

Telephone Bills And Directories

Are you ready for an easy, easy project? Besides the Bible, which book is probably looked at more than any other each year? Give up? It could be the Telephone Directory.

Telephone companies may or may not be cooperative - owned and operated by the people who are users. If your telephone company is a cooperative you have a better chance of getting water safety messages in the directory ... free. Also, it seems the smaller the company the more donated space they have available for the asking.

Here's all you do. Take your telephone book and look for the page "How To Reach Us." You are now looking for the main office telephone number, address and their hours. Call and make an appointment with the person who works with the directory. Take the news clipping about a recent drowning, accident or fatality on the lake. Also, take some PSA print slicks. Ensure to take some 8" x 10" (full page ads) as it is very possible you will be able to receive approval for a full-page donated ad.

Another area you might be able to obtain is a small spot on the emergency page. The "Don't Swim Alone, Take Me Along!" life jacket slick is perfect. Normally the emergency page space is about the size of a nickel.

Remember your "selling points" are the same as before; you are trying to save lives on the water and want their (the telephone company's) help. If you have another telephone book with a water safety message, it could be of assistance.

Wait, there's more. Many telephone companies, especially cooperatives, send

out a monthly newsletter. Some are about 5" x 7". They provide tidbits of information to their members. Here is where you might be able to get some of your PSA slicks and information placed.

The DeKalb Telephone Cooperative in Alexandria, Tennessee, displayed Nashville's boating info in their monthly newsletter entitled *Dial Tone*, in May. The blue headline read: "Are You Drown proof?" Also, in blue ink was the border of the water safety slick showing a dog with a life jacket, on which reads "Wear Your Life Jacket It's Your Friend For Life."

The text is as follows: "With Memorial Day officially opening up the summer boating season, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reminds all residents that with the fun and enjoyment also comes the responsibility to be careful and put safety first We are fortunate to have many area lakes, rivers and streams within a short driving distance for most of us. Take advantage of these areas and remember - Water Safety Is Our Responsibility!"

You may use any or all of this text. In August, *Dial Tone* printed the "Never Swim Alone, Use The Buddy System" slick and the headline read: "Water Safety." The editor used maroon ink for that month's newsletter.

Also, after a successful year working with the DeKalb Cooperative the approving telephone official was thanked and sent a real nice letter of appreciation. When asked, "Do you know your counterparts at the surrounding cooperatives?" they answered, "Sure. What do you want me to do?"

"Would you mind calling each one and tell them how you have worked with us on water safety and tell them a Corps of Engineers representative will be calling to work with their Cooperative?"

Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative Corporation, based in Gainesboro, Tennessee, which serves both Cordell Hull and Dale Hollow Lakes, provided about

three-quarters of a page in their monthly edition.

Their monthly publication *Tele-News* used a photo of a telephone pole along the Cumberland River with text describing telephone cables as a rural anchor for telecommunications service, and then added a water safety slick with: "Water Safety Will Keep Your Boat Afloat - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has some helpful suggestions for water safety. We're

fortunate to have some of the most scenic waterways in the southeast: Enjoy the water the safe way!"

You can do this, too. Seriously, it is not only easy; it's exciting to see how the telephone company uses your material in the directory and their newsletters.

Don't tell anyone you are anxiously waiting for telephone bill, they might think your elevator doesn't stop on every floor. Is it time to reach out and save someone? Good luck.