

WSU Extension Policy on Commercial/Partner Underwriting of Newsletters

1. The selling of any advertisement creates a public forum and a potential problem in that WSUE may not have a legal basis to deny someone advertising space while selling it to someone else.
2. The placement of an ad within an Extension educational newsletter can inadvertently create the impression that Extension is endorsing the product or service being advertised.
3. If financial support for a newsletter is being sought, then it is recommended that a sponsorship or underwriting format be used as a way to defray those costs associated with producing that newsletter. The underwriting or sponsoring organizations can be mentioned in a sentence on the back page of the newsletter in wording such as:
"This newsletter is sponsored (or underwritten) by the XXXX County wheat growers, the XXXX grain elevator and the XXXX County cattle producers."
4. Non-profit mailing permits cannot be used for newsletters containing advertising. You can use other commercial mail without limitation.
5. WSU employees are not allowed to use University resources to influence elections. Ads for candidates for elected office could be construed as endorsements therefore those ads should not be placed in Extension publications.
6. The underwriting of certain products are inappropriate for certain audiences. For example, an underwriting statement for a particular winery would be appropriate in a newsletter prepared for grape growers, however that same underwriting statement would not be appropriate for a 4-H newsletter.
7. WSU does not protect its employees from lawsuits that are a result of poor ethical judgment. Therefore, if you have ethical doubts do not accept the underwriting support or seek administrative clarification.