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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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ALASKA HYDRO-POWER PROJECT SEEKS PR

Alaska is trolling for PR help for a \$5.4 billion hydroelectric power plant project that has gained steam after three decades of planning.

The project, dubbed the Susitna-Watana Project and in development for three decades, is key to Alaska's plan to get 50 percent of its power from renewable sources and picked up momentum last year when the state moved to spend \$65M to build a project team.



The Alaska Energy Authority released an RFP Jan. 24 for PR like media relations, publication development and advocacy assistance as it involves the public in the process.

A \$500K PR budget for the first year of a contract is planned.

The 700-foot tall, 600-megawatt dam will create a 39-mile-long reservoir two miles wide. Estimates say it could be on-line by 2023.

Deadline is Feb. 21. RFP: <http://odwpr.us/xLSocC>.

KETCHUM WRAPS PENN STATE WORK

Ketchum and Penn State have parted ways after the Omnicom firm's hiring in November amid the child abuse scandal that rocked the institution.

Rodney Erickson, president of Penn State, said the university decided after the holiday break that it no longer needed help, according to the local State College newspaper, *Centre Daily*.

Erickson had previously said the school paid \$360K to Ketchum to help with the crisis.

Kekst and Company has worked for the special committee of the school's board investigating Penn State's actions regarding the abuse allegations.

McGinn & Company has handled PR for the family of former Penn State head football coach Joe Paterno, including deflecting rumors of and a day later the announcement of his death Jan. 22.

Penn State distributed more than 10,000 tickets to a Jan. 26 memorial service for Paterno. Ebay pulled the plug on some of the tickets that showed up for auction on the site.



GREENPEACE RAPS KEYSTONE PIPELINE PR

Greenpeace is complaining to the Securities and Exchange Commission that TransCanada is inflating the number of U.S. jobs that will be created with construction of its Keystone XL pipeline, which may be a violation of U.S. securities disclosure laws.

Executive director Phil Radford penned a Jan. 26 letter to SEC chairman Mary Shapiro saying TransCanada's claim of "20,000 high-wage manufacturing and construction jobs" resulting from Keystone is a false and misleading number. That figure comes from a TransCanada-commissioned report from economist Ray Perryman.

Radford, who sent a copy of his letter to TransCanada's board of directors, notes the 20,000 figure is "67 times higher than job creation totals given by the company to Canadian officials for the Canadian portion of the pipeline."

Wrote Radford: "These false and misleading job creation numbers are part of TransCanada's lobbying and PR campaign designed to create Congressional pressure to issue a presidential permit approving construction of Keystone."

In noting that Greenpeace has neither built nor operated a pipeline, TransCanada spokesperson Shawn Howard rapped the environmental group's claims as false and without merit. "We stand by our job numbers as they can easily be substantiated," he told O'Dwyer's via e-mail. He said it's easy for Greenpeace to "question our reporting without any accountability. As a publicly-traded company, we are required to make accurate and timely disclosures about our business."

CUNNINGHAM TO BITE AS PRESIDENT

Tech PR pioneer Andy Cunningham has left e-commerce platform developer Rearden Commerce to head North American operations for Bite Communications.

Cunningham was at Regis McKenna in the early 1980s before founding and building her own agency into a \$24M shop in the 1980s-90s, later selling to Huntsworth for \$75M. Her client list has included icons like IBM, HP and Apple, for which she handled the Macintosh launch.

She takes the new post of president for Next Fifteen-owned Bite, charged with building out an integrated marketing and communications offering for the agency, including analytics, content development and distribution channels. Cunningham joined Rearden in December 2010 as chief marketing officer after a stint founding and running CXO Communication.



Cunningham

JOELE FRANK, KEKST TOP U.S. M&A PR FIRMS

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher and Kekst and Company were the top M&A PR advisors in 2011 by value of deals and volume, respectively, after leading the annual tally by mergermarket in 2010.

Kekst advised 102 transactions during 2011, 15 more than Joele Frank and Sard Verbinnen & Co., which worked 87 deals during the year. FTI Consulting (80), Abernathy MacGregor Group (76) and Brunswick (71) rounded out the top five by number of transactions.

Ranked by deal value, Joele Frank's transactions totaled \$170.4B in 2011, ahead of Brunswick Group (\$166.3B), Sard Verbinnen (\$154.8M), Abernathy MacGregor (\$144B), and Kekst (\$103.6B). Joele Frank worked the largest deal in the U.S. and globally in 2011, Kinder Morgan's \$37.4B move on El Paso Corp., counseling the latter. Brunswick and Abernathy worked the No. 2 deal, Express Scripps' \$33.4B acquisition of Medco Health Solutions.

