



Leff & Associates  
Public Relations and Media Training

**City of Smyrna and Leff & Associates LLC  
Public Relations Service Agreement for 2024-25**

July 2, 2024

Attn: Ms. Jennifer Bennett  
Community Relations Director  
City of Smyrna  
2800 King Street  
Smyrna, GA 30080

Dear Jennifer:

Following please find our Letter of Agreement for public relations services for the City of Smyrna for FY 2024.

Leff & Associates LLC, with offices located at 2646 Danforth Lane, Decatur, GA 30033, is pleased to have a working relationship with the City of Smyrna (Smyrna), located at 2800 King Street, Smyrna, GA 30080. The terms of this Agreement between Leff & Associates and Smyrna are as follows:

- 1) General:** Leff & Associates will create a "Scope of Work" (see proposal included below) for our work with Smyrna.

This will be reviewed and agreed upon by both Leff & Associates and Smyrna. Any services requested beyond this Scope of Work must be agreed to, in writing, in advance of the start of work, by both parties. Any additional services agreed to will be billed by Leff & Associates to Smyrna, in addition to the monthly fees and expenses, as outlined in Paragraph 3 below. Agency will notify client if required services are likely to exceed the agreed upon fees.

No public relations agency can guarantee earned media story placements, or the responses of journalists. In our experience, a straightforward plan presented in a professional, consistent manner should yield positive results. As with all of our clients, we commit to serving you diligently and honestly and ask the same of all of our clients. By working together, we can maximize the impact of our work and make the most efficient use of your budget and resources

- 2) Term of Agreement:** This Agreement is effective **July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.**

- 3) Fees:**

Ongoing Public Relations Support: Professional fees for this component will be invoiced on a retainer basis. Professional fees will be \$4,000 per month. This level of service will be re-evaluated after three months by agency and client.

Media Training: Agency will provide media training for the flat cost of \$5,000. This will include two sessions during the first half of 2025. These sessions will include the Mayor, City Council, and other staff to be determined.

- 4) Expenses:** While we do not anticipate many out-of-pocket expenses for this project, in general Leff & Associates would bill Smyrna for expenses at cost, including such items as overnight mail, reproduction, postage, travel expenses, meals and entertainment relating to Smyrna accounts and other expenses as may be required for the completion of the Scope of Work. Any expenses for entertainment would be approved by Smyrna in advance. Any expenses in excess of \$100 will be approved in advance in writing by Smyrna.

- 5) Payment Terms:** The retainer will be billed at the start of each month and is due within 15 days.

(more)



- 6) **Conditions of Engagement:** Leff & Associates shall operate at all times as an independent contractor of the City of Smyrna, and is in no way considered an agent, joint venture, or an employee of Smyrna. This Agreement does not authorize Leff & Associates to act for Smyrna as its agent or to make commitments on behalf of Smyrna.
- 7) **Use of Proprietary Information:** Leff & Associates agrees to hold all information provided to it by Smyrna and identified in writing to it as proprietary (Propriety Information) in strict confidence and trust for the sole benefit of Smyrna and not to disclose, use, copy, publish, summarize, or remove from Smyrna premises any Proprietary Information (or remove from the premises any other property of Smyrna, except (i) during the Term of the Agreement to the extent necessary to carry out Leff & Associates responsibilities under this Agreement, and (ii) after termination of the Agreement as specifically authorized in writing by Smyrna. This provision shall not prevent Leff & Associates from disclosing Proprietary Information either known prior to the date of this agreement or generally known to the public.
- 8) **Indemnity:** Smyrna agrees to indemnify Leff & Associates, including costs of defense including legal fees, with respect to any third-party claims or actions resulting from use by Leff & Associates of any information or materials provided to it by Smyrna. Leff & Associates agrees to indemnify and defend Smyrna with respect to any similar claims for information and materials not provided by or approved in advance by Smyrna. All advance approvals must be in writing/email.
- 9) **Termination:** At any time, either Smyrna or Leff & Associates may terminate this Agreement for any reason, without cause, by giving sixty (60) day advance written notice to the other party. Either party may terminate this Agreement immediately upon breach by the other party of any provision of this Agreement. In the event that it is necessary for Leff & Associates to file suit to collect any amounts due and owing under this Agreement, client agrees to be responsible for all costs of collection including reasonable attorney's fees and costs.
- 10) **Notices:** Any notice, demand or other communication required or permitted to be given by one part to another pursuant to this Agreement shall be in writing and may be given either personally or by facsimile or by prepaid mail to the other party to the address below, or to other such address or person as may from time to time be designated in writing by either party. Any such communication is conclusively deemed to have been given or made on the day upon which it is delivered or faxed or, if mailed, on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) business day following the date of mailing.
- 11) **Governing Law:** This Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of Georgia. All disputes hereunder shall be resolved under the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the AAA in Atlanta, Georgia.

