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MAINE ASKS FOR TOURISM PITCHES

The Maine Office of Tourism wants proposals for a public and media relations programs to attract new visitors and boost the awareness of the Pine Tree State among the traveling public.



The effort “should position Maine as a destination that ignites a sense of curiosity and adventure that inspires generations; and enhance Maine’s brand identity in coordination with the approved marketing campaign pillars,” according to the RFP.

The selected firm will offer the best combination of destination marketing expertise in the areas of media relations, media platforms, overall PR experience, content management and integration, social media strategy, international trade travel relations, financial stability and creativity with a comprehensive cost structure.

The effort will complement and support advertising in key markets, as well as expand reach beyond paid media areas.

Maine plans to award a one-year contract with options to renew for two two-year periods.

Submissions are due Aug. 25 at proposals@maine.gov.
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

NOTRE DAME RECRUITS RIBEIRO

The University of Notre Dame hires Pedro Ribeiro, who most recently served as senior VP for communications and public affairs at the Association of American Universities, as VP for public affairs and communications, effective Oct. 2.



Pedro Ribeiro

Before joining the AAU, Ribeiro was deputy assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and he was also director of the office of communications for the District of Columbia government.

At Notre Dame, Ribeiro will provide strategic communications and governmental relations advice to the president and other senior University leaders, communicating about and advocating for the mission and priorities of Notre Dame.

He will oversee the offices of public affairs, University communications and *Notre Dame Magazine*.

“He combines extensive experience in local and federal government with a deep knowledge of research universities,” said University of Notre Dame president Rev. John Jenkins.

BLUMENTHAL TARGETS TENEO-LIV GOLF LINKS

Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal, who is probing the merger of Saudi Arabia’s LIV Golf with the PGA Tour, wants to know what role Teneo played in the transaction.

In his Aug. 16 letter to Teneo CEO Paul Keary, Blumenthal demands a “detailed list” of engagements between Teneo and Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund and the names of staffers who worked with the PIF.



Richard Blumenthal

The Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations found that Stephen Cohen, Teneo’s senior managing director, participated in meetings on June 5-6 prior to the announcement of the planned agreement between the PGA Tour and PIF to form a new corporate entity in professional golf.

Prior to joining Teneo, Cohen was a VP at Goldman Sachs and worked with the PR team that helped it emerge from the global financial meltdown. He also was senior VP in Citigroup’s corporate affairs department and a reporter for Bloomberg.

Blumenthal also wants any Teneo documents concerning PIF’s future role in other US sports.

The Democrat also sent letters to the heads of McKinsey & Co., M. Klein & Co. and Boston Consulting Group.

MATTER HEALTH’S LILLY SHIFTS TO MWW

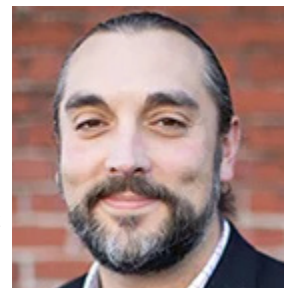
Ryan Lilly, who launched [Matter Communications](#)’ Matter Health unit, has joined MikeWorldWide to head its rebranded health practice.

As senior VP & managing director of MWW Health, Lilly will oversee clients such as Rite Aid, Delta Dental, RWJBarnabas Health, Pycnogenol, IntelyCare, CSL Behring, Cerebral and OMRON.

MWW Health will focus on reputation management, impact/ESG, CEO & executive visibility, issues management, advocacy and thought leadership.

Lilly said healthcare is in the midst of a true renaissance, requiring brands to be bold and bring fresh approaches to the market. “They need to collaborate with specialized practitioners who can help them embrace today’s complexity and pace of change with confidence,” he said.

[MWW ranked No. 15 in O’Dwyer’s healthcare rankings](#) with 2022 fee income of \$12M.



Ryan Lilly

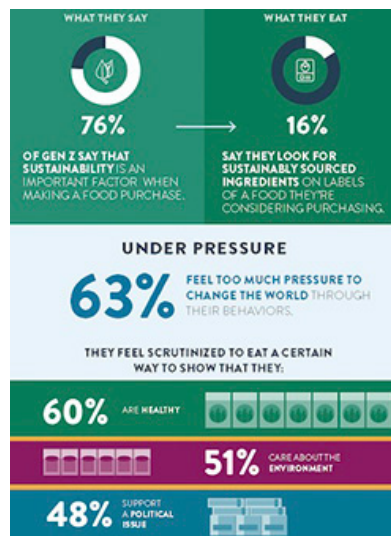
GAP EXISTS BETWEEN GEN Z'S TALK, ACTION

Although a wide range of social and personal factors are impacting Gen Z's relationship with the food they eat, [a new study from Ketchum](#) says that a few hot-button topics—sustainability and animal welfare—are having a greater effect on what Gen Z consumers say than on how they actually spend their money on food.

