



Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

May 17, 2021 Vol. 54 No. 20

DC HOUSING AUTHORITY SEEKS PR

The DC Housing Authority plans to hire a PR firm to promote the re-launch of its transformation plan to lift residents out of poverty.



DCHA unveiled its “Our People, Our Plan, Our Portfolio” in 2019 to create communities and neighborhoods that support educational and life opportunities for children and the expansion of affordable housing. That launch failed to attract much attention.

DCHA wants a partner to do PR for “Transformation 2.0”, which will explain emerging trends and methods for financing and developing public housing and how government policies impact what can and cannot be accomplished.

DCHA wants placements in local, national, business, real estate and housing media outlets. The firm will get involved in social media activity and any crisis management situations.

Responses are due May 21. Send a hard copy to: District of Columbia Housing Authority; Office of Administrative Services—Contracts and Procurement; 1133 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300; Washington, D.C. 20002-7599; Attn: Cheryl Moore, Contracting Officer

DCHA also wants an electronic proposal at lwashing@dchousing.org with copy to business@dchousing.org.
[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

STARBUCKS' KELLY STREAMS TO ROKU

John Kelly, who was executive VP, public affairs and social impact at Starbucks, has joined Roku, the TV streaming service, as senior VP-corporate affairs & communications.

He exited Starbucks in December after a seven-year run.

Earlier, Kelly worked more than 15 years at Microsoft. He served as VP of industry affairs at Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, WA, and director of corporate affairs for the MENA region in Paris and Brussels.



John Kelly

Roku's Q1 revenues surged 79 percent to \$574.2M as the number of active accounts grew 35 percent to 53.6M. The San Jose-based company posted \$76.3M in net income during the quarter vs. a year ago \$54.6M loss.

CEO Anthony Wood projects Q2 revenues of \$615M but warns Roku's second-half 2021 faces a

tough comparison from last year's financial performance.

WEBSTER EXITS TEAM BIDEN FOR LAUDER

Meridith Webster, special assistant to president Biden and chief of staff at the Domestic Policy Council, joined Estée Lauder Cos. in the newly created executive VP, global communications and PA post on May 17.

She succeeded Alexandra Trower as global communications chief and Maria Cristina Gonzalez Noguera as PA head.

Webster also worked in the Obama White House as senior advisor to chief of staffs, Rahm Emanuel and Pete Rouse. She also was deputy chief of staff to US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice.



Meredith Webster

Before joining Biden's staff, Webster was chief communications officer at Vox Media, PA lead at the Emerson Collective and global head of PA at Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

OGILVY POWERS VINEYARD 1 WIND FARM

Ogilvy Government Relations is working for Avangrid sustainable energy company related to offshore wind power and transmission matters.

The Interior Dept. on May 11 approved Avangrid's Vineyard 1, an 800-megawatt project, as the country's first large-scale wind project. Construction will begin later this year and result in a facility that will power 400K homes and businesses in Massachusetts. The 62 turbines will be located 15 miles off Martha's Vineyard.

Madrid-based Iberdrola energy giant owns an 81.5 percent stake in Avangrid. Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners is part of the Vineyard 1 joint venture.

EDELMAN TAPS PFIZER VET FOR HEALTH POST

Edelman has recruited Pfizer UK's corporate affairs director Emma Lynn as global health deputy.

Lynn, who did a 16-year run at Pfizer, reports to Kirsty Graham, head of the specialized global health offering.

She also put in stints at GSK and Burson-Marsteller.

Edelman Health chalked up a robust performance during the 2020 pandemic year as fee income rose 9.1 percent to \$168.8M. The firm is No. 2 behind Real Chemistry, the former W2O Group, on O'Dwyer's roster of healthcare firms.

Edelman also added Lynda Gordon as executive VP, global DXI Health lead.

Gordon joins from the VP-analytics post at Merkle.

LOS ALAMOS NEEDS TOURISM MARKETING

Los Alamos County, New Mexico, is looking for a marketing and PR agency to direct future tourism marketing, advertising and public relations efforts—including web and social media marketing—in an effort to raise awareness of the County as a leisure destination and tourist attraction, with the goal of attracting more visitors and overnight stays.



