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Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



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## SD LABOR DEPT. PLANS TO HIRE PR FIRM

The South Dakota Dept. of Labor is seeking a firm(s) to handle \$550K worth of PR, marketing, branding and advertising services targeted at “strategically selected markets and audiences” in the Mount Rushmore State.



The Dept.’s goal is to increase awareness of workforce training and employment services offerings.

Interested parties may bid on the entire package or individual components. They are 1) “Career Launch SD” (\$100K push aimed at youth 16-24); \$250K effort for business and job-seeker services; 3) “SD

UpSkill” (\$200K drive for adults in need of high school equivalency or post-secondary education.

Each effort contains digital marketing, traditional media outreach, research and partnership development work.

South Dakota plans to issue a 15-month contract that begins Oct. 1.

Proposals are due Aug. 30. Send the original and two copies in an envelope marked “Request for Proposal RFP #2469 to: Dawn Dovre, Deputy Secretary; Dept. of Labor and Regulation; 123 W. Missouri Ave.; Pierre, SD 57501

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## SAMSUNG’S BATTEN DRIVES TO VOLKSWAGEN

Cameron Batten, head of communications for the US unit of Samsung Electronics, has joined Volkswagen Group of America as chief communications officer.



**Cameron Batten**

He will handle PR for the Volkswagen brand and spearhead corporate storytelling, internal communications and government affairs in the US, Canada and Mexico.

At Samsung’s \$34B consumer electronics unit, Batten oversaw corporate/product communications, media relations, social media, citizenship and internal PR.

Earlier, he served as VP of US card communications for Capital One and did stints at Johnson & Johnson, American Express and Royal Philips Electronics.

Scott Keogh, CEO of Volkswagen, said Batten’s brand communications background will help shape the narrative around the company’s electric car push.

Volkswagen has a manufacturing plant in Chattanooga, with more than 1,000 dealers and 8,000 workers in the US.

## BRAGMAN REPS EX-NAT’L ENQUIRER EDITOR

Hollywood crisis manager Howard Bragman represents former *National Enquirer* “catch and kill” editor Dylan Howard, who is plotting a comeback with the launch of a Hamptons edition of *Grazia Gazette*, a free luxury fashion magazine.



**Howard Bragman**

The *New York Times*’ Aug. 15 [business section](#) described Howard as the “disgraced National Enquirer editor who played a key role in suppressing stories about Donald Trump’s affairs during his presidential campaign.”

Howard left American Media, National Enquirer’s parent, on March 31, 2020 with the expiration of his contract.

## FTI HANDLES BATTLE FOR VECTURA

[FTI Consulting](#) is advising Vectura, the UK maker of inhaled medicines and devices to treat respiratory illnesses, as it is a takeover target of Philip Morris International and Carlyle Group. It had agreed to a deal with Carlyle, but the maker of Marlboro cigarettes upped its offer on Aug. 8 by \$1.4B to top the private equity firm’s offer.

The London Stock Exchange’s takeover panel intervened on Aug. 9 by establishing an auction process for Vectura to “provide an orderly framework for the resolution of this competitive situation.”

PMI and Carlyle have until Aug. 17 to make final bids.

FTI’s Ben Atwell and Simon Conway handle Vectura.

## HUGHES TO HEAD EDELMAN INFLUENCER UNIT

[Edelman](#) has hired Fiona Hughes as head of business development and operations for its influencer marketing and Edelman Studios operation. Based in London, she will develop a uniform approach to influencer marketing and content creation across the firm’s global network.

Hughes joins Edelman from Collectively, a global influencer shop, where she was European managing director.

Earlier, Hughes was integrated communications director at Hill+Knowlton Strategies/UK and did stints at Fever PR, Red Consultancy and [Weber Shandwick](#).



**Fiona Hughes**

## **MALDIVES FLOATS RFP TO LURE TRAVELERS**

The Maldives is looking for a public relations agency that can promote and position the image of the Maldives around the globe as a premium tourist destination.



The Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corp wants to hire a PR firm for a year to entice travelers living in the Middle East Market to visit the country, particularly as a honeymoon, luxury destination.