More than three quarters (76 percent) of the 2,000 Gen Zers surveyed by Ketchum said that “sustainability is an important factor” when they are making food purchases. However, far fewer (16 percent) indicated that they actually look for sustainably sourced ingredients on the labels of foods they are considering purchasing.

Similarly, while a large majority (72 percent) say that animal welfare is a factor they consider when making a food purchase, just five percent reported that animal welfare has impacted their eating pattern.

The survey respondents also say that they feel burdened



by the expectations being placed on them to bring their food purchasing decisions in line with their general opinions about the overall food system. Almost two thirds (63 percent) say they experience “too much pressure to change the world” through their behaviors.

However, that does not mean that Gen Zers are happy with the state of the food system. More than seven in 10 think “food companies are greedy and only care about profits” while

almost as many (72 percent) say “the food system is broken.” In addition, 66 percent say that they have trouble finding information about how their food is raised and 42 percent think food companies “don’t understand them.”

A majority of survey respondents are also uneasy about their own eating patterns, with 62 percent saying those patterns are “wrong.” The study also says that Gen Zers are less likely than other generations to say they have a positive relationship with food, and are more likely to say that cooking makes them feel “tired and stressed.”

As regards where they find out about food, 70 percent say they follow influencers for their food content, and the same number say that they are more willing to trust a food trend if it has gone viral. But many also see themselves as influencers, with 75 percent regarding themselves as “a leader, not a follower,” and 76 percent reporting that they tell friends and family about new products.

“This generation has seen food politicized and been taught to choose food products related to values,” said Melissa Kinch, president of Ketchum’s Food Consultancy. “It has left them feeling insecure and negative about cooking and food. In particular, the contrast between what they say and how they spend their money is eye-opening.”

The Ketchum study was conducted between April 7 and 18.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Coyne PR is named PR agency of record for **Thayers**, a science-backed skincare brand that was acquired by L’Oréal in 2020. Coyne PR will develop and activate an integrated 360 go-to-market plan for Thayers, working with the brand and its integrated agency partners in paid media, influencer and social media. Coyne’s “proven track record in delivering creative and impactful campaigns, combined with their deep understanding of the skincare industry, make them the ideal partner to help us achieve our goals,” said Thayers Natural Remedies SVP, head of brand Derrick Booker.



Babbit Bodner comes on board as PR agency of record for the **College Football Hall of Fame**. The agency will leverage earned media relations, influencer engagement, community relations and thought leadership to elevate the College Football Hall of Fame’s outreach efforts. Babbit Bodner kicks off the partnership by promoting Football Fest & Free Day (Aug. 26), which grants free admission to all visitors to the Hall of Fame.

BPM-PR Firm adds **Subtl Beauty** to its roster of beauty brands. The agency will leverage its relationships with key journalists, bloggers and media influencers to raise Subtl’s profile in a competitive beauty landscape. Subtl says that its stackable makeup solutions provide compact, travel-friendly and customizable products. Its contract with BPM-PR Firm comes as the company debuts their Stak 2.0 product.

The Uptown Agency is selected as agency of record by **A&A Optical**, the eyewear partner of Aéropostale, for their latest collection, The agency will also continue to handle strategic marketing efforts for A&A Optical’s other eyewear brands.

The Pollack Group is retained by the **Latino Donor Collaborative**, a nonprofit that conducts original research and studies centered on reshaping the perception of Latinos in the United States. The agency will spearhead all media relations, ensuring that LDC’s reports get widespread recognition. TPG will also support LDC’s upcoming LinkedIn Live announcement to increase awareness and stimulate engagement. A key focus for TPG will be promoting the release of the 2023 LDC U.S. Latino reports, a series that highlights the impact and growing influence of Latinos across a broad spectrum of industry sectors.



BizCom Associates is selected to drive an integrated media relations and digital strategy program for **PrimoHoagies**, a hoagie chain that has been expanding its presence. The agency is tasked with maximizing exposure for the PrimoHoagies franchise opportunity and the overall brand in media outlets, trade shows and other platforms with the greatest potential to reach target franchise prospects. Founded in South Philadelphia, PrimoHoagies now numbers over 100 restaurants.

Gunpowder, which works with hunting, fishing and outdoor lifestyle clients, signs on to lead public relations, creative, digital and social media efforts for **Ravin**, a designer, manufacturer and innovator of crossbows and accessories. Through creative marketing strategies and industry expertise, Gunpowder will assist Ravin in engaging new, existing and aspiring Ravin owners.

EMPATHY: THE NEW FRONTIER

The fundamental rules of business are beginning to shift from a purely profit-driven approach to one that's more people-centric, challenging established norms and demanding a metamorphosis of traditional business models.