Globally, Brunswick (\$238.9B) and FTI Consulting (235) were again the most prolific by volume and number.

Mergermarket said U.S. deals rose 14.9 percent over 2010 by value, although the strongest numbers came during the first quarter and trended downward. The fourth quarter was off 25.5% over 2010.

SV SHORES UP ILLUMINA

Sard Verbinnen & Co. is handling media for San Diego-based Illumina biotechnology company, which has received a hostile \$5.7B takeover bid for Switzerland's Roche Holding.

The \$44.50 per-share offer is a sweetened deal from Roche's \$40 per-share price offered earlier this month. Illumina had been trading at \$37.69 just prior to the revised bid by Roche.

Illumina's board promises to review Roche's proposal, but urges shareholders to take no action at the present time. It is consulting with financial advisors Goldman Sachs and Bank of America's Merrill Lynch plus law firm Dewey & LeBoeuf.

Roche terms its all-cash offer as a "full and fair" one and remains open to engage in a constructive dialog with Illumina's management.

SV's Cassandra Bujarski and Matt Benson are working the business.

IPG ADDS TO GH'S DIGITAL OFFERINGS

Interpublic has acquired FUSE, a London.-based digital shop, founded in 2004. The shop serves clients such as Unilever, BBC, Deutsche Bank, Bissell and Tia Maria.

FUSE founders Doug Ayres, Simon Hobbs and Jon Meggitt will remain at their posts, reporting to Jonathan Hughes, president GH International. The shop will retain its own name.

Fred Cook, CEO of GH, says the deal strengthens his firm's digital, interactive and creative offerings. "As the lines between PR, digital advertising continue to blur, these added capabilities will allow us to deliver more fully integrated client campaigns that span earned, owned, shared and paid media," said Cook in a statement. FUSE also has a San Francisco office.

D.C. GROUP BUFFS IRAQ

The Iraqi Center for Development opened Jan. 5 in Washington as a non-profit organization committed to strengthening relations between the U.S. and Iraq.

Its goal is to "reconstruct the Iraqi state and improve the lives of millions through economic revitalization, the strengthening of educational institutions and the solidification of the Iraqi-American relationship," according to its federal filing.

The Iraqi government offered seed money to ICD to enable it to "get up and running as an organization." Budget talks are ongoing.

ICD is headed by Karim Almusawi, a key ally of Iraq's embattled prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. He had been U.S. representative of al-Maliki's political party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.

The Center plans an aggressive outreach program, targeting public officials, media, think tanks and educational groups.

WALTON TAKES U.S. CHAMBER PR POST

Mia Walton, senior VP of corporate communications at Rolls-Royce North America, has moved to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as VP, communications and strategy.

Tita Freeman left the VP slot last April to build a public affairs unit at the National Retail Federation.

Walton exits defense contractor Rolls-Royce after a decade as head of its \$7M marketing and communications unit. She previously held communications and policy posts at General Motors and the American Automobile Manufacturers Association. She was also an aide during the first Bush administration.

At the U.S. Chamber, which marks its 100th anniversary in 2012, she reports to senior VP Tom Collamore.

Rolls Royce NA has not been reached about a replacement.



Walton

BELL POTT GETS NEW CRISIS HEAD

Peter Roberts, who directed Hill+Knowlton Strategies' issues and crisis management unit, has moved to Bell Pottinger in London to head its own I&CM unit.

He was formerly head of communications for BBC News, a tenure that included the 2003 Hutton Report inquiry on the BBC's coverage of alleged "sexed up" Iraq intelligence.

He left the broadcaster after seven years for H+K in 2008.

Roberts also spoke for the BBC on the 2007 kidnapping of journalist Alan Johnston in the Gaza Strip who was held for more than three months.

Group managing director David Wilson alluded to Roberts' BBC tenure in noting that in a crisis the "audio-visual challenge can be the difference between communications success and failure."

BP, part of Chime Communications, was enmeshed in its own crisis in December after a series of unflattering articles about the firm ran in the British press.

HEARST TAPS SPENCER FOR WOMAN'S DAY

Hearst Magazines has named Susan Spencer, a Time Inc. veteran, as editor-in-chief of *Woman's Day* effective Feb. 6. She replaces Elizabeth Mayhew, who is leaving the company.

For the past five years, Spencer has been executive editor of *All You*, the value-focused magazine that covers consumer products, food, health and relationships.

From 2001 to 2007, Spencer was at Time Inc.'s content solutions unit, where she rose to deputy managing editor in charge of developing magazines for American Express, Unilever and Pfizer.

