



Fostering Community Awareness

“Community attendance at our Open House event last October was 60 percent greater than we achieved in previous years, and CoActive’s community outreach and work with the media played a major role in that success. We are heavily dependent upon news coverage to promote our program, and as a result, we were thrilled at the attention that CoActive generated with KRON-TV and with local newspapers and radio stations.”

Ron Kolb, Former Head, Community Relations, Berkeley Lab

History: Located in the hills above the University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley Lab is one of five multi-program laboratories in the U.S. Department of Energy’s network of scientific research enterprises. Every second year, Berkeley Lab opens its doors to the community to explore its many facets and applications of its research through its “Open House” event.

Challenge: Despite the fact that Berkeley Lab is the second largest employer in Contra Costa County, it faces ongoing perception issues within the local community. Open House events, while designed to increase community awareness and participation, historically had been poorly attended.

Solution: CoActive engaged an aggressive community outreach campaign to promote the Open House throughout all communities within 20 miles of the Lab. In addition to hosting an exclusive press preview two weeks before the Open House, CoActive distributed public service announcements (PSAs) and disseminated posters and flyers to school districts and youth programs. The effort even included coordinating transportation for school-age children.

Results: On the Tuesday morning before the Open House, CoActive secured a 4-hour spot on the Bay Area’s leading KRON-TV morning news featuring intermittent interviews with Berkeley Lab officials, previews of biology and nanotechnology labs and tours of the Cyclotron (where the 2003 blockbuster *The Hulk* was partially filmed).

In addition, feature articles were published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Oakland Tribune*, *East Bay Business Times* and *Berkeley Voice* newspapers. Busloads of school age children were brought in from local schools and youth programs for the Open House. These combined efforts resulted in a 60 percent increase in attendance from the previous year's Open House.