Scope of the work includes creating public relations campaigns that promote Maldives as a safe and premier luxury tourist and beach destination; attending, assisting and representing Maldives in exhibitions/fairs in the target market; organizing and managing a roadshow or marketing event; media monitoring; and crisis management work.

Proposals are due by 3 p.m. (MVT) on September 2 and can be sent to [Saaif@visitmaldives.com](mailto:Saaif@visitmaldives.com) and [procurement@visitmaldives.com](mailto:procurement@visitmaldives.com).

Questions should be directed to Procurement Assistant Director, Ahmed Saaif, [Saaif@visitmaldives.com](mailto:Saaif@visitmaldives.com).

[Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## **BGR SMOKES OUT DC FOR CANNABIS CO.**

BGR Government Affairs is representing Captor Capital Corp., a Toronto-based investment firm that is scouting for cannabis opportunities.

CCC targets cash-flowing established companies and organizations with growth potential that require capital to scale.

It has a 51 percent controlling stake in a California venture with Three Habitat Consulting Holdco Inc. That portfolio consists of two Chai Cannabis Co. and four One Plant brand-ed dispensaries, with other retail licenses in the works.

BGR provides strategic counsel and advocacy services to CCC related to safe banking, cannabis reform measures and various other matters.

Corporate counsel Dan Murphy, financial services practice co-head Andrew Lewton, and VP Pete Landrum round out BGR's CCR's lobbying team.

## **REEVEMARK WORKS SANDERSON FARMS DEAL**

[Reevemark](#) handles Sanderson Farms as the No. 3 chicken producer gets acquired by Continental Grain and Cargill in a deal valued at \$4.5B.



The \$203 per share acquisition offer represents a 30.3 percent premium to the price at which Sanderson was trading prior to a run-up triggered by media speculation about a deal.

Sanderson Farms, which is based in Laurel, MS, will be combined with Wayne Farms, a subsidiary of Continental.

Joe Sanderson expects the new owners of his company will be strong stewards of the Sanderson Farms' team, brand and assets. The merged company will have plants in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Wayne Farms markets its birds under the Wayne Farms, Platinum Harvest, Chef's Craft, LadyBird and Naked Truth brands.

The deal is expected to close by early 2022.

Reevemark's Paul Caminiti, Delia Cannan, Nicolas Leasure, Luc Herbowy, Jessica Engle and Jill Steinman represent Sanderson Farms.

## **NEWS OF FIRMS**

SCS, a brand transformation agency, merges with Atlanta-based independent digital performance marketing agency **Swarm**. The combined company will operate under the SCS brand name and will include 100 people across offices in Atlanta, Southern California and Ottawa, Canada. Swarm CEO Tom Ellis will now serve as chief revenue officer of SCS and Swarm SVP, marketing and implementation Alexa Ellis becomes SCS chief operating officer. The Ellises founded Swarm in 2009. SCS founder and CEO James Schiefer will remain in his position, as will president and chief strategy officer Jeff Roach.

[ICR](#) launches "Welcome to the Arena," a podcast featuring interviews with CEOs, CFOs, financial analysts, members of the media, investment bankers, private equity executives and those who influence and create value for public and private-equity backed companies. Hosted by ICR co-founder and CEO Tom Ryan, the podcast debuts Aug. 18, with new content released every two weeks. The podcast will be accessible on Apple Podcast, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or anywhere else podcasts are available.



**The Global Steering Group for Impact Investment** is one of the groups behind a new awards program intended to recognize outstanding examples of impact investing communications. The Impact Narrative Awards are open to any organization involved in impact investing and the wider ecosystem (social entrepreneurs, accelerators/incubators, market builders). San Francisco-based Thinkshift Communications will develop a communications strategy for the awards program and Thinkshift principal Sandra Stewart will serve as one of the competition's judges.

## **MEDIA MANEUVERS**

Voting-machine company Dominion has added **Newsmax Media** and **Herring Networks** (the owner of **One America News Network**) to the list of those it has sued regarding claims that the company rigged the 2020 election in favor of president Biden. Dominion also sued former Overstock.com CEO Patrick Byrne, who has made similar accusations. Earlier this year, the company filed lawsuits against Fox News, Rudolph Giuliani, attorney Sidney Powell and MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell over their roles in spreading claims of election fraud.