Formerly used by the U.S. federal government during the Manhattan Project, where the atomic bomb was developed, Los Alamos is seeking proposals from agencies that can identify key visitor markets with a well-coordinated marketing strategy that will leverage partner efforts and best maximize exposure across all media platforms.

Scope of the work includes development and creation of a marketing plan (which should include targeted media for PR outreach, media outreach, special event marketing and social media marketing efforts); developing, upgrading and maintaining a new visitor website; and developing a data plan that recommends data collection, analysis and reporting practices to produce metrics that will assist the County in assessing visitation and tourism effectiveness.

Proposals are due by 2:00 p.m. (MT) on Tuesday, May 25 and can be submitted either in person, through the mail or electronically via email.

They can be delivered or mailed to: Office of the Los Alamos County Purchasing Officer; Procurement Division; 101 Camino Entrada, Bldg. 3; Los Alamos, NM 87544

All proposals must contain one labeled unbound original, three bound copies and one electronic copy on a USB flash drive or CD.

Proposals may also be submitted electronically (in PDF format) to laebid@lacnm.us. The subject line must contain the following: “RESPONSE – RFP21-58 Tourism Marketing Services.”

[Download the RFP, which includes addendum \(PDF\).](#)

TENEO GUIDES CD&R'S \$4B HEALTHCARE DEAL

Teneo is providing PR services to private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice as it moves to acquire Dublin-based UDG Healthcare in a deal worth \$3.7B.

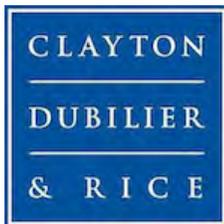
UDG supplies advisory, marketing communications, strategic engagement, technology and manufacturing support to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

CD&R purchased UK-based Huntsworth healthcare communications firm for \$511M in 2020.

It plans to merge UDG's Ashford advisory unit with Huntsworth to support clients across the life cycle of a drug, from development to launch and beyond patient expiry across therapeutic areas.

UDG Chairman Shane Cooke said CD&R made an attractive offer that “reflects the quality, strength and long-term performance of UDG's business and future growth potential.”

Teneo has Philip Gawith and Haya Herbert-Burns repping CD&R, while Powerscourt's Lisa Kavanagh, Jack Hickey and Eavan Gannon advise UDG.



ON THE MOVE

Hill+Knowlton Strategies appoints **Aurelien Raspiengeas** as head of corporate in France. Raspiengeas was most recently in charge of innovation, international accounts and new business at Aequitas Global in London, specializing in corporate positioning, reputation management, and stakeholder engagement. He previously worked at APCO Worldwide in the Gulf, the U.K. and the U.S., and spent five years at Havas in Paris. At H+K Strategies, Raspiengeas will focus on growing the agency's corporate strategy and reputation offering.

Finn Partners expands duties of Jerusalem managing partner **Goel Jasper** to include digital health innovation group head. Jasper, a member of the Finn global health practice leadership team, has been part of Finn Partners from its inception in 2011 and has led the Jerusalem office since that time. “Goel is a go-to leader in global digital health,” said Finn Partners managing partner, chair global health Gil Bashe.



Goel Jasper

The Public Affairs Council promotes **João Sousa** to managing director of its European office in Brussels. Sousa previously served as senior manager in the office. Before joining the Council, Sousa worked for the European Union, where he served as a spokesperson and led communications teams operating in Africa (DR Congo) and Europe (Brussels and the Western Balkans). In his new post, Sousa will assume responsibility for strategic planning, program development, member development and relations, and office administration. He will also continue to manage the Council's International Networks.

Current Global promotes **Lisa Dini** to executive vice president, global consumer lead. Dini has been with the agency since 2007, expanding her responsibilities over the years to include piloting work across multiple brands for The Clorox Company, managing the San Francisco office, and driving best practices across the agency's client experience talent community. Dini is now responsible for facilitating consumer best practices globally while growing the firm's talent, clients, and agency reputation in the marketplace.

