>

Host CPR/First Aid Training

There are always people looking to get CPR/First Aid certified, especially high school kids that may start looking for summer jobs with their local Park Districts. Contact the American Red Cross to locate an Instructor in your area and then advertise for the public to also attend. Members should be in uniform and have a couple of displays available for people to "browse."

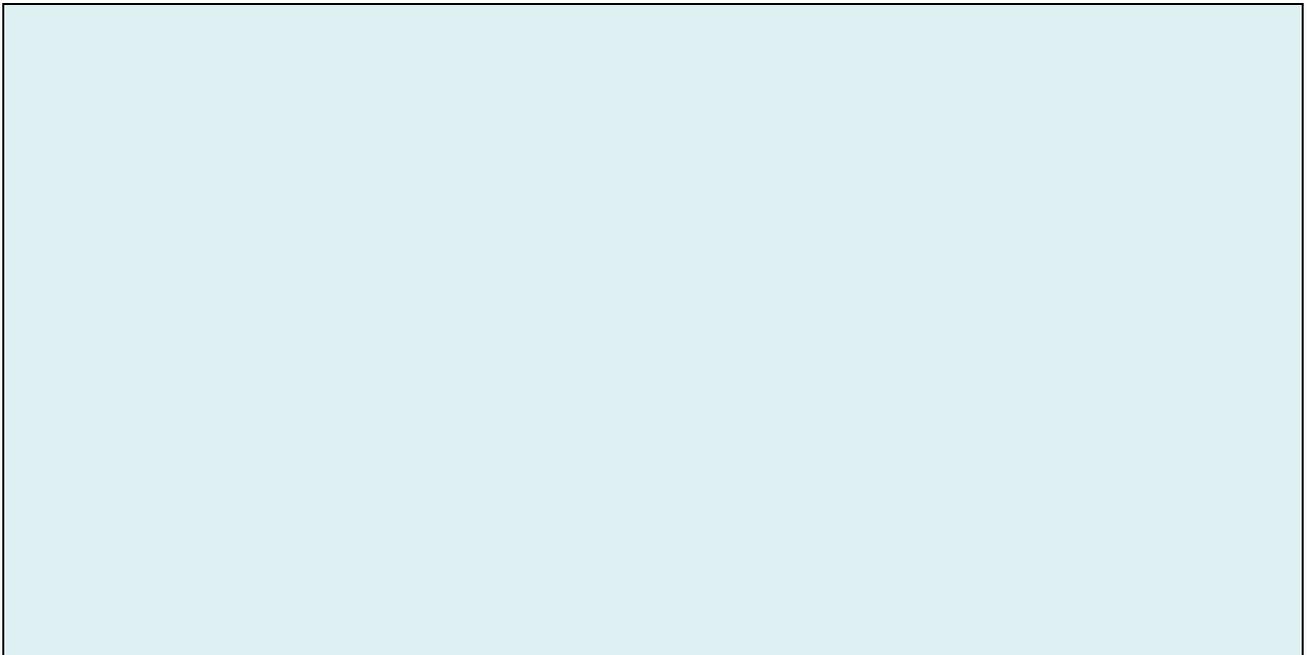
American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class>

Need to add pilots - Host a FAA WINGS Safety Class

One way to attract attention from pilots is to host a FAA Wings Safety class. As with the CPR/First Aid class, advertise at local flight schools and airports and have CAP information on display that day. Contact the FAA at: faasafety@faa.gov
http://www.faasafety.gov/WINGS/pub/learn_more.aspx

Wreaths Across America Memorial Day Cards

Each year, WAA prints thank you cards for people to give to Veterans. You can order a supply for your Unit to give to Veterans during Memorial Day events from their website. Cards are free and your Unit will have to pay for shipping and handling only.





May

Parades and Memorial Day Ceremonies

Participating in parades is a great way to get exposure. Many Senior Living Centers will also hold special Memorial Day events for its Veteran-residents and would be happy to have CAP provide a Color Guard. Don't discount them. Our veterans come in all ages now. Our older veterans will have family that may be interested in CAP and the younger ones may look to CAP as a way for them to still serve without being on active duty.

Wreaths Across America Campaign Push #1

Use Memorial Day as the first big push for the WAA fundraiser. VFW and American Legions especially should be contacted with information about CAP and an invitation to a meeting. Many have not heard of CAP but are more than happy to support us because of our Cadet Program, donating potentially up to \$2,000/yr.

