****

**Tips for Writing a Good Letter to the Editor**

A good letter to the editor addresses a current issue and is used as a tool to raise awareness and influence the local community and elected officials. The letter should be no more than three paragraphs and should not exceed 250 words. See “Letter to the Editor Chaffee County Guidelines” for local news outlet specifications.

The letters to the editor section is one of the most widely read sections of any newspaper or periodical. This section offers advocates a chance to reach a broad audience and provide readers with information and insights on unfamiliar issues that often inspire readers to take action.

**General Guidelines**

1. Letters should be typed or neatly handwritten and should follow the submission rules of the particular publication (see “Letter to the Editor Guidelines for Chaffee County” for local news outlet specifications). Language should be polite, but persuasive. Be sure to include any information that highlights your expertise on the issue. The publication will need to authenticate the letter, so sign your letter and provide contact information, including an address and daytime phone number.

2. Introduce the issue and why you are writing the letter. If you are responding to a previous letter to the editor or article, directly address that article or letter. Most published letters are 200 to 250 words and take a strong position on a topic recently covered in the publication. Start with a compelling introductory sentence and follow with short and clear factual points. Introduce yourself and quickly describe any expertise you have related to the issue. Next, state the case you wish to make using powerful details that are important to the readership of the paper. Do not make broad statements that can’t be backed up with facts. It’s best to focus on what is most important rather than trying to address every aspect of the issue. Keep your argument simple and the letter short.

3. Relate it to home. Newspaper readers care about how an issue will affect them, their family, and their community. To draw reader’s interest, include local references or facts in your article.

4. Close with a call to action urging readers to join your efforts to address the issue or offer a solution to the problem. Then thank the editor.

**Letter to the Editor Template**

\*Note: The below template is for submitting a letter via US Mail. Submittal via email does not require writer to add name of media outlet/publication address.

<Date>

<Name of media outlet or publication>

Attention: <Dr./Ms./Mr. editor’s first name and last name\* or Editor>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

<City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code>

Dear <Dr./Ms./Mr. last name of editor or Editor>:

*Introduction*

<State your reason for writing here. If you are responding to articles

or editorials by the media outlet, use the first sentence to reference

the name of the publication (in italics), the title of the article, author’s

name and date when it appeared.>

*Case*

<State your case here. Include facts, references or research here

to establish credibility. Mention your expertise on the issue.

Keep length in mind.

Include a call to action, asking readers to follow up with some

activity, such as calling on policymakers to address the issue.>

*Conclusion*

<End with a strong, positive, and persuasive statement in support of your case.>

Sincerely,

<Writer’s signature>

<Name of writer>

<Writer’s address>

<Daytime contact information>