**Plan for a Successful Event**

Putting the right pieces in place for the big day is essential.

**Plan the day**

**Select the best date**

* Choose a weekday time that will allow for the best attendance from the community, local and statewide representatives and the media.
* Check for other big events in the area that could conflict, like holidays, local government meetings, other grand openings or Chamber of Commerce events with overlapping audiences.
* Work with your construction and development partners to ensure the site will be ready for visitors and tours.

**Choose the day’s activities**

* Beyond the ribbon cutting or groundbreaking, you can plan additional components like tours of the project site and exhibits with planning and community information.
* Display promotional posters, project blueprints and maps of the area for a visual touch.
* If you plan a tour, choose a guide or develop materials for a self-guided tour. Clearly mark important points and have handouts with extra information.
* Make sure you have required safety items like hard hats and vests and designate any off-limits areas that could be hazardous.

**Schedule the ceremony**

* The highlight of the event is the ribbon cutting or groundbreaking, which usually lasts up to 20 minutes.
* Determine who is speaking and notify each person of the allotted time for their remarks.
* Decide positions for the ceremony, such as who gets to hold the scissors or the ribbon, or who gets a shovel, and notify the appointed people in advance.
* Position those participating so they’re facing the audience and any photographers and media present.

**Invite the community**

**Appoint a contact**

* Pick someone from your organization to manage speakers, reservations and questions, often the same person who is listed as the contact on other promotional and press materials. This person can also send reminders or follow up on important people that haven’t responded.

**Nominate your speakers**

* Choose speakers who know the project, the community or the development’s positive impact. Ask them early to increase the likelihood of attendance and set expectations that they’ll speak for up to five minutes.
* Aside from the ceremony speakers, an emcee can help with the structure of the event. They’ll be able to speak to the project, welcome people in, acknowledge partners and important attendees and introduce speakers.

**Set your guest list**

* It’s not an event without the community in attendance. Once you know how many people should attend, begin creating a list.
* Business partners, community representatives, nearby businesses, staff, family and friends and the media could all be valuable attendees to the event.