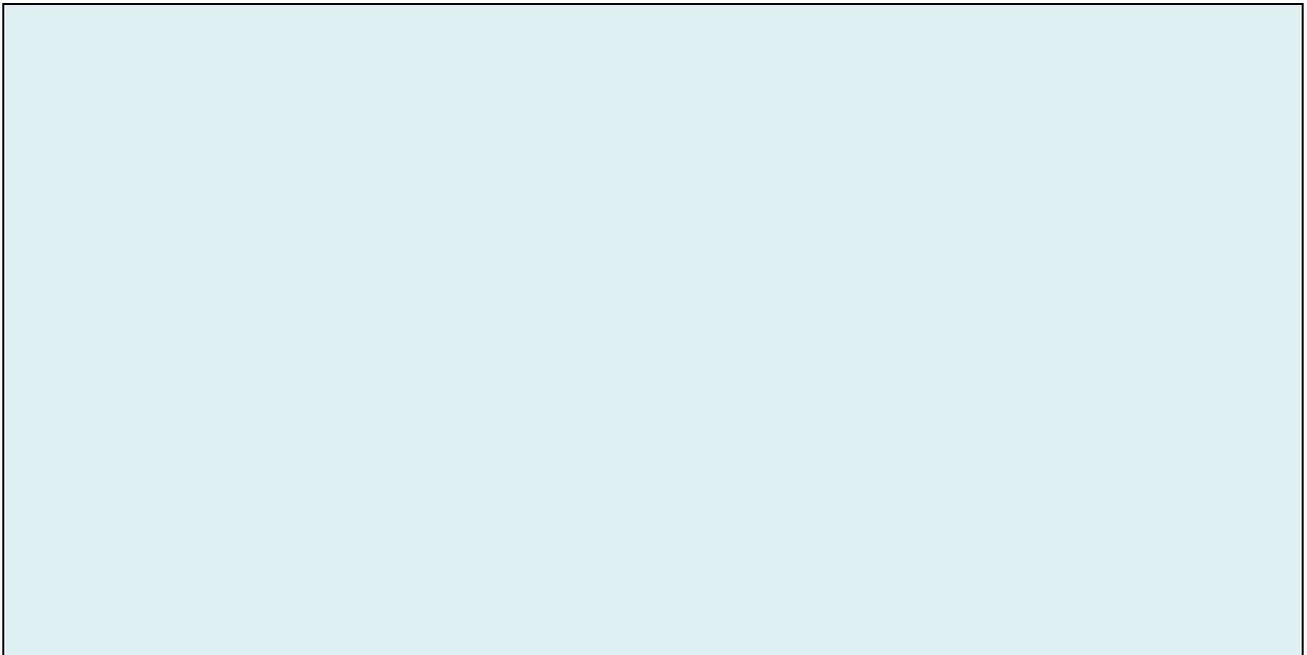
Members should reach out to community organizations, set up booths at malls, and bring donation letters to their employers. Always include an invitation to a meeting and provide contact information to learn more about CAP.

Reach out to local AFROTC and AFJROTC Units about Orientation Rides

While our agreement states that their units are supposed to request our assistance with flying, reach out to the units in your area to let them know you are available! They have until Sept 15th to submit requests to their Chain of Command for the next school year, so visiting or speaking with the local detachments now allows them time to make the request.

To locate AFROTC Units: <http://www.afrotc.com/locator>

To locate AFJROTC Units: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/holmcenter/AFJROTC/AFJROTCunits.asp>





June

Wreaths Across America Campaign Push #2

Flag Day: Setup a display about Wreaths Across America and give out small American flags. Add a simple sticker or business card to a flag with your Unit's information for them to learn more. Some locations, such as Wal-Mart, require organizations that setup tables in front of their stores to give out something as part of their fundraising efforts – the small flag will cover that requirement.

Contact your local Homeschooling Chapter

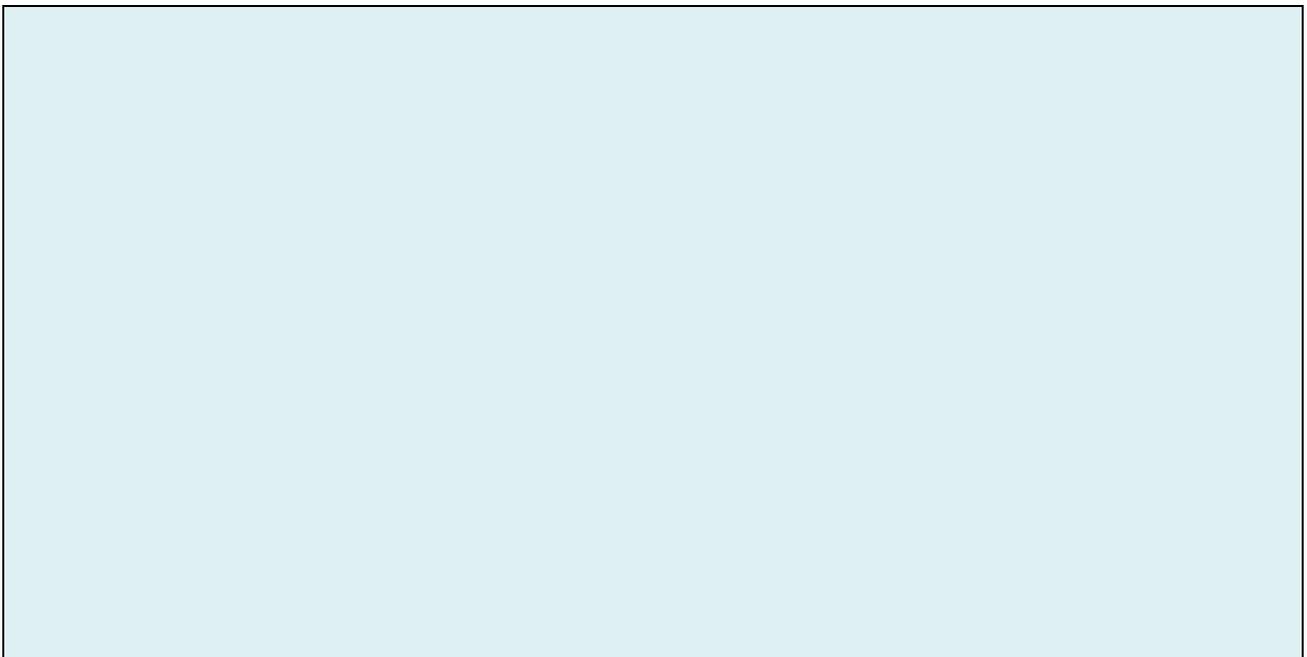
Homeschooling is becoming more and more popular. CAP can complement the homeschooling experience through our aerospace education, STEM, CyberPatriot and physical fitness requirements. Their national association also provides different "expos" throughout the year – contact the organizers to see if CAP can set up a booth.