Earlier, Spencer was senior editor at *Child and Diversion*.

The Woman's Day platform reaches more than 20M readers. The magazine celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

MEREDITH ACQUIRES ALLRECIPES.COM

Meredith Corp. has agreed to acquire Allrecipes.com in a \$175M deal that is expected to close at the end of the quarter.

Owned by Readers Digest Assn., Allrecipes.com has a database of 500K recipes that have been downloaded by more than 11M people. Its audience is 70 percent female with a household income of \$73K.

Tim Harty, president of Meredith's national media group, says the acquisition significantly enhances the company's digital platform and reinforces its leadership in the food category.

The company says it can now offer marketers an audience of more than 100M unduplicated women.

SINCLAIR TO EDIT FRENCH HUFFPO

Anne Sinclair, journalist and wife of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former International Monetary Fund chief, will edit the French version of The Huffington Post. The site is a partnership with AOL and Le Monde.

Sinclair had her own TV interview show during the '80s and '90s, but gave it up when Strauss-Kahn became France's finance minister.

She stood by him after sexual assault charges were filed by a hotel chambermaid in New York. Those charges were ultimately dismissed.

WEATHER CHANNEL PUTS KENNEY IN CHARGE

The Weather Channel has named Dave Kenney, ex-president of Akamai and former CEO of Publicis Groupe's Digitas Inc., CEO.

He succeeds Mike Kelly, who took the helm in 2009.

Kenney says he was attracted to the post because "weather is fascinating." He's eager to further the integration of TWC TV, digital and mobile platforms and develop new programming.

The WTC is owned by NBC Universal, Blackstone Group and Bain Capital. The group issued a statement that praised Kenney's "leadership experience and vision to drive global initiatives across all platforms."

Kelly will serve as a special adviser to Kenney and Bain Capital. TWC reaches more than 160 people through its multiple offerings.

EX-LAT EDITOR JOINS PUBLIC RADIO

Russ Stanton, who stepped down in December as editor and executive VP at the *Los Angeles Times*, becomes VP-content for southern California's KPCC public radio station on Feb. 6.

He oversaw the firing of hundreds of LAT staffers due to the collapse of the newspaper business and bankruptcy of parent company, Tribune Co.

Stanton called KPCC his favorite radio station and one that has moved "down the path of developing a sustainable business model to produce high-quality journalism."

He joined the LAT in 1997 as an Orange County reporter.

TIME WARNER OPENS MEDIALAB

Time Warner has opened a medialab at its New York City headquarters to gain insight into consumer behavior and industry trends that will impact its magazine, cable programming, Internet and film production units.

Jeff Bewkes, CEO of TW, says the medialab will provide the company tools "to look inside the mind of the consumer as we develop even more engaging content."

The facility features a 50-seat theater, home-style living room, a mock retail check-out lane and gaming stations. It will use biometric monitoring devices to measure a person's physiological responses to content.

TW Research Council is the force behind the medialab. Gary Ginsberg, executive VP/corporate marketing and communications serves on the Council.

SHOWTIME FOR ASSANGE

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who faces sex assault charges in Sweden, plans to launch a 10-part TV series in March featuring interviews with "key political players, thinkers from around the world," according to statement posted on the site Jan. 23.

He sees the need to radically rethink the world.

"Upheavals and revolutions in the Middle East have commenced an era of political change that is still unfolding.

"In the West, the deterioration of the rule of law has demonstrated the bankruptcy of once leading political institutions and ideologies.

"The Internet has never been so strong, or so much under attack," Assange wrote.

The statement calls Assange "one of the world's most recognizable revolutionary figures."

There is no word about where the show will air, but the statement claims initial licensing commitments are in hand covering more than "600M viewers across cable, satellite and terrestrial broadcast networks."

Assange sees "an exciting opportunity to discuss the vision of my guests in a new style of show that examines their philosophies and struggles in a deeper and clearer way than has been done."



TRUST IN MEDIA GAINS, GOV'T PLUMMETS

The Edelman Trust Barometer released Jan. 23 documents the massive disconnect people worldwide have with government.

Media is the only institution – among government, business and non-governmental organizations – measured by Edelman to show a rise in trust. The biggest gains were made in India (+20 points), U.S. (+18), U.K. (+15) and Italy (+12).



Edelman

Trust in government charted the biggest decline in the 11-year history of the Barometer. Credibility of a government official or regulator dipped from 43 percent in 2011's survey to 29 percent, which ranks on the bottom of the list, below CEOs (38 percent)

and financial/industry analysts (46 percent).