**The New York Times** posted positive numbers for Q2 2021 as regards both subscription and advertising revenue. Subscription revenue grew 16 percent over last year's second quarter, "the largest year-on-year subscription revenue gain in more than a decade," according to president and chief executive officer Meredith Kopit Levien. The paper says it added 142,000 net digital subscriptions in Q2, and now has more than eight million paid subscriptions across its paid and digital products.



**The E.W. Scripps Company** hires former CNN International vice president for editorial Eric Ludgood to lead Newsy, its national news platform. Currently available on over-the-top and connected TV platforms, Newsy will launch over the air in more than 90 percent of U.S. television homes on Oct. 1, carried primarily over Scripps-owned broadcast stations' spectrum.

## **TO KEEP STAFFS ENGAGED, CHALLENGE THEM**

In the spring of 2020, the internal comms team at Philip Morris International (PMI) faced a triple challenge. We wanted to keep our global workforce engaged, increase their



**Bessie Kokalis Pescio**

confidence in our ongoing business transformation, and equip them with content to help navigate their new remote working reality. To do this, we turned a simple idea into an impactful internal communications campaign that can be leveraged at any organization—no matter the size, industry or geography.

### **First, find your inspiration**

An avid reader of the *New York Times*, I remember spending a chilly Sunday morning at the beginning of the pandemic contemplating our rapidly changing world with a cup of coffee and the paper. Like most companies, PMI had just pivoted overnight to a mostly remote work environment. It was clear that my original plan—for the global internal communications team to spend the entirety of 2020 cascading a global transformation narrative to our employees—was not going to work.

I wanted to find a fresh, new way to communicate about other topics important to our workforce. I also wanted to meet our employees' need to connect. And they needed real-time, practical advice on topics of importance. And then it hit me! The New York Times Daily Health Challenge, through which readers sign up for a daily dose of wellness inspiration, became our model for an entire series of online challenges throughout the company.

### **Next, turn challenge into opportunity**

We began with a 21-day challenge that motivated employees to learn how to communicate with impact. Following this, a second challenge focused on well-being. On both e-challenges, employee engagement was remarkably high and overwhelmingly positive.

On the heels of those pilots, we mainstreamed the campaign. Since then, we've tackled such soft-skill topics as resilience, diversity and respect, as well as launching challenges aligned to PMI business priorities including consumer centricity, sustainability and project-based work.

Each challenge provides snackable, actionable tips over a five-, 10- or 21-day period. Along with the daily tips, we also produce an e-book with additional resources to read, listen to, watch, and/or do to learn more. To create opportunities for employees to share their thoughts, we conduct the challenges on our companywide Yammer channel, allowing employees to continue the conversation long after a challenge officially ends.

### **Make sure you challenge from the top down**

Each challenge is sponsored by a senior leader who introduces it with a videocast Q&A, then engages in informal conversation with employees on Yammer during the entire challenge. As a result, the leadership team is our communicator network—successfully promoting an empathetic and caring culture while building authentic, direct connections with employees.

Before the pandemic, we hosted town halls where our CEO and senior leaders answered live questions directly. It wasn't a monologue or address, but an open, comfortable dialogue. Many of our leaders were also known to walk the hallways and engage in watercooler chats, or visit the coffee corner and exchange small talk with employees. Thanks to

our challenges, that accessibility continued virtually and more informally.

### **Continue to challenge yourself**

As organizations become acclimated to an increasingly virtual workplace, a big obstacle leaders face will continue to be connecting with their employees in a meaningful way.

Online challenges may not be your cup of tea. The good news is, if you know your organization's strengths, recognize your audience's needs, have a well-established communications program and dedicated leaders, you can find your own inspiration to execute simple, low-cost and highly engaging digital initiatives that spark conversation and keep a virtual workforce connected.