HomeschoolWorld (local chapters): <http://www.home-school.com/groups/>

Homeschool Legal Defense (expos): <http://www.hslda.org/about/calendar/default.asp>

Need to add Airborne Photographers – Contact local photography clubs

You can find a lot of these clubs on Facebook. Reach out to them about CAP's Airborne Photography and invite them to a special meeting focused on that to learn more. Display the equipment we use, show examples of past photos taken, and talk about how they can be a part of it.





July

This is probably the hardest month for Units to keep their members engaged between family vacations and various summer Cadet activities. And because of the weather, most members may not want to sit in meetings every week – so make July your “get out and do CAP” month.

Fourth of July Parades

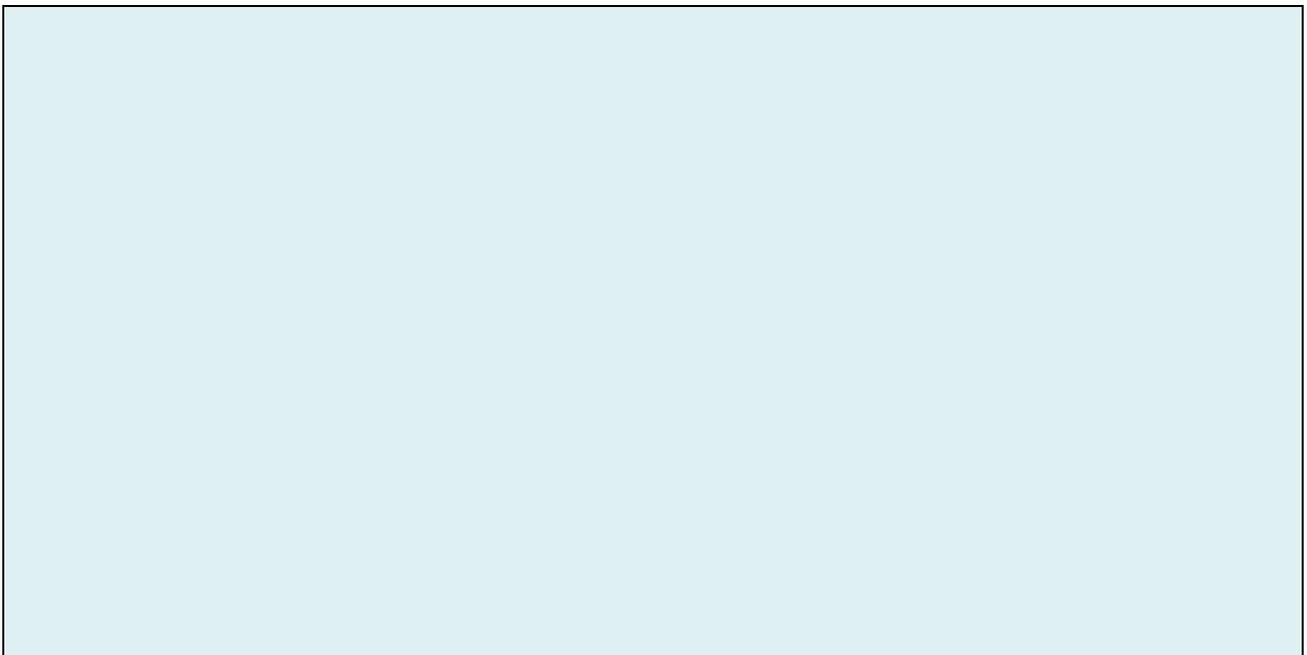
Get involved in your community’s parades. This isn’t just for cadets to participate in. Want to draw interest to your group? Have the cadets march in their Blues but include Seniors in BDUs and flight suits. It will stir curiosity and prompt questions. Make sure you have recruiting brochures or business cards with meeting location and time ready to hand out. This is also a prime opportunity for face time with your local elected officials. Introduce yourself and ask for a meeting with them or invite them to come to a Unit meeting.

Host a Geotagging Course...add some ELT training

Hands-on experience is the best way to get people interested in joining CAP. Some communities have local “Geotagging” clubs. Host the event as part of your Unit’s ES training and invite the community to take part. Then, add “how to use an ELT” at the end of the event. You will draw them out with the geotagging and possibly peak their interest by introducing them about how and why we use ELTs.

Host a Model Rocketry Day

There are also many model rocketry clubs that put on “launch” days. Reach out to these clubs and invite them to come participate in your Unit’s Model Rocketry Day. Make it a hands-on, interactive event for all participants.





August

Back-to-School time!

- * Put up a CAP poster in your school if you are allowed.
- * Recruit your classmates and/or teachers to join.
- * Submit an article to your school newspaper about an upcoming activity.
- * Talk to the head of the school's Parent Club and ask to give a quick 15 minute presentation about how CAP can help complement their child's education

