The Pitch: “Hey, Come Here Often?”

The pitch is like a pick-up line ... good ones are hard to find. Pitching stories via email or phone is one of the best ways to break through and grab media attention for your issues. It is your first impression—and the quality of your pitch will determine whether or not your story gets told. Some tips to keep in mind:

• Tell a story. Who is impacted? How? Why? So what?

• Stay confident. You have the goods. They want them. Pitching is hard, but reporters want to tell good stories and will keep coming back to you if you provide reliable, newsworthy information that sparks their interest.

• Shorter is better. Don’t hide the lede, lead with it.

• Follow up. Emails get missed, placed into junk mail or glossed over. Don’t be afraid to follow up on your pitch with phone calls and emails.

(See a sample email pitch on the other side)
Hi Christopher,

In light of Vice President Biden and Secretary LaHood’s transportation stimulus event today, I wanted to give you a heads up on a report Smart Growth America (SGA) is releasing on Monday looking into how states have allocated the first 80% of their surface transportation stimulus funds. The report shows that many states have failed to select the transportation projects that would create the most jobs, as fast as possible.

The report delves into more detail on the actual projects, and the process by which they have been selected, than any other assessment to date. It also shows that in spite of clear guidance from the ARRA and the Administration on the priorities of stimulus spending, overall 31% of the transportation projects that states have selected would create fewer jobs at a slower pace, and do less to fix our nation’s crumbling infrastructure than other shovel-ready projects available to states.

I’m happy to provide to an advance copy of the report, and connect you with Geoff Anderson (President of SGA) or Will Schroeer (State Stimulus Campaign Director) who can provide useful context to your coverage of the stimulus spending to date.

Thanks,
Maggie