

# Taking It to the Streets: Social Media at Arlington County

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**Briefing for COG Planning Committee** 

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# **Across the County**

- Several Arlington County departments maintain a social media presence:
  - Office of Communications (Facebook: 4,825, Twitter: 2,122)
  - Libraries
  - Environmental Services (Fresh Aire. BikeArlington, CarFree Diet)
  - Housing
  - Others: Office of Emergency Management, Volunteer Arlington, Artisphere,
     Arlington Employment Center, ShopArlington



## Where Are We?

















## Goals

- Reach a new, different audience
- Raise awareness of County programs
- Start "conversations" with constituents
- Provide customer service



# **Strategies**

- Transparent, open government
- Integrated Approach
- Multiple accounts, general & focused.
- Creative cross-promotion
- Creative staffing



# **Examples**

- Trash, recycling and leaf pick-up
- FreshAIRE
- Snowmaggedon
- Housing Blog



# Trash, Recycling, Leaf Pickup



Arlington County Virginia Vacuum leaf collection begins today. Crews will make 2 passes through each neighborhood. Sign up for email schedule updates usina the link below:



#### 2010 Leaf Collection Program

www.arlingtonva.us

Details on the 2010 leaf collection program, including schedules and home

7,302 Impressions 10.08% Feedback

November 15 at 12:50pm · Like · Comment · Hide Feedback (6) · Share · Promote



Kara Brown Lee What about Lacev Woods? November 15 at 12:59pm · Like · Flag



Andy Platt @Kara - it's by civic association, not subdivision.

November 15 at 1:13pm : Like : Flag

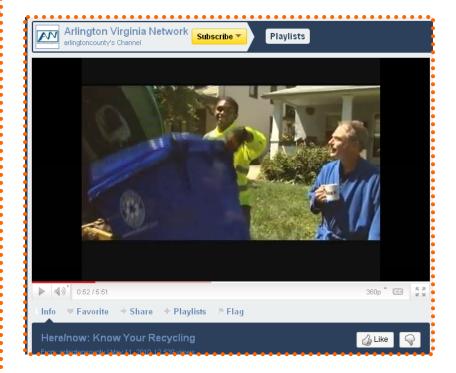


Arlington County Virginia Kara -- You can check your civic association using this mapping tool, select "civic association" from the select category drop-down menu: http://gis.arlingtonya.us/ GIS/gis MapsByTopic.asp

November 15 at 1:29pm ' Like



Kara Brown Lee thanks thanks! November 15 at 2:00pm : Like : Flag



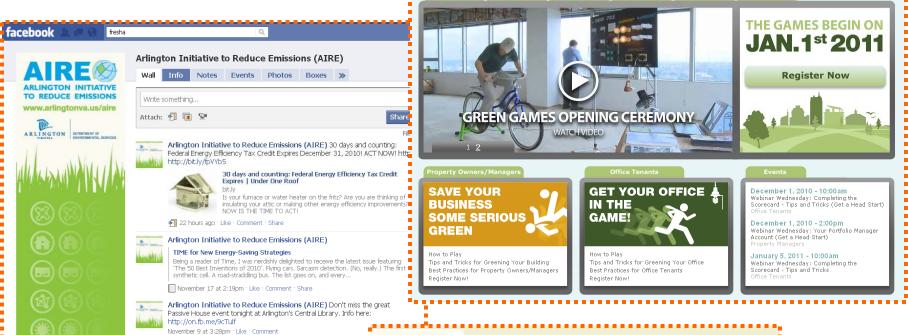


LaurenMarley @ArlingtonVA Perfect timing! The house we're moving into TODAY is FULL of paint, chemicals, A/C unit, pots & pans, etc http://bit.ly/b49p9

about 1 hour ago from web



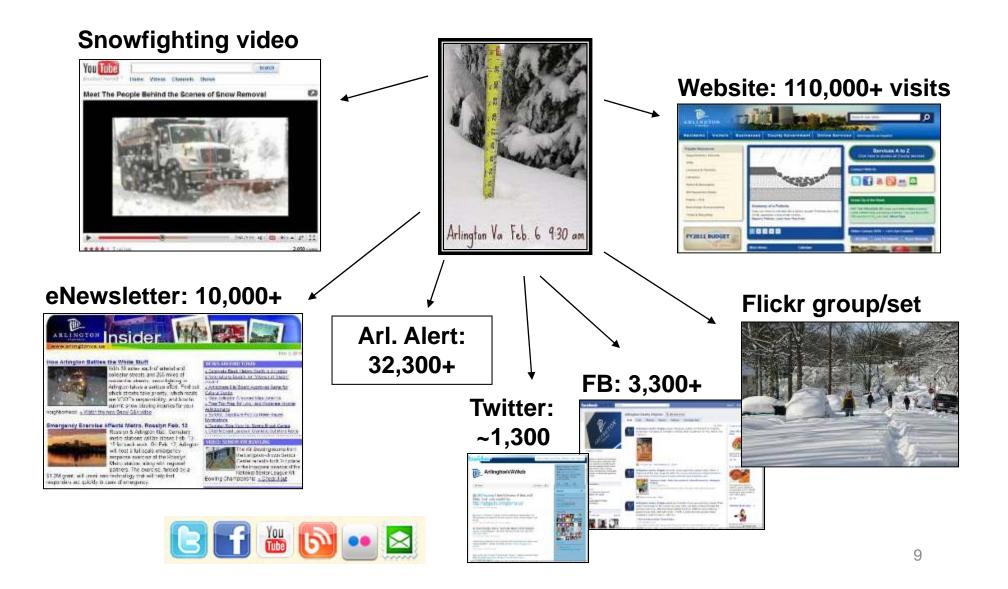
## **FreshAIRE**







### **Connecting Through Snowmaggedon**





# **Housing Blog**

#### Why it Happened

- Current news system was out of date
- Tight budgets = Do more with less (AND promote it better)
- Leverage County-wide use of social media
- Use of popular format allows greater audience reach and brings in new people
- Desire to improved resident knowledge and participation

#### **How it Happened**

- Silo busting
  - Improved work coordination
  - Less work by sharing the load
- Improved messaging
- Broad topic with specific stories means the entire site appeals to a larger audience



# **Housing Blog**

#### **Strategies**

- Motivated team and leadership support are essential
- Sometimes post short and quick, sometimes longer
- Thematic posting is effective Crystal City
- The more we promote, the more views we get targeting
- We've been covered in local and national press – tbd, planetizen, sun gazette, ggw, arlnow, etc.
- Time needed to promote is as significant as time needed to craft content



#### **Our Stats**

- 3 posts/week
- 110+ Subscribers
- 7,000+ total views, 25 comments



# **Housing Blog**

#### **Other Accomplishments**

- Our audience is growing & get other residents involved
- Increased participation by County staff

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Better integrate with County website
- Find other social media tools that would improve planning process, promote more dialogue
- Identify staff time for social media work



## **Lessons Learned**

- We can't do it alone
- Replying with a phone number is often enough
- Sometimes you have to "go analog"
- Can't always predict most popular topics
- It's OK to make mistakes
- Lots of shades of gray in social media



## What's Next?

- Social Media workgroup for employee outreach and support
- Continue to work with existing tools if they remain relevant
- Keep eyes on horizon for changes in the social media space
- Work on using technology to enable conversation and engagement with constituents



## **Possible Tools for Planning**

- Online Polls
- Feedback Tools
- Timelines
- Voting