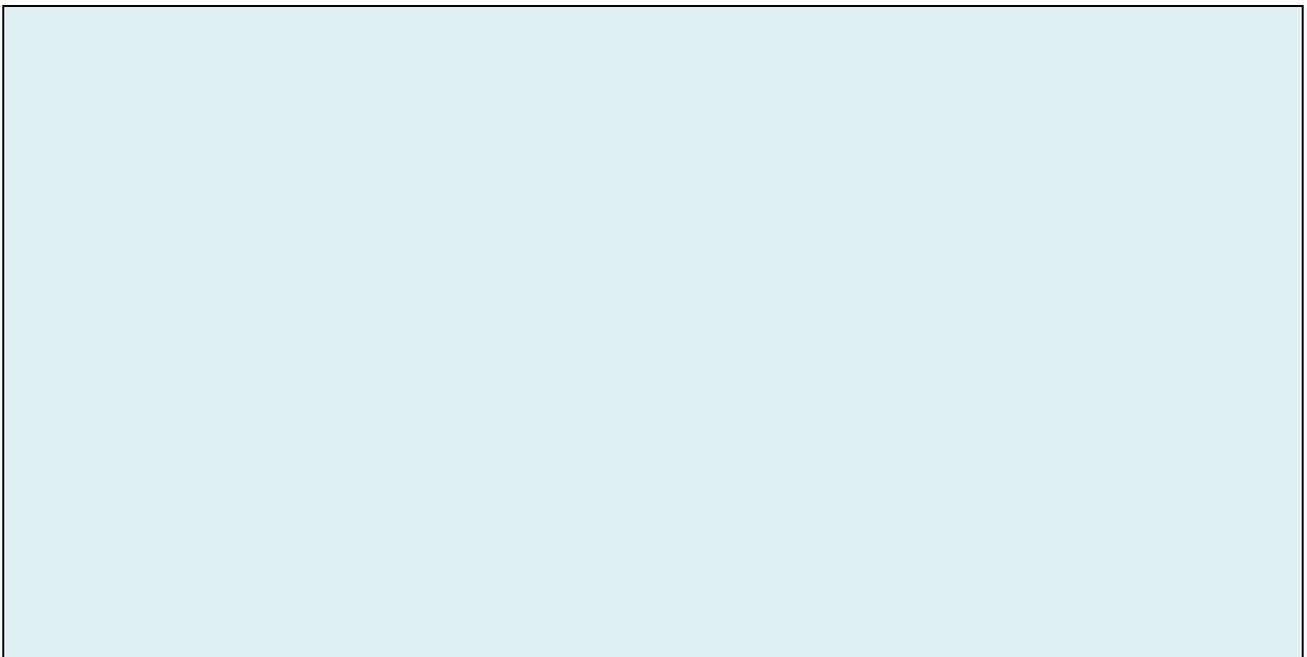
August 19th is National Aviation Day

In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt designated aviation pioneer Orville Wright's birthday as a day to celebrate the science of aeronautics.

Put out a press release about our Aerospace Education program and how CAP continues to promote and educate aviation in the community. Talk about the activities and training that your Unit participates in and include contact information for people to learn more.

Begin planning Open House #2 for September

As with Open House #1, plan out the day to provide interactive activities for your guests and displays (including photos of Unit members participating) of the training/activities the Unit has been participating in during the year.





September

Host Open House #2

Talk to the teachers

Encourage them to join as Aerospace Education members by introducing them to our Teacher Orientation Program (TOP flights – formerly called Fly-A-Teacher). The cost is a **one-time** fee of \$35 and is automatically renewed each year for free so long as the teacher continues to utilize the CAP AE products we provide for their students. They can use our ACE materials for grades K-6 so that when their students turn 12, they may want to join CAP themselves to do more.

Join local 5k races

Get a team together from your Unit and run in "uniform"...BDU pants, black t-shirt (or design a shirt that says "Civil Air Patrol" or your Unit's name/logo", safety vest and gym shoes. Run in formation so that people will wonder "who is that group?" One person remains behind in full uniform as your "recruiting contact" to talk to those that are curious. Your Unit has a fun experience and the community gets to see you out in public.

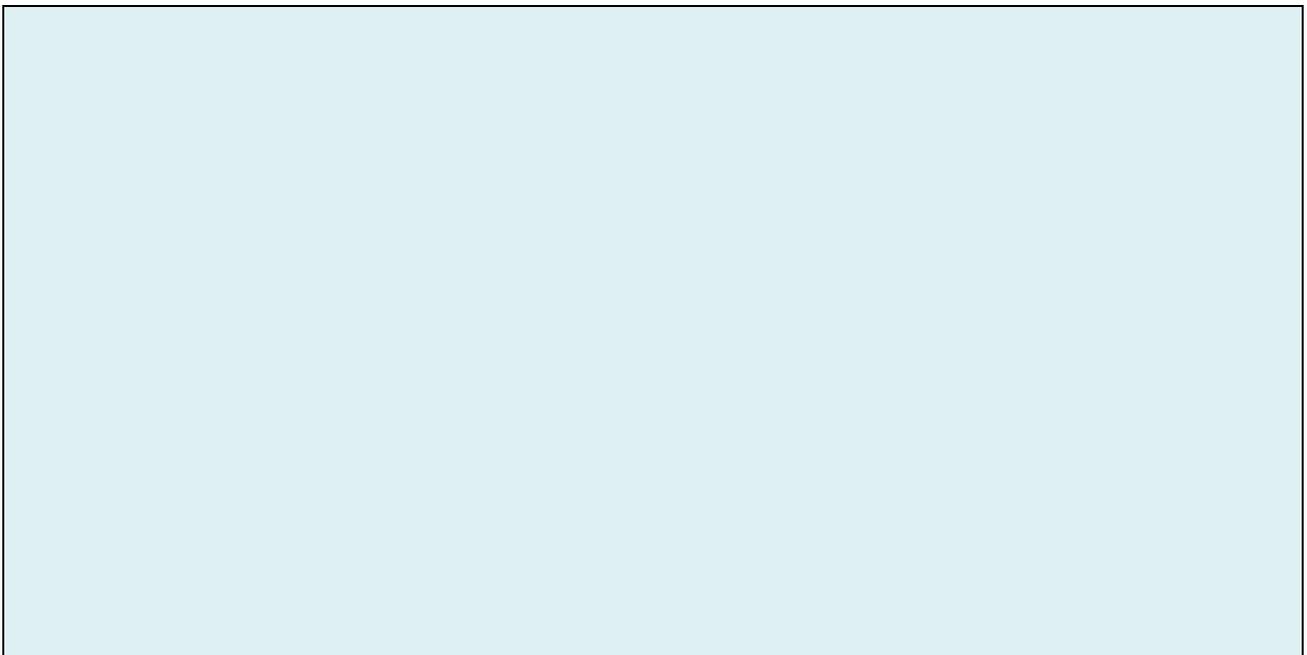
Reach out to your local FEMA office about their "Community Emergency Response Teams"