The Edelman survey of 25,000 people in 25 countries found that while two-thirds of respondents expect government leaders to listen to "citizens' needs and feedback" only 17 percent feel that their gripes are heard. A mere 19 percent of respondents say government "effectively manages the financial affairs of the country," and 16 percent say leadership "communicates frequently and honestly."

Despite the trust deficit gap, people support governmental regulation of business.

Only four percent say "government should not play a role in business." Thirty-one percent believe government "should protect consumers from irresponsible business practices" and 25 percent want regulators to "ensure companies are behaving responsibly."

On a nation-by-nation breakout, 77 percent of Chinese believe government "does not regulate business enough." That's followed by Spain (70 percent), Mexico (68 percent), Ireland (64 percent) and Hong Kong (61 percent). The U.S. weighs in at 40 percent. Singapore, Japan, United Arab Emirates, Poland and Netherlands are the five nations rounding out the bottom of the list.

U.S. Media Trust Rises

In the U.S., Edelman reported trust in all media sources rose, including major jumps in television, radio, and newspapers as sources of information about companies – by 23, 13, and 11 points, respectively.

In the U.K., those same sources increased by 25, 17, and 17 points, respectively. But in France and Germany, trust in TV news and newspapers fell by ten or more points, Edelman found.

China, meanwhile, saw double-digit decreases in television as a trusted source, including a plunge from 74 to 43 percent.

Newspapers' trust was down by 20 points to 34 percent, while trust in social media jumped from "virtual distrust" at one percent to being greatly trusted in the 20-percent range as more Chinese adopted micro-blogging and social networking.

At the end of 2010, Edelman noted, China's Twitter-like service Weibo had 60M users while the end of 2011 found 310M users.

"Trust in media went up this year because media is perceived as a big tent," said Edelman. "There's the first place you go for information about companies, mainstream media. There's also hybrid media – blogs or search engines – which is the second place. The third is social media. And the fourth is corporate communications. It is the melange. It is the combination because the average person has to see or hear something three to five times before achieving belief."

Edelman said media has been perceived as doing an excellent job covering the global financial crisis in Europe and deficit issues in the U.S. He added that a lot of large stories broke in 2011 and that media consumption spanned mainstream media to social.

"That is the path forward for media, to have a kind of conversational tone as opposed to a lecturing tone," he said.

MURDOCH TARGETS SPANISH-LANGUAGE TV

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. is joining with Colombia's RCN Television SA to create a Spanish language broadcaster in the U.S. to compete with leader Univision.

The venture called MundoFox will debut in the fall, offering a "more action-packed type of telenovela," Lucas Kappaz, managing director of RCN's international channels, told the *Wall Street Journal*, which is owned by News Corp.

The partners will contribute programming, but also buy shows from third-parties. Sports, news, fantasy, variety programs, movies and scripted shows are on tap.

MundoFox is projected to lose less than \$50M during the first year.

Kantar Media reports that U.S. ad spend on Spanish TV rose 7.4 percent last year compared to an overall 2.3 percent hike.

The future is bright due to the robust growth prospects of Spanish speakers in the U.S. Currently, Hispanics account for 16.3 percent of the U.S. population. That percentage is expected to hit 30 percent by 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

CBS FIRES BLOGGER OVER PATERNO STORY

CBS Interactive has fired college football blogger Adam Jacobi, who erroneously reported former Penn State coach Joe Paterno's death the night before it occurred.

Jacobi posted a story (since amended) around 8 p.m. on Jan. 27 saying that an ailing Paterno died from complications from lung cancer treatment.

The dispatch was widely cited in social media but counter-reports followed from the *New York Times* and others and Paterno's family released a statement via the McGinn Group that night saying Paterno was still alive.

Paterno died the next morning at 85.

"In the end, CBS had to let me go for the Paterno story going out the way it did, and I understand completely," Jacobi wrote on Twitter Jan. 27. "Thanks, everyone, for reading."

Jacobi's report prompted an apology and retraction from CBSSports.com managing editor Mark Swanson hours after it appeared.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**BURSON FLIES WITH SFO**

Burson-Marsteller has won a competitive bid process with San Francisco International Airport for a three-year PR contract worth \$600K a year.

The SFO commission kicked off a search process last June but canceled responses to that initial RFP after deciding to re-write the scope of work to include a focus on new technologies. A second RFP then followed in September.

There was no incumbent for the PR component, although SFO's marketing contractor, M-Line, previously handled some of the digital components. In addition to Burson, the airport has also give M-Line a new marketing pact.