Bellmont Partners adds **Maureen Cahill** and **Bridget Nelson Monroe** as partners. Cahill has been collaborating with the agency since 2008 and has spent the last year working as a contractor on numerous client projects. Monroe has been with the agency since 2011 and was named vice president in 2015. She is also the leader of Belmont's nonprofit practice group.

Blue State brings on **Alia Hassan** as executive VP. Hassan rejoins the firm from SecondMuse, where she was global head of operations & people systems. Before that, she was at Blue State for a decade. In addition to working to optimize Blue State's offerings and delivery methodology, Hassan also joins Blue State's executive team, which has been restructured to more accurately represent the people who make up the agency and their clients. Blue State has also hired **Eric Reif** as senior vice president of paid media. He was most recently managing director at eStreet Group.



Alia Hassan

A BIZARRO YEAR IN FINANCIAL COMMS

We're in the midst of 2021's corporate proxy season, when Wall Street and the investor community are hyper-focused on the decisions, actions, governance and earnings of corporate brands we invest in and whose products we purchase.



Thomas P. Butler

It's also a daily reminder that the messaging that communication pros in our industry curate and convey are essential on so many levels.

The curveballs of today's market

So far in 2021, there are a few troublesome case studies that show clearly to any CEO or board of directors that maintaining regular and quality communications advocacy is vital.

In January, website Reddit took the investing and finance world by storm, pumping up the valuation of certain stocks seemingly on their last legs. One of those was GameStop, the largest brick and mortar video game retailer.

GameStop's stock price had dropped to \$3 and so-called amateur investment bloggers pushed it towards \$20. Hedge funds sought to capitalize by shorting the stock. The Reddit community countered by pushing the price higher. By January 20, it was \$40 and by the 28th it was \$483/share. A week later it deflated to \$50 and then up again to \$180.

I also recently received a lesson about the cryptocurrency DogeCoin. While its market capitalization peaked in early 2018 at \$0.01y, over the pandemic, online campaigns sought to boost the price towards \$1. Per CoinDesk's price index, it ended 2020 at less than half a penny per coin. Then with 2021, it leaped over 800 percent, thanks to tweets from Reddit. Billionaire Elon Musk. As of this writing, the cryptocurrency, which touched \$0.42 on April 20, was at about \$0.27.

The GameStop and DogeCoin sagas are clear examples of the modern decentralization of news and informational sourcing. It shows it can be like the wild west out there if you can't maintain and manicure your client's brand and message.

A path diverted

Back in my college years, I thought a life working on Wall Street was in the cards. I spent a summer working on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange when that Exchange was considered the center of the financial universe.

I walked away after that summer job to complete my degree, having received offers from two trading firms. Then, upon graduation, I interviewed with a large banking institution and a major bond house. Ready to accept one of the offers, my dad suggested I do one more interview. I agreed.

I traveled to New York City Hall for a job interview, just a five-minute walk from NYSE. The interview, in a bustling press office newsroom, went better than expected. It hummed with reporters from the *New York Times*, Associated Press, NBC-News and all the major dailies, radio and TV stations.

For the next few years, I received the best education in communications and media from some of the most experienced journalists in the nation, some of whom went on to be columnists, news anchors and bureau chiefs, including at the White House.

The corporate and financial markets

At my first PR agency, I was anxious to do more and learn, managing public affairs, economic development, commercial real estate, construction accounts and more. Then the portfolio evolved to include crisis management, litigation, publicly

traded companies, entrepreneurs and CEOs.

That firm was also retained to promote some new global stock exchanges that would eventually merge, as global markets and economies advanced. It was clear, the career path intended, and the path taken, had been getting closer to their own merger.

This year, Butler Associates marks 25 years since we first opened our doors. What started out as a firm focused on servicing first responders, labor, public policy and crisis matters, law firms and litigations, has evolved to be so much more.

Decades after first setting foot inside the New York Stock Exchange to begin a career on The Street, I'm still in awe when walking past this historic landmark, but now to visit our agency clients that include prominent financial firms.

The experiences over three decades in our amazing business has been rich and rewarding and not something I might trade in so easily.

Thomas P. Butler is President of Butler Associates Strategic Communications.