Invite them to come visit one of your training events. Many members will train in the same manner as CAP but not continue with exercises and training like we do. If they really enjoy being a part of the CERT term with FEMA, they may be just as interested in our ES teams.

CERT Teams: <http://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams>

Looking to find more PAOs? – check out local colleges for "Student PRSA Clubs"

Typically, these groups are Public Relations majors and minors. CAP offers them the opportunity to reach real-life experience while improving their skills and they will be reaching the education and training to make press contacts, conduct interviews and write professional press releases.





October

Hold a Parent's Night at the Squadron

This allows the parents to get to know each other as well as the CAP leaders who are influencing their child's experience. Parents may decide to join themselves or offer to form committees for fundraising and transportation. Open communication will also encourage them to "talk" about the whole CAP experience with their friends and colleagues who may then express interest in joining – remember, word of mouth accounts for 50% of our membership.

Partnership with parents is vital for the success of a cadet program. Building trust with the parents and keeping communication lines open not only helps keep them informed, but also helps keep their Cadets engaged.

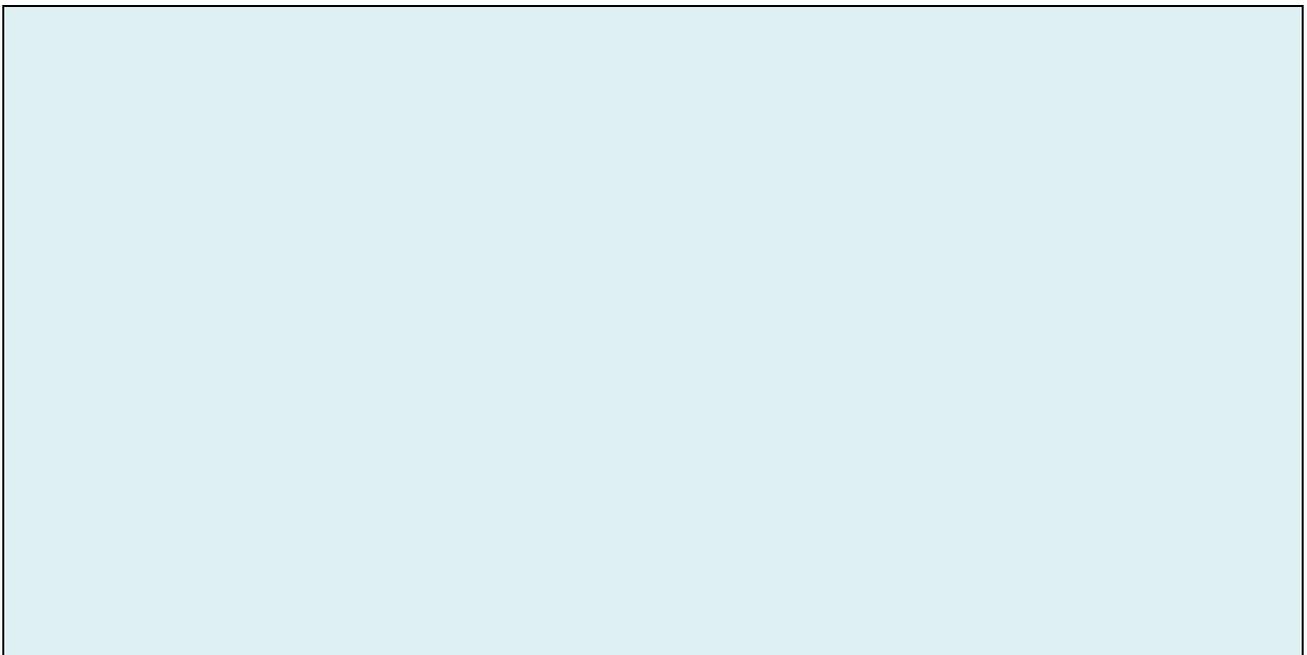
Host a community "Safety Day"

Remember the annual "Safety Down Day" we were required to have every October? Continue the practice with hosting a "Safety Day" for the community. You can even partner with your local Police or Fire Department to do a joint presentation.

Some local middle and high schools will also seek out speakers for "Anti-drug" or "Anti-bullying" presentations that your Safety Officer may be able to provide. Most won't seek us out, so make the offer instead. You may even consider reaching out to them in April or May about a summer safety presentation.

Begin planning your next year's Recruiting Plan

Take a look at what has worked for your Unit this year, what didn't and what needs to be improved on. Which activities did your members engage in the most? Which activities drew the most interest from your local community? What suggestions on new or additional ideas were offered? Dedicate 30 minutes of one meeting this month to have an open forum with your Unit members to gain their input and ideas.