The pact carries two, two-year options and was approved by the airport's board on Jan. 17.

C&W REVAMPS MULTICULTURAL UNIT

Cohn & Wolfe has unveiled an expanded and renamed incarnation of its four-year-old Latino and multicultural unit, Infuse.

The move comes with the hire of VP Kerri Allen, director of PR for Revolución who launched that agency's PR division and handled clients like AOL, HBO and the American Heart Association. Allen reports to C&W's U.S. consumer lead Liz Beck.

Infuse provides programs to reach Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American and LGBT communities and leans on C&W's Asia and Latin America network of offices.

GREENOUGH REALIGNS OPERATIONS

Boston-based Greenough, said it has introduced a new organizational model centered on two areas: account services and creative services. AS includes client strategy, day-to-day account activity, and client satisfaction, including metrics, while the creative division includes media relations, a content team, and social media/marketing pros.

As part of the revamp, 11-year vet Stacey Mann was promoted to executive VP, account services. Mann just started her eleventh year at Greenough. Scott Bauman, in his seventh year at Greenough, has been promoted to EVP, creative services and architect of its social marketing and social CRM methodology.

The firm has also hired former *PC Week* editor Barbara Call as director of content. Andrea LePain, former managing editor with New England Cable News, also recently joined as director of media relations.

BRIEFS: Evolve Communications, Baltimore, is offering "Rocket Packs for Startups," a suite of low-cost marketing services for early stage companies. A basic package includes a press release and distribution, while larger packages add a marketing brainstorm session, custom media list and outreach.

...**Karen McGagh Communications**, Baltimore, has a flat fee PR plan for lawyers and law firms for assignments like a legal feature story, expert commentary, case news or industry perspective the media.

...Indianapolis-based **BohlsenPR** has moved to Pan Am Tower at 201 S. Capitol Ave., Suite 800, and re-branded as Bohlsen Group.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

Emanate, New York/Akzo Nobel, as AOR for PR for its Glidden Paint brand. Seven agencies were involved in the search. Scope of work includes setting up a PR function for the brand, as well as working with the integrated team to support launches and other strategic initiatives. Sister Omnicom firms DDB (advertising) and PHD (media buying) are also engaged. Digital Influence Group is social media AOR.

DDR PR, Pleasantville, N.Y./WeeZee... World of Yes I Can, indoor sensory playspace, for strategic communications, media relations, social media and the coordination of a grand opening event.

East

Aloysius Butler & Clark, Wilmington, Del./Klein USA, U.S. unit of Spain-based interior sliding glass door maker, as AOR.

Hager Sharp, Washington, D.C./Educational Testing Service, assessments and education research, to generate attention for its research and its assessment products. Debra Silimeo is senior VP and leader of HS' education practice.

Midwest

San Jose PR, Chicago/Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, as AOR for marketing communications. Gift of Hope is one of 58 non-profits that make up the U.S. organ donation system.

SSPR, Glenview, Ill./Media Solutions, interactive mobile advertising solutions, as AOR for PR.

PReturn, Chicago/SIM Partners, local digital marketing services, for media relations and thought leadership.

Mountain West

JohnstonWells PR, Denver/Denver Resources Partners, for PR counsel and investor outreach for a Feb. 29 conference touting Australian-based resource companies to U.S. investors.

West

The Phelps Group, Santa Monica, Calif./Luxury Link Travel Group, high-end travel, for strategic marketing planning and execution, branding and media relations.

Cook + Schmid, San Diego/Unified Port of San Diego, to develop and manage public and community relations services, including increasing public awareness and understanding of the Port's mission and current and upcoming real estate and development projects.

J PR, San Diego/Rancho Valencia Resort (Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.), for PR through a six-month, \$20M renovation beginning this month.

Canada

Fleishman-Hillard, Toronto/Foraco International SA, France-based diversified drilling services company, to develop a communication strategy targeting stakeholders.

International

Harvard PR, London/CCS Insight, mobile analyst group, to raise the profile of the brand with a general business audience and support expansion into new markets. Harvard is part of Bell Pottinger.

— Greg Hazley

NEWS OF SERVICES**NIRI-NY SEEKS 9/11 INTERNSHIP PARTNERS**

The New York chapter of the National Investor Relations Institute is looking for partners in the IR, PR and corporate communications sectors who can offer paid internships for its program for relatives of victims of the 9/11 attacks.

The Logler 9/11 Internship Program needs sponsors for the summer 2012. The program was founded in 2001 by the chapter in memory of member Beth Logler, VP-IR of eSpeed, who died in the World Trade Center attacks.