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. Any amendment or modification of the Agreement by either party shall be in writing and executed by duly authorized representatives of the parties.

The following parties agree to the terms and conditions of this Public Relations Service Agreement:

City of Smyrna

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Leff & Associates, LLC**

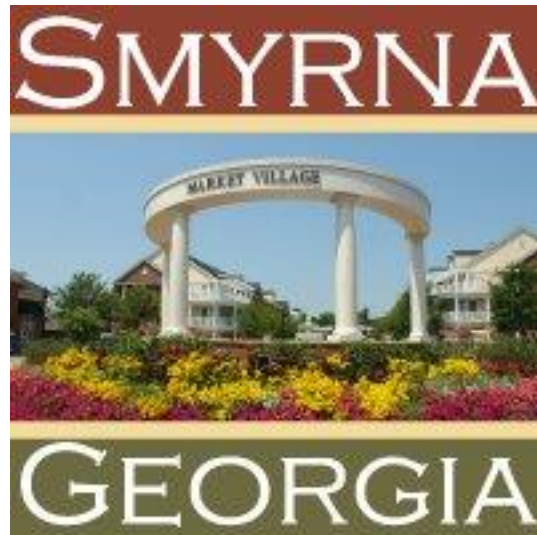
\_\_\_\_\_ Date July 2, 2024

Mitch Leff, President, Leff & Associates, 2646 Danforth Lane, Decatur, GA 30033



Leff & Associates

**Scope of Work for the The City of Smyrna**



**July 1, 2024**



Leff & Associates

July 2, 2024

Ms. Jennifer Bennett  
Community Relations Director  
City of Smyrna

Dear Jennifer:

Thanks for the opportunity to present a proposal for public relations services to support the City of Smyrna.

Following you'll find an overview of the process, strategy, and tactics we'd recommend for our engagement with you.

We included a range of options, but you don't need to implement them all, or even all at once. I find that's helpful to see the full plan.

We've included a bit of background on our agency, our team, and client expertise. Your team would include myself, Kim Speece, and Sarah Douglas (long-time colleague and Cobb resident).

You'll find included the budget we discussed.

Please review and give me a call with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mitch Leff  
Leff & Associates Public Relations  
404-861-4769



# Leff & Associates

## Table of Contents

Overview	page 4
Strategic Process	page 5
Phase One: Foundational Elements	
Situation Analysis / SWOT Analysis	page 7
Positioning / Messaging Architecture	page 7
Target Audiences	page 8
Phase Two: Implementation Elements	
Story Angle Development	page 8
Media List Development	page 8
<i>Tactics to Raise Awareness</i>	
Media Relations	page 9
Media Training	page 10
Social/Digital Media	page 11
Budget	page 12
Your PR Team	page 13
About Leff & Associates	page 15



# Leff & Associates

## Public Relations Process Overview

*Create a communications program for the City of Smyrna with a clear and creative strategy, defined messages, target audiences, and multiple tactics designed to help achieve your objectives.*

Leff & Associates will provide public relations services, with a focus on strategic counsel, media training, and media relations for the City of Smyrna. Our media focus will be on metro Atlanta and hyperlocal to Smyrna and Cobb County outlets.

### Goals:

- To highlight the great things happening in the Smyrna community
- To raise awareness of Smyrna and the work of its leaders
- Create a best practices system for communication

### Our Expertise: Why Work with Our Team?

- ❖ Strategic, collaborative, creative mindset
- ❖ Senior professionals who know how to create unique tactics for clients
- ❖ Extensive media relations and content creation expertise
- ❖ Unmatched knowledge of media in Atlanta and Georgia

**Target Audiences:** Focus on the best communication strategy for leaders to reach those in the community.

**Strategy:** An ongoing effort planned out three to four months in advance, with your bottom-line objectives in mind at every step.

### Tactics

- ❖ Media Training
- ❖ Media Relations
- ❖ Social Media

## Strategic Process

We create public relations plans for clients designed specifically to meet their defined company objectives. These might include:

- Build your brand
- Engage and include the community in your success

The elements in this plan will serve to systematically build a positioning, overall awareness, and an image of Smyrna among your target audiences.