Kristina King

As consumers and corporations alike experience ongoing challenges in both professional and personal settings, marketers must embrace new strategies and tactics.

Central to this transformation is the concept of empathy. Most people associate the word "empathy" more with therapist offices than boardrooms, but business leaders are taking notes.

Transformative empathy as a business imperative

In her book "Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead," leading empathy expert, author, researcher and TED speaker Brené Brown shared that empathy has no script, and there's no right or wrong way to do it.

But marketers are finding empathy to be more than a concept—it's becoming a business imperative. Worldwide thought leaders are finding that empathy in business has many benefits. Increased employee engagement and loyalty, paired with greater innovation and diversity in the workforce? Check, according to Belinda Parmar's article for the [World Economic Forum](#). Helping better serve customers by creating an embodied experience for employees that puts them in the customer's shoes? Check, according to Erin Henkel and Adam Grant in the [Harvard Business Review](#). Increased innovation, engagement, retention, inclusivity and work-life balance? Check, says Tracy Brower in [Forbes](#). Even Tim Cook's [MIT commencement address](#) included notes on the importance of empathy in business.

Empathy in leadership needs to be a mandate, but taking an empathy-driven approach to customer engagement and marketing can feel confusing and overwhelming. And for financial services marketing in particular, the question is often simply "Where do I even start?"

How human-centric approaches help marketers understand diverse customer bases

People often perceive financial services as a cold, hard realm of numbers and algorithms, but implementing empathetic approaches can transform customer experience, brand perception, integrated marketing campaigns and beyond—and when implemented correctly, benefit the bottom line.

Traditional customer-centric models focus on creating a narrow view of the customer's immediate needs and wants as it impacts their spending and purchasing decision-making processes. Today's human-centric models take a broader and more holistic approach, understanding the entire ecosystem in which a customer operates.

Demographics, personas, data and empathy: striking the right balance

In today's highly complex business environment, companies must strive to understand their customers beyond simple demographic profiling and persona work, and instead move into an empathy-driven, human-centric model of marketing. Knowing who your customers are, their expectations and the unique nuances that influence their interactions with your

brand are integral to a successful and authentic engagement strategy. Such an empathetic approach promises multiple benefits—improved customer service, increased sales and enhanced customer loyalty.

Marketers operating in today's data-driven business environment must inform their approaches with insights and data and provide increased reporting and measurement of marketing campaign impacts. Luckily, empathy and data are not mutually exclusive. Rather, a human-centric approach to marketing calls for a harmonious blend of data-driven insights with an empathetic understanding of customers. Data provides an analytical perspective of customer behavior, but empathy adds the human touch, the emotional connection that helps businesses resonate with their audiences effectively.

Marketers must be wary of "collective amnesia," or the risk of losing sight of their audiences' real experiences while relying heavily on data. Data is essential, but it can't replace the essence of real human understanding of customer needs, wants and psychographics. All messages must be deployed with great empathy to help businesses connect with their audience, not just their executives, marketers or stakeholders.

The path forward

The future of the financial services industry—and every industry—hinges on the ability to integrate empathy into core business strategies. This shift, from being merely customer-centric to becoming decidedly human-centric, is more than just a trend. It's the future of customer engagement.

Empathy, along with a human-centric approach, is the new touchstone for the industry, enabling businesses to build stronger, more meaningful connections with their customers while fostering an inclusive, innovative and engaged workforce.

As we step into this future, the essence of business lies not just in the numbers but in understanding and empathizing with the people behind these numbers.

Kristina King is Vice President at [Finn Partners](#).

SF STATE WANTS TO ENROLL PR PARTNER

San Francisco State University is looking for a partner to assist its strategic marketing team with market research and the creation of a brand and enrollment campaign.

SF State, established in 1899, has a diverse student body of more than 25K and more than 3,400 faculty and staff.

"Due to a variety of factors, including shifting statewide population demographics, declining high-school enrollment and corresponding graduation levels, economic barriers to higher education, competition from alternative universities and a somewhat anemic post Covid-19 pandemic return to normal, the University has struggled to adequately recruit, retain and build upon its student population to meet its targeted enrollment goals," according to the RFP.

The selected partner must demonstrate the ability to elevate SF State's brand regionally, nationally and globally. It also will possess the "ability to skillfully assess, guide, strengthen and inspire our value proposition and overall brand positioning."

SF State has budgeted \$375K annually for the PR work. It plans to award a three-year contract with options to renew for two more one-year periods.

Proposals are due Aug. 29 at the [California State University electronic portal](#).

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



SANTA ROSA SEEKS PR FOR FIRE REHAB

Santa Rosa is seeking a public communications partner to keep the community updated on the rehabilitation of 33 miles of city streets that were destroyed in the 2017 Tubbs Fire.