Our series ultimately turned the challenge of physical distance into an opportunity to create social closeness among our employees. Engagement metrics demonstrate the challenges' enormous impact.

We average about one new challenge every six to eight weeks now. And I don't expect to slow down anytime soon.

*Bessie Kokalis Pescio is global head of internal communications at Philip Morris International.*

## **FRUITA, CO FLOATS TOURISM MARKETING RFP**

The City of Fruita, Colorado is seeking proposals from agencies that can develop a marketing plan to promote tourism and travel to the area.

The Mesa County city is looking for an agency that can work with the city to promote its outdoor recreation activities and market Fruita to target audiences and demographics.

Scope of the work includes implementing and executing a strategic consumer marketing plan and strategies; recommending specific marketing mediums (print, web, billboards, videos, photos); monitoring marketing placement; and reporting.

The City anticipates entering into a multi-year agreement for the work, with an estimated budget of up to \$65,000 annually.

Bids are due by 5:00 p.m. (MDT) on Friday, August 20, and should be submitted via email to [svassen@fruita.org](mailto:svassen@fruita.org).

Questions should be submitted to Shannon Vassen, assistant to the city manager, at [svassen@fruita.org](mailto:svassen@fruita.org), by 5:00 p.m. (MDT) on August 18.

[Download the RFP \(PDF\).](#)

## **SOUNDEXCHANGE HIRES VH1 VET WERNER**

SoundExchange, which collects and distributes digital performance royalties on behalf of recording artists and master rights owners, has named Stephanie Werner vice president, brand marketing and industry engagement. Werner was most recently headed up global marketing for Global Citizen, an advocacy organization working to end extreme poverty.

She has also served as executive director for VH1's Save The Music Foundation and vice president of consumer marketing and music marketing for VH1 and LOGO. In her new post, Werner will lead engagement and growth strategies for SoundExchange's portfolio of over 250,000 creators worldwide.



**Stephanie Werner**

Along with current VP, industry relations Barry LeVine, who is taking on the title of VP, marketing and entertainment partnerships, Werner will be part of the company's newly expanded corporate affairs group.

## **INFLUENCER SPENDING TO HIT \$3.7B IN 2021**

Influencer engagement programs have become a mainstay for online marketing campaigns, and [a new forecast](#) by digital market research company eMarketer proves the practice is showing no signs of slowing down.

According to eMarketer, U.S. influencer spending will rise by more than a third (33.6 percent) this year to total \$3.69 billion, compared to 2020's \$2.76 billion.

This double-digit growth is expected to continue for the next two years, according to the eMarketer forecast, hitting \$4.14 billion in 2022 and \$4.62 billion in 2023.

The strong spending in the influencer segment this year comes as a return after a series of pandemic-related cuts cratered marketing budgets in 2020. But eMarketer's forecast shows that nearly two-thirds of marketers in the U.S. still utilized influencers last year, up from 55.4 percent in pre-COVID 2019.

The eMarketer report also notes that many of the marketers who collaborated with influencer marketing last year did so by amplifying influencer content in their paid media campaigns.

## **KEENE WANTS SHARP BRANDING PUSH**

Keene, a city of 25K people in rural southwest New Hampshire, wants to hire a firm to handle branding, marketing and communications work.

The effort will market Keene throughout New England as "an ideal location for modern business and pleasure."

Keene, which has never had a sustained branding campaign, is a two-to-three-hour drive from Boston, New York, Hartford and Portland. It envisions hiring a firm for a minimum two-year marketing push.

Send seven hard copies of the proposal (preferably on double-sided, maximum post-consumer recycled content paper) and an electronic version on a thumb drive by Aug. 31 to: City of Keene; Purchasing & Contract Services Office; City Hall, 3rd Floor; 3 Washington Street; Keene, NH 03431.

The package must be labeled as RFP No. 02-22-01 City Branding, Marketing, and Communications.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



**Paul Marobella**

Prior to Havas, Marobella led a digital experience division of Accenture Interactive's Wire Stone, consulting with brands such as Motorola, Conagra, Microsoft and Nike.