### ***Building Visibility***

You have an opportunity to build a higher level of visibility among your target audiences. We will help build that awareness, but high visibility cannot be attained overnight. That kind of success is the result of creating a strong foundation and building upon that a strong, multi-faceted marketing and public relations structure.



# Leff & Associates

A strong marketing/PR plan for any organization includes many elements, from a great website to strong public relations and a strong community presence. Together these pieces combine to achieve your objectives.

A successful PR program begins by honestly assessing and understanding the City's situation and by conducting an **analysis** of your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

These results will help us to develop a clear **positioning** statement and **key messages**. Understanding **Target Audiences** (discussed below) is also key to overall plan development.

## Structure

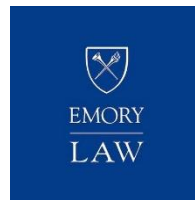
With this groundwork completed, the plan would be implemented using the elements below. The development process of this plan has been divided into **Foundational Elements** and **Implementation Elements**.



Leff & Associates

### Current & Recent Clients

[Click here](#) for highlights of our recent work



DeKalb  
Vein  
Center



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF METRO ATLANTA







## Phase One: Foundational Elements

*We believe you have a great story to tell and the potential to quickly increase your level of awareness. Our team will work with you to build your profile among your target audiences.*

### A. Situation Analysis / SWOT Analysis

The S.W.O.T. analysis provides an overview of your **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats (or challenges). This exercise serves to identify elements that are then incorporated into the PR plan. Your reputation can be a great strength, but we should look at areas of weakness and challenges you'll need to overcome.



### B. Positioning/Message Architecture

If these materials don't exist, or need to be updated, we can assist. Otherwise, we'll review and incorporate into our efforts on your behalf.

#### Positioning Statement

The positioning statement is a short statement encapsulating the essence of an organization. It enables the target to instantly understand your *desired* place in the world.

#### Message Architecture

Message Architecture contains three main components: The **umbrella messages** are a few short points to be communicated in as few words as possible. Think of it as the "elevator conversation" or the "cocktail party chatter." When you step onto an elevator and the other passenger says "Nice to see you again. What are you up to lately?" you should be able to tell them about happenings in the City of Smyrna in just a few statements.

The **key messages** are important points which support and expand upon the high-level, umbrella message. The **proof points** are the specifics that sit under and support each main point. We can help build this messaging and incorporate it into all levels of communications.

### C. Target Audiences

Public relations efforts should be targeted to meet the City's overall "business" goals. To use your resources most effectively, you must be sure that you are targeting the right audiences, influential people and organizations that will positively affect those you serve, your staff, and partners who will become part of your community.

There are many influential audiences that could be targeted for our communications. While the media are often considered audiences, we consider them a conduit to reach your audiences.



## Phase Two: Implementation Elements

### Story Angle Development

We would work with you to identify a range of story angles, ideas, and concepts. These story angles would then be matched to specific media outlets and reporters.

Our practice is to review upcoming events and areas of discussion to then create a spreadsheet that summarizes each area and the city leader with the expertise in that space. As appropriate, your spokespersons – including the Mayor and City Council - would be trained or “rehearsed” for media interviews.

This would include creating a timeline of announcements for the four month period, including various economic development announcements and culminating with the city’s birthday celebration in October.

### Media List Development

We will build target media lists, focusing on specific reporter beats and on targeted geographic areas. We'll look at journalists and publications focused on Smyrna, Cobb County, Metro Atlanta, and specific issues and events impacting the City and your elected officials.

## Tactics to Raise Awareness

### Media Relations

*An effective media relations effort includes both proactive and reactive activities. A steady stream of news to our target audiences builds awareness over time. The overall goal is to build long-term relationships with the media that grow stronger and stronger.*

Our media relations efforts have several parts, all working simultaneously.

#### *Proactive Tactics*

- Coordinate with your team to prepare effective press materials, including bios, talking points, FAQs, and press releases (when needed).
- Proactively place stories about the City of Smyrna in local and hyperlocal media.
- Monitor trending topics to anticipate when a specific story will emerge, so that our experts are prepared in advance.



#### *Reactive Tactics*

- Reactive: Respond to topical news
- Trend Topics: Monitor trending topics and stories to be sure the City of Smyrna is part of the conversation
- Note: These reactive opportunities often require a fast turnaround and response.