November

Wreaths Across America Campaign Push #3

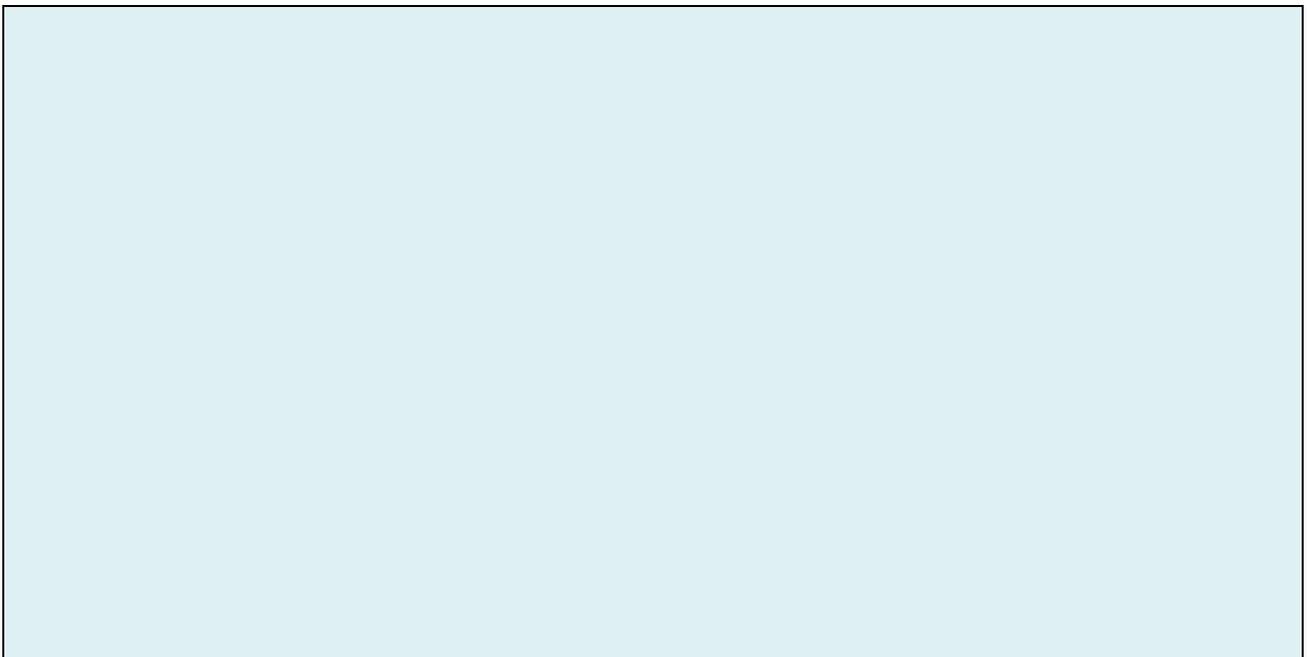
Veterans Day: As the wreath laying event is now only one month away, you will find more people willing to donate and support this event. Also, companies and other organizations will be looking for non-profits to donate to before the year is over for their tax write-offs. Create an internal challenge for your Unit on who can solicit the most during these last couple of weeks.

Don't forget to contact the Volunteer Location Coordinator for the cemetery chosen about how your Unit can participate the day of the event. Take pictures and have your Unit PAO issue a press release after the event. Send "thank you" notes with the photo or press releases to those companies or community organizations that donated and they will remember you next year.

Setup Recruiting and Activity Goals for next year

Based on the feedback you received from the Unit during last month's "campfire" meeting, work with the Command Staff to put together a preliminary schedule for the next calendar year.

Together with your Unit PAO, gather photos and new releases from activities that your Unit has participated in this past year. Highlights will be used to show (and remind) your members what benefits they have had for being part of your Unit through a PowerPoint presentation. Share the presentation and preliminary calendar with them in December.





December

December 1st = CAP's Anniversary

Get something in the local newspaper reminding people about CAP's founding one week before the start of World War II in 1941 and how your Unit is contributing to the community today.

For Cadets, the Unit Commander can prepare a letter (in advance) asking that the Cadet be authorized to wear their blues to school on December 1st. This permission request should include a spot for the parents to approve prior to the Cadet taking it to school and asking their principal. If approved by the parents and the principal, the Cadets should be encouraged to ask if they can spend 15 minutes presenting to their class what Civil Air Patrol is and why they are proud to be a part of it.