## **ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT**

[Bellmont Partners](#) picks up **Duluth tourism business**, pending approval by its city council. Visit Duluth, the city's nonprofit tourism bureau, had handled the job for the past 85 years and will stay on solely to provide convention and event promotion.

Duluth Mayor Emily Larson said that Belmont Partners, which will work alongside partner Lawrence & Schiller on the account, is "the right fit for right now" as the city looks to rebound from the pandemic and grow its \$780 million tourism economy.

[Matter Health](#) has expanded its agency of record engagement with **Hospital IQ** and signed on as agency of record for **Debiopharm**. For Hospital IQ, which offers advanced technology solutions for healthcare, Matter has broadened its services to include SEO and social media services. As agency of record for privately held global pharmaceutical company Debiopharm, Matter was initially engaged to provide a fully integrated public relations, digital marketing and advertising program announcing a licensing deal with Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany, and will now work to elevate the brand in North America.

**FullTilt Marketing** wins **North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission**. FullTilt will lead marketing, PR, trade and consumer advertising, graphic design, digital and social media for the NCSPC, as well as influencer engagement, retail dietitian programs, and experiential marketing efforts. The organization is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

[Trevelino/Keller](#) is partnering with **SnapNurse**, a tech-powered nurse staffing agency. Established in 2017, SnapNurse fills open nurse positions in more than 1,000 partner facilities across the country. The company says it can fill short-term nursing vacancies in less than 48 hours, as opposed to the 14-day average from traditional staffing agencies. "We needed a partner who could build our reputation as a thought leader in the healthcare staffing industry," said SnapNurse CEO and founder Cherie Kloss. "We're excited to work with Trevelino/Keller because of their experience in the healthcare and technology industries."

[Montieth & Company](#) to build brand awareness for **Markacy**, a New York City-based digital strategy and marketing agency. M&Co's strategic communications and media relations program will work to bring increased visibility to Markacy's disruptive impact on its industry and demonstrated track record of successfully deploying tactical digital marketing plans for direct-to-consumer companies. Markacy plans to expand its presence into such sectors as fashion and apparel, food and beverage, pet, health and beauty.

**Troika Media Group** to handle the rebrand of the **Pac-12 Networks**, content arm of the Pac-12 Conference. The rebrand will roll out across Pac-12 Networks' linear and digital platforms throughout the coming weeks leading up to the 2021 football season, including broadcast, digital, social, out-of-home and in-stadium assets. TMG is working on brand strategy, on-air network IDs, live event packaging and show packaging, as well as school-by-school brand and player assets.



## NORTHERN NY SEEKS PANDEMIC RELIEF PR

The Adirondack North Country Association is looking for a firm to develop a marketing campaign for its just-created Center for Pandemic Response, which aims to help businesses rebound and rebuild from COVID-19.



ANCA is looking for a firm to help develop a brand identity for the CPR and promote the resources that it offers for businesses and entrepreneurs in the 11-county rural region.

The marketing plan will include audience research, strategy development, tactic identification and implementation, according to the RFP.

The PR partner also will conduct targeted outreach to low-moderate income and BIPOC business owners.

ANCA, which is based in Saranac Lake, has budgeted up to \$18K for CPR marketing activity.

Proposals are due Aug. 20. Brandy Hobson at [bhobson@adirondack.org](mailto:bhobson@adirondack.org) is the contact. Work will kick off Sept. 8.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## FGH HANDLES AVAST-NORTON DEAL

Finsbury Glover Hering represents Czech Republic-based Avast as it merges with NortonLifeLock in a cash/stock cybersecurity deal worth more than \$8B.

The merger combines Avast's strength in privacy and NortonLifeLock's expertise in identity, creating a broad and complementary product portfolio.

The combined cybersecurity company, which will trade on the NASDAQ, will serve more than 40M direct customers and 500M-plus users.

Following the completion of the transaction, Vincent Pilette will be CEO, Avast chief Ondřej Vlček will become president and NortonLifeLock CFO Natalie Derse will keep her title.

The company will be dual headquartered in Prague and Tempe, AZ.

Finsbury Glover Hering has Dorothy Burwell representing Avast, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

WPP owns Finsbury Glover Hering.