"In this, the 10th anniversary year of the 9/11 attacks, NIRI-NY remains committed to supporting those students who are just now embarking on their professional paths," said Bernard Kilkelly, president of NIRI-NY.

Past participants have included BGC Partners, Lane PR, Capital Bridge, PepsiCo, Veeco Instruments, EDGAR Online, Burson-Marsteller, Delphi Financial Group, Altria and Hain Celestial.

Entities with the ability to offer a paid summer internship in investor or public relations or corporate communications can email Patrick Tracey at patrick.tracey@computershare.com.

For those companies that can only offer an unpaid internship, NIRI-NY says it can arrange for a stipend for the student to cover transportation and other expenses.

SYNAPTIC UPGRADES

Synaptic Digital said it has unveiled major enhancements to thenewsmarket.com, including faster cloud-based direct downloads, one-click embedding and open content previews.

Krish Menon, chief technology officer, said the new cloud-based mechanism, as opposed to FTP, is particularly crucial in markets with challenging bandwidth issues, and will be a real asset for media to get content instantly during the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games.

[Thenewsmarket.com](http://thenewsmarket.com) was launched in beta at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

BRIEFS: PR Newswire is marking Black History Month with discounts on select services to reach and engage with African American media, influencers and consumers, the company said. PRN's African American news feed is published by sites like *The El Paso Times*, *Las Vegas Business Press*, *Orlando Sentinel* and KGO-TV ABC 7. Details about the offerings are at <http://odwpr.us/xpmNk0>. ...**Atlanta-based agency EOS** is collaborating with TV journalist, talk show host and author Kimberley Kennedy as it introduces a communications and media training program dubbed Empower. Kennedy will work with EOS VP of PR Elyse Hammett, APR on the communications training program, which includes a one-on-one key message articulation, as well as simulated press conferences, speaking engagements, video vignettes, print interviews, and other venues where a client must articulate a message. EOS is led by Margaret Gearing and Susan Frost. Kennedy is currently co-host and producer of the WXIA talk show, "The Chat Room."

PEOPLE**Joined**

Julie Cunningham, managing director, The BlueShirt Group, to Mitek Systems, the San Diego-based imaging software company emerging as a leader in mobile check deposits, as VP of investor relations and corporate communications. She was senior VP in charge of IR, corporate comms. and PR in a decade at Qualcomm before a stint as VP/comms. at Novatel Wireless and then moving to the agency side at Next Fifteen-owned Blueshirt in 2010.

**Cunningham**

Christopher Curran, director of communications and issues management, The ServiceMaster Company, to The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Akron, Ohio, as VP of PR and comms. for its North American tire business, effective Feb. 6. Curran, 45, replaces Ed Markey, who was named vice president of corporate communications in March 2011. He was senior manager of corporate comms. at Cadbury Schweppes and led global PR and IR for Esselte Corp.

Alexis Lauren and Isabella Sophia Varese to RPR PR, Boca Raton, Fla., as account managers.

Jennifer Wonnacott, comms. director in the California state assembly, to Fiona Hutton & Associates, Los Angeles, as senior A/E. Ann Newton was upped to A/S.

Mike Hooker, a TV news veteran, to Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo., as executive director of public affairs and communications, effective Feb. 20. Nearly 100 applicants were interviewed in a national search to replace Brad Bohlander, who took a similar post at North Carolina State in October. Hooker worked at NBC stations in Missouri and Tennessee before joining CBS4 News in Denver in 1994.

James Whatley, previously with 1000heads, to Ogilvy PR/London's 360° Digital Influence unit, as senior associate director to lead social business and B2B communications strategy for global clients.

Promoted

Stephen Fera to the new post of senior VP of public affairs, Independence Blue Cross, Philadelphia. He was VP of government programs and will now lead expanded efforts on government affairs, health policy matters, and community affairs. He also oversees the health insurer's foundation, started in October.

Mike Gross to senior VP;

Emily Watts to senior

A/E; **Allie Artur** to A/E,

and **Maria DeFazio** to

**Gross, Watts**

senior graphic designer, Hornercom, Philadelphia.

Bob Dowling to president of Weber Shandwick's New York office, reporting to Gail Heimann, global vice chair. He joined the firm in 2004 and led its New York tech practice before heading to Northern California. He takes over for Paul Jensen, who was promoted last year to chair of the firm's North American Corporate Practice. Also, Tony Hynes was promoted to GM of Northern California, Dowling's old post.

U.S. LOBBYING OUTLAYS DIPPED 6.8% IN 2011

Federal lobbying outlays dipped 6.8 percent to \$3.27B in 2011, marking the first year-to-year decline since 1999, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Center says the decline is due to a combination of political gridlock and a fall-off from the aggressive 2010 spending by healthcare and financial services companies fighting to stave off regulation.