MISINFORMATION PLAGUES VACCINE COMMS

Misinformation plays a large role in online discussions about COVID vaccines, according to a new study from LLYC. The firm's Vaccine Conversation Trends Study finds that the most widespread of the myths being spread about the virus is that it alters the DNA of recipients.

LLYC's study looked at 2M posts published between November 2020 and April 2021 from accounts in the US. Pro-vaccination posts outnumber anti-vaccination posts by a two-to-one margin—440,300 to 219,400—with about half of the posts judged to be neutral.

Scientists and journalists led the online pro-vaccine community, the study found. Journalists, however, were also a major source of anti-vaccine commentary, along with lawyers.

While most Hispanic respondents expressed doubt and fear about the vaccine in a November 2020 survey, by this April "most of the community had become pro-vaccine."

The study also reports that some online commenters have a far larger effect than others. What it calls "power profiles" are leading the conversation, with 40,000 profiles producing 33 percent of all Twitter posts about the COVID vaccine.

"Our findings can help policymakers on the regional and federal levels, as well as interested private parties, create strategies to address the vast amount of vaccine misinformation," said LLYC DC office director Francisco Marquez.

FLORIDA INT'L UNIVERSITY SEEKS PR PITCHES

Florida International University is inviting firms to pitch proposals to provide strategic content marketing and other related services to the Miami public research facility with a student body of about 55K.

FIU plans to hire two firms for media services work for a three-year period. It will retain the option to renew for two additional one-year periods.

Responses to the ITN (Invitation to Negotiate) are due June 4.

Firms can register and receive files at <https://bids.sciquest.com/apps/Router/PublicEvent?CustomerOrg=FIU>.

Elsa Alfonso has more information at ealfonso@fiu.edu.



CONSERVATION LEGACY ISSUES RFPs

Conservation Legacy, which places young people in conservation and service programs, has issued RFPs for strategic communications and crisis management.

The strategic communications RFP calls for raising awareness through PR and media relations to help CL deliver on its mission while reinforcing the brand.



The PR partner will help develop and build out infrastructure, support and tools needed to amplify messaging and communication to key audiences.

Budget is \$5K to \$7K per-month.

CL also seeks expertise to help develop, manage and support internal and external crisis communications. That includes providing proactive and preventative measures as well as working with CL during an active crisis situation.

CL encourages women and BIPOC-owned firms to apply for crisis RFP that carries a base budget of \$7K.

Proposals for both RFPs are due May 26. They go to Amy Sovocool, COO, at amy@conservationlegacy.org.

[Download strategic communications RFP \(PDF\)](#).

[Download crisis management RFP \(PDF\)](#).

KETCHUM ALUM COHEN TO MILK & HONEY

Paul Cohen, a 17-year veteran of Ketchum, has signed on at Milk & Honey PR as the UK-based shop expands to the US. Cohen takes the CEO North America title.



Paul Cohen

Kirsty Leighton, who launched Milk & Honey in 2017, said clients and prospects were increasingly asking for PR support in the US.

She called Cohen's extensive experience in the US and "a thoughtful, intellectual approach to PR that is rare for our industry."

Cohen exited Ketchum in 2020 as partner/managing director of its energy & industry practice in New York.

He worked for the Omnicom unit in

Shanghai, Hong Kong and Brussels.

Cohen, who also was PA director at Burson-Marsteller, joined Milk & Honey from Brooklyn-based Prospect Strategies Group.

SVC WORKS AUDAX'S WOMEN'S HEALTH DEAL

Sard Verbinnen & Co. represents Audax Private Equity as it sells its Axia Women's Health unit to Partners Group of Switzerland.

Based in Voorhees, NJ, Axia operates more than 150 facilities that offer OB/GYN, breast health, high-risk pregnancy and fertility services in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.

Charlie Choi, CEO of Axia, praised Audax for "supporting our mission to create a more caring, connected and progressive women's health community." He looks forward to "our next chapter with Partners Group to continue building sustainable value as a national women's health platform."

Partners has \$109B in assets under management, with 20 offices worldwide and a regional headquarters in Denver.