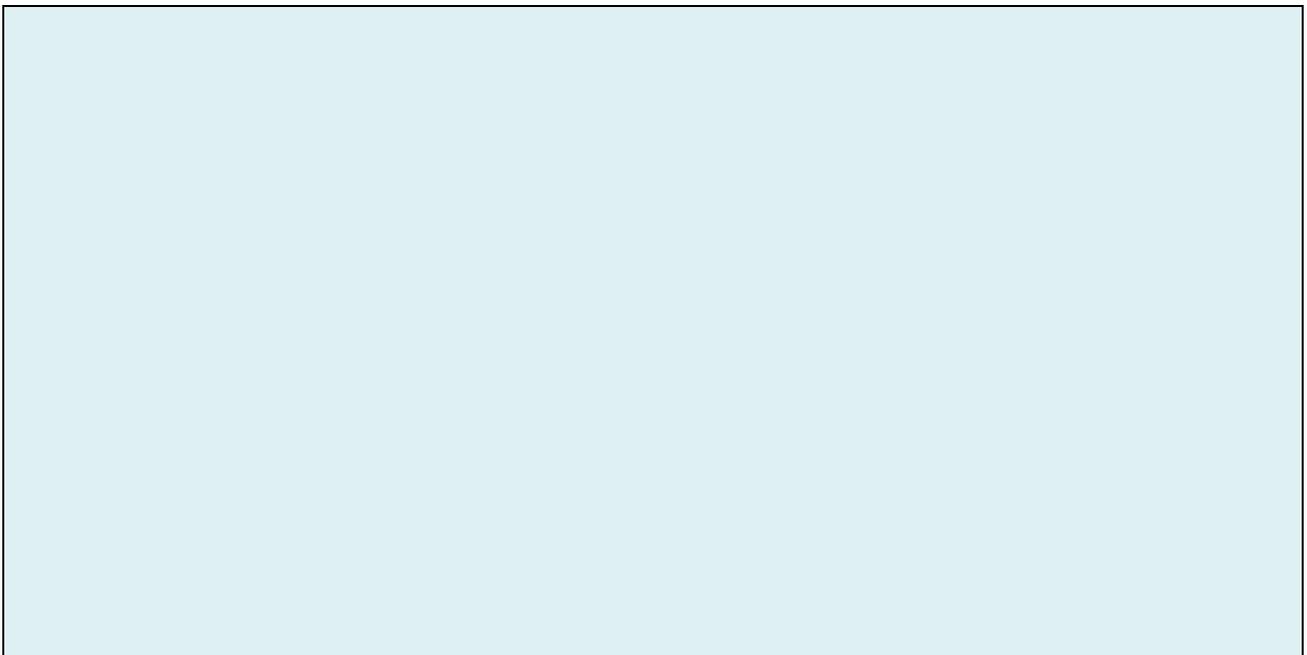
For Seniors and Cadets, don't forget about CAP Sunday!
In 1972, the CAP National Board designated the first Sunday in December as "CAP Sunday." Soon after that, the Saturday before was added to the celebration for those whose day of worship is Saturday. Civil Air Patrol members are encouraged to wear their service dress or corporate uniform while attending worship services.

"Year in Review" party =

"Where we are now and Where we are headed next year."

If your Unit hosts a "holiday party" or an "End-of-the-Year Awards Ceremony", that is when you should include this presentation. Invite all your members, their family and friends and share with them the PowerPoint that shows what the Unit has already done this year. Then, have the Commander take over the second half of the PowerPoint to talk about what ideas/activities the Unit has discussed and will focus on in the new year.

Be proud of what your Unit has accomplished and get everyone excited for what the plans are for the coming year!





Step Four: Compiling Your Plan

Based on the ideas suggested and your own notes, put together a preliminary plan for the next calendar year so you know what activities you want to focus on so you can start planning the details involved:

January:

February:

March:

April:

May:

June:

July:

August:

September:

October:

November:

December:



How To Plan An Open House

If you don't feel your Unit is large enough to host one by yourself, combine efforts with another Unit (or have your Group host it).

Work with your Public Affairs Officer and create a "press release"

Announce your Unit to the area: what CAP is and what your Unit is doing in the community with contact information so they can learn more. Take your new "press release" and send it out to: local newspapers, government offices, Air Force Recruiter offices, Chamber of Commerce, VFW & American Legion posts, EAA Young Eagle groups, schools, etc.

Get on Facebook and "share" your release

Post on your local news and radio station Community pages
Post to your area Congressman and other elected officials
Post on local business pages that include the type of audience you are trying to reach
...and remember to include a photo to grab their attention!

Plan activities for it:

Have demonstrations for Emergency Services, Cadet Programs, Aerospace Education...things that your audience can take part in so that they can, right away, see if they feel part of the group. Don't create a speech or presentation that they just sit and listen to...welcome them, give a brief rundown of what your Unit does and what they will be participating in that night and get them engaged.

Have photos on display

Of activities your Unit has participated in over the last year and create a PowerPoint to show plans your Unit has for activities for the coming year.

Have equipment we use on display

Bring out your 24hr and 72hr gear!
Have an ELT on hand and demonstrate how it works.
If you are at an airport, have a CAP plane positioned where your guests can walk up to it and see for themselves what aircraft they will be flying in.
If you have cadets and they have participated in model rocketry, bring that out and use one of the first "rockets" as an activity for your guests to partake in.

Bottom line:

You want your guests to be able to already picture themselves as part of your Unit – showing them your equipment, photos of past events, holding demonstrations and conducting interactive activities for them helps put them in that mindset...and sends them home wanting to come back again to learn more.



How To Plan An Open House

SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Select a date for your Open House
- 2) Appoint a Project Officer to select a staff and develop a plan
- 3) Order recruiting materials from eServices
- 4) Let your Unit Members know what date has been chosen

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Start advertising!
 - * Send flyers to local schools, community newspapers and government offices
 - * Place flyers (with permission) at libraries, airports, military recruiting offices, park districts, community centers
 - * Contact local radio stations about including the announcement in their "community happenings" segment
 - * Post to your Unit's webpage on the "home" page
 - * Post to your Unit's Facebook page and create it as an "event" and invite friends & family
- 2) Project Officer should have a staff together:
 - * Who will handle the advertising?
 - * Who will plan the demonstrations and schedule members to conduct them?
 - * Who will create and arrange the displays for the day?
 - * Who will gather sign-in information from guests and then follow up after the Open House?
 - * Who will greet guests and be the point-of-contact on all questions during the event?
 - * Who will bring drinks and refreshments for the day?
 - * Who will create a sign for outside the main entrance or serve as a guide to direct guests to where the Open House will take place?

THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Have a planned schedule developed with times and instructors listed
- 2) Create the displays and visual aids that will be used
- 3) Create an "Open House Agenda" that will be given out to all guests with that day's schedule of events and contact information for the Unit RRO or Commander

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Follow-up on advertising
- 2) Re-post the event to your Unit's Facebook page as a "reminder" as well as to the other Community pages that you contacted
- 3) Challenge every Unit member to bring at least one friend to the Open House

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR OPEN HOUSE

- 1) Do a "dry" run-through – have the assigned members conduct their demonstrations for the Unit to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed beforehand or last minute supplies that will be needed
- 2) Prepare "recruiting packets" for your guests.
Include: a recruiting flyer, an application for membership, Unit newsletter (if you do one), a personal invitation to attend the next Unit meeting (so they can hang on their frig as a reminder) and a business card with the contact information of the Unit RRO or whomever is designated to follow-up.



Year-Round Practices: Prospective Member Report

What is the Prospective Member report?

Quite simply: It's a report that NHQ compiles from anyone that has expressed interest in Civil Air Patrol through the www.gocivilairpatrol.com using the "Request Information" button instead of searching for a local Unit to contact directly.

The information is populated into the "Prospective Member" report. NHQ assigns the inquiry to the closest Unit. The information is then available for the Units/Wings/Regions to download from eServices as well as sent to the NHQ mailroom.

RROs and/or Commanders should be accessing this report regularly to make sure they are following up with prospects quickly before they forget about it and lose interest in joining.

How and where can you find this report?

The prospective member report is no longer emailed/mailed like it used to be. We converted it to an online-only report and all RROs/Commanders have access to this report in eServices.

Once you login:

Go to "Member Reports"

Under the drop down menu for " *Reports " is where you will choose "Prospective Member Report"

You will be given three different options for how to download the report: pdf, Word or Excel. While the quickest and easiest download format will be pdf, it is suggested that you download the report in Excel so that you can create an additional column to track when you contact the prospect and results.

The report itself with list:

Prospect Name

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Age Group

Parent name – if a prospective Cadet

Date the inquiry was received

***As a reminder:** Units are responsible for keeping their unit contact info up to date in eServices. NHQ usually receives, on average, about 100 contacts each year from prospects that cannot get in touch with their local unit because information is missing or out-dated. The RRO can update the information if they have access to the Org. Maintenance module under "Membership System" in eServices. Commanders can also update the information. Changes are not reflected immediately in the Unit locator, but are updated several times a week.

Also, if your Unit does not have a Unit RRO assigned in eServices, contact information will default to the Unit Commander – giving him/her the responsibility to follow up with the inquiry.



Year-Round Practices: Contact Those Inactive Members

Take a look at your Unit's roster: you can point out the names of the members that stopped coming and are just sitting on your roster waiting for their membership to expire. Makes your Unit numbers look great but does nothing to help with staffing and training needs that your Unit is faced with.

So, what do many Units do?

Some just ignore it – when their membership expires, they will drop off. If they wanted to be in CAP, they would be showing up.

Others – move them into 000. Cleans up their roster to show who is truly engaged and active and then they work on recruiting new members.

General consensus seems to be that most Units think that when a member stops showing up, its because they are upset or lost interest in the program so they don't want to spend the time trying to contact them and open a dialogue. Yes, we are focused on trying to build our Units by getting members to take on staff positions, recruiting new members, setting up training, etc... But, what if the reason why they stopped coming wasn't that they lost interest or got upset?

So what are some other possible reasons why they stopped coming?

- 1) They moved and now the Unit is too far.
- 2) Work or family issues came up and they just lost track of it.
- 3) Their schedule changed and now they can't come to meetings on that night anymore.

Regardless of the reason, and what we may speculate it may be, the smart thing for us to do to show the level of quality and commitment that CAP displays is to reach out to any inactive member and try to open up a dialogue.

If it is something that upset them and they just decided not to come back, ask them to share with you what the situation was so you can see if there is a solution or – in the case of personality conflicts – see if they would be open to transferring to another Unit in the area that they may enjoy and allow them to become active again. Yes, you are helping build the roster of another Unit, but your professionalism will change this member's view of CAP as a whole...which help his his/her retention and may help them recruit others into their new Unit.

If they moved, especially if they moved out of state, they may have no clue where to look and transferring is last on their priority list...so help them with it. Find a local unit and put them both in contact with each other. We never know the situation or the reason why an active member goes inactive unless we take the time to try and have that conversation.



Year-Round Practices: Contact Those Inactive Members

Here is a "form letter" that could be sent to the members both by email and regular mail:

Dear _____,

I am reaching out to you because we have noticed that you haven't been attending our Unit's meetings in quite some time so I was hoping to talk to you about why and see if there is anything we can do to rectify the situation. We have some new and exciting things that our Unit is doing and I would hate to have you not be a part of it. If you have moved and need help in finding a local Unit, I can help with that as well.

If you have the time, I would like to have just a 10min discussion with you. Please let me know, by replying to this letter, a good day and time at your convenience that we can talk and a phone number I can all you at. Or, you can always call me at (999) 999-9999 and we can discuss this further.

We do understand that you may just not have an interest in the program any longer and we respect that. If we don't hear from you by _____ (30 days from the date of this letter), we will be moving your membership into our holding Unit set up for inactive members until your membership expires. I just want you to be aware that while in this holding Unit, you won't be able to participate in any CAP activities or training if you change your mind at a later date.

I hope we have the opportunity to talk and find a solution that works for you to remain an active member of CAP.

Sincerely,

How you go about contacting your inactive members is up to you – whatever form you are more comfortable with – but the point is...**make it a priority each month** to reach out to those inactive members and try to reach a resolution or closure with them instead of just focusing on recruiting new members.

For more Recruiting & Retention tips and suggestions, join the conversation at www.facebook.com/caprr and www.capmembers.com/recruiting