The big 2011 spending categories were the pharmaceutical and health products industry (\$226M), insurers (\$158M), oil & gas companies (\$146M) and electric utilities (\$144M).



Sectors stepping up lobbying activities in '11 were TV/music/movie, commercial banks, telecom services, mining, public sector unions and reproductive rights groups

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce topped the list of individual spenders with outlays of \$66.4M. It was followed by General Electric (\$26.3M), National Assn. of Realtors (\$22.4M), Blue Cross/Blue Shield (\$20.9M), ConocoPhillips (\$20.6M), American Hospital Assn. (\$20.4M), AT&T (\$20.2M), Comcast (\$19.3M), Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America (\$18.9M) and National Cable and Telecommunications Assn. (\$18.5M).

The Center reports there were 12,600 registered lobbyists in 2011, off the record high of 14,900 in 2007, the year before new regulations were put into effect in the aftermath of the Jack Abramoff scandal.

EX-REP. DELIVERS PITCH FOR TAIWAN

Former Florida Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart's Western Hemisphere Strategies (Miami) has inked a \$15K-a-month pact with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office to further Taiwan ties with the U.S.

The Republican, who stepped down in 2010, is to brief the client on "developments in the U.S. Congress and U.S. political scenes" that may impact Taiwan, according to the contract.

Diaz-Balart is also slated to encourage Congressmen and their staffers to visit the Republic of China and extend invitations to lunch/dinner at Taiwan's Twin Oaks estate in Washington.

Havana-born Diaz-Balart, whose aunt was the first wife of Fidel Castro, is prohibited from doing any business with the People's Republic of China and any of its entities.

He also is banned from lobbying Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, who took over his brother's conservative south Florida Congressional seat in the last election.

Tecro also uses former New York Republican Senator Al D'Amato's Park Strategies.

It renewed that \$240K one-year pact this month.

WPP BOLSTERS PBN CO. STAKE

WPP has bolstered its stake in PBN Co., a major corporate/crisis/government relations player in the former Soviet Union, from 49.9 percent to 75 percent, a move that results in the new brand name of PBN Hill+Knowlton Strategies.

In 2007, Martin Sorrell's ad/PR combine purchased a 49.9 percent stake in PBN, which has counseled clients such as Bank of America, BP, John Deere, Abbott, Xerox and Visa in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the former Soviet republics.

PBN's management trio of Peter Necarsulmer, Susan Thurman and Myron Wasyluk now hold a 25 percent state in the revamped firm.

Jack Martin, CEO of H+K, said in a statement that PBN's depth of expertise and relationships with governments/ business community/ and media "will serve our clients well in this dynamic part of the world."

PBN launched 1983. H+K's Moscow office will be merged into PBN. PBN's D.C. office will be folded into H+K.

SNAP PLANS TO DEVELOP IR WITH ICR

Snap Interactive, the Facebook app developer growing at a prodigious rate, has engaged ICR as the publicly traded company looks to improve communications with the investment sector.

Snap, which went public in 2006 a year before its hit dating app AreYouInterested.com debuted, will lean on ICR as it plans to present at investor conferences for the first time this year.

"We look forward to more actively communicating our story to investors interested in these emerging markets," said new CFO Jon Pedersen, who joined from Warner Music Group in November.

New York-based Snap posted \$5.1M in third quarter 2011 revenue, up nearly 200 percent from the same period of 2010. It is the No. 2 Facebook app developer behind Zynga, which went public in a mediocre debut in December.

Snap claims 55M installs of AreYouInterested.com. It also developed WhoIsNear.com, a geo-location app. The company does not currently work with a PR agency. Leah Taylor is PR director.

USC DENTAL SCHOOL WANTS IMAGE BUFF

The University of Southern California's dental school has kicked off a review for its communications and advertising efforts with an RFP process through early February.

The Ostrow School of Dentistry issued an RFP on Jan. 24 noting it wants to "increase awareness and enhance its reputation" on the Los Angeles campus and throughout the state of California. It is also kicking off a \$115M fundraising campaign in March, part of USC's overall \$6B push announced by new president Max Nikias last year amid cutbacks in state funding.

A \$10K-a-month budget is expected. There is no incumbent.

Proposals are due Feb. 3.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/wrpfEFQ>.

PR OPINION

Wikipedia celebrated its 11th birthday Saturday throughout the world and one of the events included an all-day conference and birthday party at New York University.