Sard Verbinnen's Julie Rudnick and Julie Casale represent Boston-based Audax.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Pop'N Creative, an Atlanta-based, Black women-owned multicultural marketing firm focused on digital and social campaigns, content creation and experience design, is named agency of record for the 2021 season of the WNBA's **Atlanta Dream**.

Pop'N Creative will drive the team's brand awareness, amplify their social impact and enhance player profiles with the #DoItForTheDream campaign. The campaign is spearheaded by Dream president Suzanne Abair and vice president and former Dream point guard Renee Montgomery, who sat out the 2020 season in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. It is aimed at challenging the systemic barriers faced by people of color. Abair and Montgomery, along with Northland founder and chairman Larry Gottesdiener, purchased the team, which had been partly owned by former Georgia Senator Kelly Loeffler, in February.



Geoffrey Weill Associates has been named public relations counsel of record for **Neos**, Italy's second-largest airline. Weill is working with Neos as it prepares to launch twice-weekly service between New York and Milan in the second half of June. Weill has also been selected to handle public relations in North America for French Affaires, which offers small group journeys to France as well as designing customized trips.

Baker Public Relations, which has offices in Pittsburgh and Albany, NY, is named PR agency of record for

Gwen's Girls. Baker PR will serve as strategic communications partner for public relations, event planning and marketing for Gwen's Girls, a nonprofit founded by Gwen Elliott, Pittsburgh's first female and African American police commander, that empowers girls and young women through holistic, gender-specific programs and education.



gwen's girls

imre adds outdoor apparel brand **icebreaker**. The announcement marks imre's expanded role with VF Corporation, owner of another imre client, Dickies. imre will work with icebreaker to define and manage the development of the brand's overall PR narrative, which will then be used to support future product launches through earned media storytelling, a product seeding program and execution of initiatives that will position icebreaker as a leader in sustainability and supply chain transparency.

Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications scoops up **Jovē Wellness** to its roster of food & beverage clients. CIIC will work the launch of the company's new alkaline water, Jovē, with a campaign including media outreach, consumer activations, events and promotions, influencer partnerships and product sampling. The kick-off will begin with the "Greatest. Summer. Ever!" campaign, which consists of a summer hydration challenge, a 7-day wellness initiative, social media messaging, contests and giveaways.

Blaze Public Relations picks up Bluetooth speaker producer **Soundboks** to its roster of challenger brands. The agency will execute media outreach, targeting opportunities to build buzz and increase awareness of the brand to overland, RV, boating and audiophile channels. Campaign activations throughout 2021 will include brand growth and product launches.

ACCENTURE'S POGGENPOHL SHIFTS TO UNISYS

Unisys Corporation, a global IT solutions company, has hired Teresa Poggenpohl as chief marketing officer and senior VP, marketing and communications, reporting directly to Unisys chair and CEO Peter Altabef.



Teresa Poggenpohl

Poggenpohl comes to Unisys following a 33-year career at Accenture, where she was most recently chief marketing and communications officer for North America.

She previously served as Accenture's global brand and image leader and partner/director of global brand management and advertising.

"Teresa is a recognized leader in IT services and an innovator in her field who will bring her deep experience to our marketing and communications efforts as we position our company and our solutions for future growth," said Altabef.

Unisys posted a 1.1 percent decline in Q1 revenues to \$509.8M. It suffered a \$157.8M net loss.

ALASKA RAILROAD SHOPS FOR PR

The Alaska Railroad Corp., which operates the only full-service passenger and freight system in the US, is looking for a firm to handle its corporate and media relations.

The Anchorage-headquartered company runs 500 miles of track from tidewater Whittier and Seward to interior Alaska. It owns 36K acres of land for use in operations and available for leases.

The PR firm will be responsible for corporate positioning & imaging campaigns, employee communications, legislative outreach, publicity, social media and promotional support, according to the RFP.

It will be required to provide a team for research, strategic planning, implementation and tracking results.

Proposals are due May 31. They go to: Alaska Railroad Corporation; Attn: Procurement Department; 327 W. Ship Creek Avenue, 2nd Floor; Anchorage, AK 99501

Download RFP (PDF).