### Strategic Media Relations Counsel

- We'll work with your team, the mayor's office, and the City Council to recommend media relations “best practices” that allow the communications office to best manage overall messaging and media outreach
- Our efforts will help make your overall media relations efforts more productive, coordinated, and impactful



## “Hitting Your Mark” Media Training

Throughout our relationship, we will work with you to make sure your team is properly prepared for all interviews. Our **Hitting Your Mark** media training process helps executives and leadership become comfortable in conducting interviews, working with media, and effectively delivering key messages.

- **Confidence Building:** The session will build confidence, helping your executives deliver messages clearly, concisely and with impact.
- **Customized:** Each session is customized based on participants' experience and comfort level.
- **Challenging:** We provide more than just information. This interactive session uses techniques that will challenge your spokesperson to think about their media interactions in new ways.



### Overview

#### How the Media Works

An overview of the structure of media, focusing on the dynamics that drive news. Provides background on how reporters, editors and producers select their stories, what makes a story attractive to those decision-makers and, most importantly, how to increase the chances of your story making it to air or print.

#### Conducting an Effective Interview

- **Preparation:** Tips for making the interview successful. This includes understanding your relationship with the reporter, preparing your story and message points, and knowing the proper way to dress, speak, sit and stand.
- **Making Your Interviews Effective:** We'll show your spokesperson how to control their interviews, get key messages across, and obtain positive coverage. The session reviews the various types of interview styles, and the techniques reporters use to elicit information.



**Special Types of Interviews:** Demonstrates how to conduct interviews with specific types of media (print, radio, television).

**Interactive Role Play:** Your spokespersons will engage in mock interviews with print and/or broadcast “reporters.”



## **Social/Digital Media**

We would work with your internal team to integrate all communications into relevant social media platforms and assist you in broadening your social media outreach.

- Guide appropriate content strategy and development
- Leverage social media as an integral part of your overall communications campaign
- Guide the mayor's office and City Council on how social media fits into the overall mix of tactics to reach media and other audiences and how to best integrate social media into your overall strategy
- Review social media presence and recommend appropriate strategies and platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram

## **Proposed Budget**

Conceptually, we bill our clients based on an hourly rate of \$175. But most of our clients prefer a set monthly retainer. That streamlines their cash flow process and monthly invoices don't fluctuate. In general, our clients find their "effective hourly rate" is lower under that arrangement.

We can also budget as a project fee for the four month duration.

We can create a billing system that works within your accounting preferences. Our professional fees incorporate production markup, mileage, and other operating expenses. So, you won't see a lot of miscellaneous expenses on your monthly invoices.

Some out of pocket expenses – travel, media monitoring and clips -- would be charged in addition to professional fees. But we'd talk in advance, so you'd have the opportunity to approve any significant expenses.

Budget Range: Based on the Scope of Work we've proposed, we'd suggest a budget as noted below.

Monthly Budget: \$4000 per month. After three months, agency and client will review the budget, results, and scope of work and determine if the budget needs to be adjusted.

Other Expenses:

- Media training would be a one-time charge to train city leaders - \$5,000. Following the initial training sessions, regular and ongoing media preparation for interviews is included in our monthly retainer.
- We discussed two 45 minute media training sessions.

## **Scope of Work**

We would develop a specific and detailed scope of work together based on your objectives, target audiences, timeline, and budget.

###



# Leff & Associates

## Your City of Smyrna PR Team

### **Mitch Leff**

Agency President **Mitch Leff** is a 35-year Atlanta public relations veteran, recognized as one of the strongest and most effective media relations specialists in Atlanta. His expertise spans business to business, consumer products, sports marketing, special event marketing, education, healthcare, technology and telecom.

He began his career with Cohn & Wolfe Public Relations, rising to become Media Relations Director for the Atlanta office, at the time the largest public relations agency in the southeast. Over the years, he's provided public relations services for some of the world's most prestigious companies, including The Coca-Cola Company, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, AOL Time Warner, UPS and many others.

He left agency PR to become director of public relations for Turner Learning, the educational division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. Leff spent several years with the Atlanta offices of Edelman Public Relations and GCI Group before launching Leff & Associates in 2003.



### ***Leff Knows Atlanta & Georgia Media***

If you're looking for a PR professional who knows Atlanta and Georgia media, Leff is the expert. For many years, he edited the Cohn & Wolfe Metro Atlanta Media Guide, the definitive print guide to Atlanta media. Soon after launching his own firm, he took that resource online and digital, creating Leff's Atlanta Media ([www.leffsatlantamedia.com](http://www.leffsatlantamedia.com)) the first and only database of Atlanta media (1500+ journalists included).