We attended the event from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. when the birthday cake was cut and Wikipedians sang “Happy Birthday” to the loose organization that Phil Gomes of Edelman says “is on the first page of search results for nearly every company, brand, product, personality, captain-of-industry, etc.” in the world.

PR pros talk a lot about “social media” (which is only a tiny corner of the web) when they should be spending a lot more time learning how to correct and place materials on WP.

The complaint of Gomes, who started the CREWE Facebook discussion on WP and PR.group is that “many (WP) entries are derelict, even for important topics and well-known industry bellwethers. Financial data is often years old.”

A chief participant in the discussion that has drawn hundreds of posts is Keith Trivitt, associate PR director of the self-proclaimed world’s largest organization of PR people—the PR Society.

However, no one from PRS attended Jan. 28 although the media relations dept. had a payroll of \$406,453 in 2010 and total cost of \$620,292 (up 42% from 2009).

Trivitt and others have come up with a nine-part plan to get WP to change its policies that includes a dozen global PR groups working together to put “pressure” on co-founder Jimmy Wales; contacting “politicians” worldwide to do the same, and publishing a list of mistakes on WP involving the *Fortune* 100 and the Global 1,000 companies.

PRS has yet to post the minutes of the four board meetings last year nor the minutes of the Oct. 15, 2011 Assembly. Its posting of the 17 members of the 2012 directors does not identify who are the five at-large directors nor what districts the other directors represent. Bylaws say that only two directors are to be at-large but no one ran last year from the Southeast, Southwest and North Pacific districts.

Fastest-Growing Charity in U.S.

The Wikimedia Foundation (EIN: 20-0049703) saw its revenues climb from \$8.1 million in 2008 to \$16.2M in 2009 and expected this to rise to \$20.4M for the year ended June 30, 2011, says its annual report (PDF).

The Charity Navigator said the 106% spurt in 2009 revenues made WP the “fastest-growing charity” in the U.S. Expenses of \$20.4M were forecast for the 2011 year leaving cash/investments at \$13M. There were 680 million unique visitors to WP in that year. Revenue goal for 2011-12 is close to \$30M.

WP is Cool to PR People

Co-founder Jimmy Wales has been cool to PR people since 2006 when he said he frowns “very very strongly” on them making direct edits to WP pages.

On Jan. 11 of this year he said of PR pro William

Beutler that Beutler “has done the single best job of abusing our assumption of good faith and illustrating why it’s so critical that people in your position be completely restricted from making edits in article space...”

WP, as several Wikipedians told us Saturday, prefers that PR people uplink materials to “Talk” pages that don’t appear on main WP or in the “Articles for Creation” area for proposed new topics.

WP administrator David Goodman said WP is not opposed to PR pros making factual corrections about earnings, sales or discontinued corporate entities.

He said PR pros are not totally banned from editing WP’s “live” pages but they are discouraged from doing so. “In practice,” he added, “either they do damage control or write about an organization from the point of view of writing a web page. PR people write about what they want the public to know but an encyclopedia is about what the public wants to know.”

Like Putting Together ‘Broken Glass’

He said there is a “large overlap” in these areas and PR pros can contribute as long as they keep in mind that all content must be “objective.”

Richard Knipel, president of WP/New York, said PR pros often approach content from a commercial standpoint and should make article suggestions on WP’s Talk pages where editors will decide whether they can go “live.”

This website feels the quickest route to obtaining recognition on WP is employing those who are familiar with its rules. Some do this on a full-time basis including David King of Raleigh who says putting together an article for WP, including proper sourcing and avoidance of copyright issues, is like putting together the “shards of glass” from a broken glass. “Sourcing to their satisfaction is very difficult,” he said.

A Wikipedian who didn’t want his name used said PR pros use too many adjectives. “Expert people from companies can be very useful once they get the idea that they should write up the basic facts and then leave the article alone,” he said.

Told about “The Tylenol Mafia,” which author Scott Bartz has been unable to get mentioned in WP, Wikipedians said Bartz must first get it mentioned in national media.

The event, which drew about 70 attendees, had a panel on how students can learn to edit and create WP entries that will get past the volunteer editors, of which there are about 10,000. One panel discussed the need for a greater “gender balance” among WP editors who were described as being “largely male.”

PR pro Bryce Tom asked the Wikipedians how PR people can more actively participate in changing WP’s live content. Wikipedian Paul Robinson, who has the user name “AstroCog,” said PR people could obtain “credibility” by linking to secondary sources that talk about their employers or clients.

Peter Coti discussed plans for building the New York chapter of WP which now has about 70 members.

— Jack O’Dwyer