BUZBEE SUCCEEDS BARON AT WAPO

Sally Buzbee, who has been executive editor and senior vice president at AP since 2017, is taking the reins as executive editor at the *Washington Post*, effective June 1.

Buzbee succeeds Marty Baron, who stepped down in February. She will be the first woman to have the Post's top editorial job.



Sally Buzbee

Buzbee had also been on the shortlist for the top job at the *Los Angeles Times*. That position went to ESPN's Kevin Merida, a former WaPo managing editor.

Before being tabbed to lead AP, Buzbee had been the organization's Washington bureau chief and also served as its Middle East regional editor.

Ryan called her "an inspiring leader and accomplished journalist in the finest traditions" of the Post.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Buzbee said that diversity and inclusion had been a major focus for her at AP.

TIKTOK TOPS INSTAGRAM AMONG GEN Z

Video app TikTok this year is on track to surpass Instagram in the U.S. among Gen Z users, according to a May social user forecast by digital market research company eMarketer.

By the end of the year, eMarketer predicts that TikTok will count 37.3 million Gen Z users (those born between 1997 and 2012) in the U.S. who access the platform at least once a month. During the same period, photo-sharing site Instagram is expected to 33.3 million U.S.-based Gen Z users.

TikTok has exploded in popularity in the U.S., with eMarketer noting that the China-based short-form video platform gained 11 million Gen Z users between 2019 and 2020 alone.

Messaging app Snapchat still boasts the largest user base for the nine-to-24-year-old demo. However, that platform's growth is also expected to taper off in the coming years, with TikTok anticipated to surpass Snapchat in terms of total U.S. users by 2023.

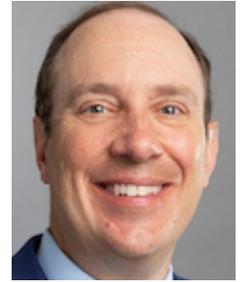
TikTok is also expected to eventually narrow the gap with Snapchat among Gen Z users by 2025

In terms of total U.S.-based users, Instagram is still expected to remain the leading social network for the foreseeable future, counting 119 million users this year, compared to Snapchat's 85.1 million and TikTok's 66.5 million.

KETCHUM UPS PETERS TO TOP CLIENT POST

Ketchum has promoted Jamey Peters to chief client

operations officer for North America, effective immediately. Peters has been with Ketchum since 2004, most recently serving as partner and managing director, overseeing the firm's automotive, energy & manufacturing; retail; financial & professional services; and travel, hospitality & leisure sectors—a role he will continue to hold.



Jamey Peters

In his new post, Peters will also be tasked with elevating and optimizing the agency's client experience, engaging its industry and specialty communications services, and operationalizing its proprietary consultancy framework.

NEWS OF FIRMS

Chess and Company, a sports marketing agency focused on chess talent and events, is launched by World Chess, the organizer of the recent Chess Championship Matches in New York. The agency, which will operate from London and Moscow, is led by World Chess head of partnerships Nadia Panteleeva. It will develop and leverage partnerships with professional chess players, streamers and top-circuit chess events and brand integrations. Chess and Company estimates the number of chess players globally at 600 million, "bigger than the number of people who play tennis and golf combined," according to World Chess CEO Ilya Merenzon.

IPREX launches IPREX Academy, a nine-month leadership development program for emerging PR and marketing professionals at independent, partner agencies around the world. Commencing this spring, the program exposes participants to top industry practitioners and seasoned agency principals from the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific as they engage in international staff exchanges, a mentoring program and course modules that go beyond marketing and communications to provide holistic business management skills.

COMMENTARY



The Trump Organization is in the dumps when it comes to corporate reputation, according to the 2021 rankings of the 100 “most visible brands” compiled by Axios and the Harris Poll.

Donald Trump’s outfit chalked up a miserable 56.9 composite score based on ethics, growth, quality of product/service, citizenship, culture and vision. Trump’s mouthpiece, Fox Corp, ranked No. 99 on the list with a score of 59.2.

The other reputationally challenged companies from No. 98 to No. 90 are Facebook, [Wish.com](#), Sears, Wells Fargo, TikTok, Twitter, Comcast, My Pillow and Uber.