## FINN PRESENTS DUBAI TO US TRAVELERS

[Finn Partners](#) handles US media relations for the "Dubai Presents" campaign starring Jessica Alba and Zac Efron, designed to woo travelers to the Persian Gulf city of more than 4.2M people



Featuring a series of trailers showcasing various locations, landscapes and cultural attractions, Dubai Presents invites people to write their own scripts for adventure in the city.

"We are confident the Dubai Presents campaign will bolster our efforts to accelerate tourism momentum in what promises to be a landmark year for Dubai as we gear up for the upcoming Expo 2020 and the UAE's Golden Jubilee celebrations," Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corp. for Tourism & Commerce Marketing, said in launching the campaign.

Dubai, home of the 2,722 ft. Burj Khalifa—the world's tallest building—reopened for international tourists in July 2020. It registered 3.7M overnight visitors from July 2020 to May 2021.

## ON THE MOVE

**MZ North America** hires **Kati Waldenburg** to build out the PR practice of the Sao Paulo-based investor relations firm MZ Group, which has more than 525 staffers. Waldenburg comes to MZNA from Rubenstein Public Relations where she was a vice president. She also did stints at Teneo, LAK Public Relations and Gutenberg Communications. In her new post, Waldenburg will oversee client strategy, media outreach and brand awareness, as well as leading PR initiatives for MZNA's clients with an emphasis on investor and financial media communications.

**Wagstaff Media + Marketing** names **Valerie Wilson** managing director, culture and lifestyle, a position created specifically for her. Wilson founded her own agency, Valinc PR, in 2010. She was previously a VP at Wagstaff, and was also a VP at DeVries Public Relations. Wilson will join Wagstaff's diversity & inclusion active participant group and will work closely with Wagstaff managing partners Jessica Rodriguez and Maite Conway on client strategy development, new business development and leadership.



**Valerie Wilson**

**Church's Chicken** appoints **Claudia Lezcano** as vice president, brand strategy & activation. Lezcano joins the company from Celebrity Cruises, where she was associate vice president, product marketing. She has also served as head of marketing for the Miami Marlins and chief marketing officer for the Miami Dolphins. In her new position, Lezcano will oversee US calendar planning, product promotions, media, field marketing and consumer PR functions.

**42West** brings on **Meg Staggard** and **Andrew Stewart** as VPs in the firm's strategic communications division. Staggard was most recently a senior account director at DiGennaro Communications, working with such clients as Pinterest, TikTok and Spotify. She has also worked at Porter Novelli and Rubenstein Communications. Stewart joins 42West from Participant, where was director, communications. He was previously manager, corporate communications at IMAX and was a reporter at Variety. Staggard and Stewart's responsibilities will include providing strategic counsel to campaigns, crisis communications, executive counsel and positioning, brand awareness and media relations.



**Meg Staggard, Andrew Stewart**

**Metro Public Relations** promotes current partner, president & COO **Laura Michael** to CEO. As CEO, Michael will continue to be a driving force behind the company's growth and expansion, oversee Metro's leadership team, and offer strategic counsel for clients. She will continue to work closely with agency founder Tess Finkle, whose primary focus will be on business development and partnerships, as well as broadening the agency's services through its creative marketing and content strategy arm. Among other recent hires to Metro's executive team are Disney veteran **Laura Jalaie**, who comes on as SVP, strategy & communications, and **Bree Jones**, who joins the firm as VP of consumer communications & culture.

# COMMENTARY



**Prudential**

**Prudential Financial scores PR gold** as it connects Rock logo with a new generation of consumers while Dunkin gets unwanted power placement from the disgraced NY governor.

The insurer announced a partnership with USA Climbing on Aug. 11. Competitive climbing debuted

as an Olympic sport during the Tokyo Games. USA Climbing copped a silver medal.

The company says the partnership celebrates “a new generation of inspirational American athletes who represent the future of climbing and embody Prudential’s shared attributes of strength, performance and reaching new heights.”

Meanwhile, disgraced New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has been charged with sexual harassment, delivered a not wanted product placement for Dunkin Donuts.