He also writes *Mitch's Media Musings*, a blog following Atlanta's media community, and the "4 Questions Journalist Spotlight," a weekly podcast that focuses on Georgia journalists ([link](#)). Following the success of Leff's Atlanta Media, he launched Mitch's Media Match ([www.mitchsmediamatch.com](http://www.mitchsmediamatch.com)), an online service that connect local reporters with local sources.

Leff is very active in the community:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta - Has provided pro-bono public relations services and served on the organization's marketing committee for more than 25 years.
- Member - Atlanta Press Club, APC Marketing Committee
- Member - Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), chaired PRSA Georgia's Independent Counselors Special Interest Group for three years
- Scouting - He's been a Cub Scout Den Leader and Packmaster for Pack 577 and is currently an Assistant ScoutMaster for Boy Scout Troop 77 and the Advisor for Venture Crew 77, both located in Decatur, Ga.
- (former) President - Lakeside High School Foundation
- Member - Georgia Production Partnership

He lives in the Oak Grove neighborhood metro Atlanta with his wife. Leff has two college-aged sons.



# Leff & Associates

## Kim Speece

**Kim Speece (Media Relations Specialist)** joined Leff and Associates in May of 2015. Originally from Richmond, Virginia, Speece is a graduate of James Madison University with a double major in Communications and Health Sciences, she was one of the college television station's first female sportscasters.



Speece previously worked as a television producer focusing on special projects and long format news shows in Richmond, VA and Charlotte, NC. She received a regional Emmy for her work on a documentary celebrating the life of Arthur Ashe. Speece worked in New York City as a freelance producer focusing on health and wellness. She also owned a Media Relations Firm in Manhattan. After a move to Atlanta, Speece worked as an educator and writer focusing on learning differences and educational issues.

Speece is very active in her community and has served on several boards as well as serving in leadership roles in her children's schools.

## Sarah Douglas

Cobb County resident Sarah Douglas helps clients with media relations, public relations, crisis communications and event planning by delivering innovative projects, with detailed and consistent service. Sarah's expertise and experience also includes message development, crisis communication preparation and training, development of branding identity and marketing materials, social media marketing and media/communication audits.

Sarah began offering association management services in 2014, becoming executive director of the Conservative Policy Leadership Institute (CPLI), a nonpartisan initiative designed to prepare Georgia leaders in conservative principles.



PR clients include professional service firms, B2B and retail companies as well as nonprofit organizations and schools. Media placements include Associated Press, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Atlanta Business Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, a myriad of trade publications as well as local television and radio stations.





# Leff & Associates

## About Leff & Associates

### Our Services

Leff & Associates offers clients a full range of public relations services, with a specialty in strategic counsel, communications program development, media relations, media training and crisis communications.

We work in partnership with our clients to achieve results that meet their business goals. The cornerstone of our business is that all public relations activities should be targeted to support specific organizational objectives.

We've created unique and proprietary tools and services, including our "[Leff's Atlanta Media](#)" database, our "[Mitch's Media Match](#)" service that connects local journalists to sources, and our "[4 Questions Journalist Spotlight](#)" podcast feature. Our strong relationships with journalists extend across the state, from WMAZ TV in Macon to the *Savannah Morning News*.

Visit us at <http://www.leffassociates.com>. Click [here](#) for our current highlight video.

### Our Key Messages

**We Build Relationships. We Know the Media. We Achieve Results.**

### Online Media Resources

- Leff's Atlanta Media ([www.leffsatlantamedia.com](http://www.leffsatlantamedia.com)) – This online service includes all the information needed for a company to effectively deliver information on events, products, or important issues to media, plus a comprehensive directory of media, media relations guidelines and other resources.
- Mitch's Media Match ([www.mitchsmediamatch.com](http://www.mitchsmediamatch.com)) – Mitch's Media Match is an online service for Atlanta and Georgia-based media that matches their story assignments and story concepts with local sources and experts.
- *Mitch's Media Musings* – Our monthly newsletter focusing on news and moves relating to the Atlanta media community.
- The Atlanta PR Guy – Our regular blog focusing on issues of interest to public relations and media professionals. <http://leffsatlantamedia.wordpress.com/>
- "4 Questions" Journalist Spotlight - Leff writes a regular feature on a local journalist.



Atlanta PR Guy  
Insight. Commentary. Analysis.



Leff's Atlanta Media  
Search. Prepare. Pitch.



Mitch's Media Match  
Search. Match. Connect.