Patagonia, which surged 31 notches to the No. 1 spot, is the most respected company. It chalked up an 82.7 score.

Vaccine maker Moderna debuted in the No. 3 spot, while Pfizer leapfrogged 54 slots to No. 7.

Honda, Chick-fil-A, SpaceX, Chewy, Tesla, Costco and Amazon round out the Top Ten.

Hats off to EPA administrator Michael Regan for steering the agency from the magical thinking of the Trump administration to the reality world of science.

The EPA relaunched the “[Climate Change Indicators in the US](#)” section on its website on May 12 to show the impact global warming has on every corner of the US. The idea is to make each of us a stakeholder in the effort to combat warming.

Under Trump, who calls climate change a hoax, the EPA failed to update the Climate Change site. It followed the old “what you don’t know, can’t hurt you” line of thinking.

The *Washington Post* noted that the Climate Change relaunch provides a “detailed and disturbing account of the startling changes that Earth’s warming had on parts of the US during Trump’s presidency.”

President Biden has called cutting greenhouse gas emissions one of his top priorities. The EPA promises to give America a scorecard so we can chart his progress.

Americans are eager to get back to the office, according to [a survey by Kekst CNC](#) released May 12.

The survey found that nearly seven-in-ten respondents want more office than home time in the post-COVID-19 hybrid model. It also found a sharp increase (12 percent since February) in the willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

“Americans have expressed a readiness to return to office, with 67% of respondents indicating they would like to be in the office more than half the time within the next year,” said James Johnson, senior research advisor at Kekst CNC.

He also noted that there is less worry about the negative impact of the pandemic.

More than half (51 percent) of Americans believe the economy will be stronger in three months. That was topped only by the UK (53 percent) and beat Sweden (30 percent), Germany (24 percent), France (19 percent) and Japan (10 percent).

Only 20 percent of Americans believe the economy will be worse off in June. That’s the lowest score of the countries polled.

The Xinhua News Agency, which Reporters Without Borders says is “[at the heart of censorship and disinformation](#)” put into play by China’s communist party, is spending big money to influence American public opinion.

The New China News Agency has finally complied with demands made by the Justice Dept. to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Its May 5 filing shows spending of more than \$8.5M since March 2020 to bankroll bureaus in New York, DC, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Xinhua disputes the notion that it is an entity tightly controlled by the Government of the People’s Republic of China.

On May 12, it certainly lived up to the Reporters Without Borders claim that it is China’s biggest propaganda channel.

It took issue with a report in the *New York Times* and European media about how plummeting birth rates in China could be one of the communist party’s “gravest and social and economic challenges.”

Xinhua quoted a foreign ministry spokesperson, saying China’s population continues to grow and that it is still the world’s most populous nation.

Note to Hua, the NYT based its story on figures released May 11 by China’s National Bureau of Statistics.

“I hope those who are keen on concocting various arguments about China can live as healthy and happy as the Chinese people, and welcome and witness the realization of the Chinese dream together,” Hua said

Hua should ask Tibetans and the Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang province how that Chinese dream is working for them.

Former first son-in-law Jared Kushner launched the [Abraham Accords Institute](#) on May 4 to promote trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges between Israel and Arab countries.

Talk about bum timing.

The Institute’s debut came just ahead of the resumption of hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians, which UN envoy Ton Wennesland fears could lead to a “full-scale war.”

The current Middle East carnage underscores the weakness of the Abraham Accords, an agreement that normalized relations between Israel, Bahrain and the UAE—a trio that was not at war.

The Abraham Accords ignored the Palestinians and their quest for an independent state. The Palestinians, in fact, had no clue about the negotiations leading up to Kushner’s treaty.

What did the Abraham Accords give the Palestinians?

They got a promise from Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to halt rather than abandon the annexation of the West Bank. That is territory that would make up the land of a Palestinian nation.

President Trump hailed the Abraham Accords as “the foundation for a comprehensive peace across the entire region.”

Those were empty words.

The Abraham Accords may have been a PR win for Trump and his embattled buddy Netanyahu, but there won’t be a lasting peace in the Middle East until there is peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

—Kevin McCauley