After his 22-minute resignation speech on Aug. 10, the Associated Press snapped a photo of the outgoing governor holding a coffee cup emblazoned with the Dunkin logo.

He held the cup while making his hasty getaway from Manhattan. The pix made the front page of the *New York Times* and *New York Post* (“At the End of his Grope” headline).

Dunkin’s marketing team must have been “at the end of their gulp” upon seeing the Cuomo pix.

**Twitter booted Georgia Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene off the site** for a week after she violated its COVID-19 misinformation policy for the fourth time.

The crazed QAnon cultist tweeted that the vaccines are failing and that they do not stop the spread of the virus.

In introducing her “Fire Fauci Act” earlier this year, Greene noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention deemed the vaccines “highly effective” at preventing infection. She also quoted research from Johns Hopkins Medical School, saying the vaccines are 95 percent effective.

Greene’s Fire Fauci Act wants to reduce the salary of the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to zero until his replacement is named.

Greene may have one redeeming quality. She has a wicked sense of humor. The Fire Fauci Act was introduced on April 1, April Fools’ Day.

**Verizon and Patagonia are odd corporate bedfellows.** One is a staid telecom operation, while the other is noted for its corporate activism. They have one thing in common: Verizon and Patagonia stick to their word.

Of the more than 1,000 brands that vowed in July 2020 to pull advertising from Facebook until it cracked down on hateful content, only Verizon and Patagonia stuck with their pledge, according to a report by Pathmatics, a marketing data outfit.

Disney, Home Depot, AT&T, Procter & Gamble, New York Times Co., Cricket, Wells Fargo, Spring, Netflix, and Starbucks earned PR points upon signing up for the #StopHateforProfit campaign, but they caved and crawled

back to Facebook, albeit at a lower spending level. Verizon and Patagonia talked the talk and walked the walk.

Despite the economic boycott bid, Facebook soldiered on. It took in \$12.9B in advertising in the year prior to the boycott, and \$15.3B post-boycott.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg reported that first-half revenues jumped 51.6 percent to \$55.2B, while net income soared 97 percent to \$19.9B.

Washington regulators may be the only people able to reel in Facebook.

**The days of “false equivalency” are over** when it comes to media coverage of climate change, much to the chagrin of Gerry Baker, *Wall Street Journal* editor-at-large.

He penned an op-ed complaining about the coverage of climate change just ahead of the release of the United Nations International Panel of Climate Change on Aug. 9.

Baker harkened back to the “heyday of journalism” when skepticism and curiosity were demanded. “The good reporter doubted whatever he was told, even what time it was,” he wrote. C’mon, Gerry. The UN report was written by 234 scientists and based on more than 14,000 studies.

The left-leaning *New York Times* called it “the clearest and most comprehensive summary yet of the physical science climate change, while the right-leaning *Financial Times* called it “a landmark assessment of climate change that makes it clear that the world faces a frightening future even if the global economy is decarbonized rapidly.”

Baker admits he is no climate scientist. He is confident that the Earth is warming and that evasive action would be smart.

“I’m less confident that a spate of historically familiar extreme weather events constitutes proof that we’re going to burn in the next decade or that the action lies only in the most drastic government-mandated responses, which the media will insist we must immediately adopt,” he wrote.

Baker may not be in the climate change denial camp, but his op-ed attempts to turn back the clock and cast doubt on the media’s coverage of global warming.

**Google may soon be getting the whole gang back together in the office**, but it may come at a cost.

As companies struggle over “return to work” policies, Google has decided that pay cuts may be in order for those who prefer to work at homes far from its offices.

Google has developed a “Work Location Tool” that calculates the pay received by a staffer at the office or at home, according to the BBC.

A Google staffer preferring to work in Stamford, an hour by train from New York, would get 15 percent less working remotely. There are 5 to 10 percent pay differences in the Seattle, Boston, and San Francisco areas. The policy does not affect workers working remotely in the same city as Google’s office.

It may result in a two-tiered compensation system and widen the gender pay gap as women, who take most of the responsibility for childcare, opt to work remotely.

—Kevin McCauley