At that time, the wildfire was California's most deadly inferno. It killed 22 people in Napa, Sonoma and Lake counties.

Nine deaths occurred in Santa Rosa, the biggest city in California's wine country. The fire destroyed half the homes in Santa Rosa, which estimated an economic loss at \$1.2B.

The public outreach effort will focus on work in the Coffey Park and Fountaingrove neighborhoods.

It will include strategic communications planning, public/community relations, media relations, public outreach and education, collateral material development, social media, and website development and continue throughout the construction process.

The campaign will kick off in November 2023 and run through March 2025.

Proposals are due August 25. They go to Gregory Mariscal at gmariscal@srcity.org.

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

KEKST CNC WORKS MARS INC.'S DEAL

[Kekst CNC](#) represents privately held Mars Inc. as it acquires the veterinary diagnostics business of Germany's SynLab.



The McLean, VA-based company operates Mars Petcare, which owns more than 50 food brands (Pedigree, Whiskas) and provides veterinary health services.

This SynLab deal will enable Mars Petcare's science & diagnostics unit to expand its laboratory business in Europe.

Nefertiti Greene, president of Mars's science & diagnostics operation, said SynLab shares "the belief that excellence in veterinary diagnostics and advanced technology is transformative for veterinary care."

Kekst CNC's Neil Matiland handles the SynLab deal.

Mars has \$47B in annual revenues and markets M&M's, Snickers, 3 Musketeers, Skittles, Orbit, Wrigley's Juicy Fruit, and Hubba Bubba.

RUBENSTEIN PR ADDS SILVERMAN

[Rubenstein Public Relations](#) hires Richard Silverman, a veteran of Merrill Lynch, Lazard, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Burson-Marsteller and Dow Jones Indexes, as a senior VP. Silverman will work to sustain RPR's service offerings in media relations, branding, and messaging development.



Richard Silverman

"Rich's deep experience in corporate communications and financial journalism makes him a perfect fit for our team," said Richard Rubenstein, president of RPR. "His strategic acumen and strong leadership skills will be instrumental in further elevating our clients' brands and achieving the highest level of media exposure."

NEWS OF FIRMS

[French|West|Vaughan](#) CEO Rick French, along with Melissa Etheridge, is being honored at Rockers On Broadway, an annual music event that raises money for charities including pre-professional training and scholarships in the performing arts. The Oct. 16 event, which marks its 30th anniversary, is presented by The Schoch Foundation and The PATH Fund, a leading nonprofit dedicated to performing arts education. "Every year the Broadway community comes together on this special night to honor individuals who uplift and contribute to the performing arts, and having Melissa and Rick as this year's honorees is something I'm very excited about," said PATH Fund founder Donnie Kehr.



Rick French

[CLYDE](#), a Washington, DC-based communications firm, recognizes [National Poll Worker Recruitment Day](#) (August 23) by committing to give any employees who register to be poll workers on Election Day a paid day off. An initiative of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, National Poll Worker Recruitment Day is an effort to address the critical shortage of poll workers. "Our actions create trickle down effects to our clients who can do the same as they look ahead to the difference they can be making in 2024," said Clyde senior VP Lilia Dashevsky.

[Cappuccino](#), a São Paulo-based digital marketing and technology agency that is part of [Weber Shandwick](#), is working on a UNESCO campaign, supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, that utilizes Artificial Intelligence to raise awareness against violence and abuse towards elderly people. The campaign includes three films that aim to expose a side of aging often overlooked: violence against elderly people. With the hashtag #AgingWithoutViolence, the campaign seeks to mobilize society to participate and widely disseminate the figures on violence against the elderly in Brazil.



[WPP](#) and digital experience platform [Optimizely](#) are teaming up on a partnership aimed at delivering optimized digital experiences to all of their customers. WPP has been working with Optimizely for 17 years across such brands as ACCO Brands, Aegon and Oister. WPP clients will have full access to Optimizely's DXP tools including content marketing, content management, commerce and experimentation. The partnership also offers clients seamless integration with Optimizely Web Experimentation and Google Analytics 4 (GA4), in light of Google's September phase out of Google Optimize, its web analytics and testing tool.

[Sprout Social](#), a social media management software provider, acquires influencer marketing and social intelligence platform [Tagger Media](#). Founded in 2015, Tagger helps brands and agencies discover influencers, plan and manage campaigns, analyze competitor strategies, report on trends and measure ROI. The acquisition is intended to further establish Sprout's position in the social media software market with a comprehensive platform that empowers brands to execute a holistic social strategy at scale.

UAE BUFFS IMAGE AHEAD OF COP28

Masdar, the renewable energy unit of Abu Dhabi National Oil, has hired Fort Lee-based First International Resources for a strategic communications and positioning campaign ahead of the United Nations global climate summit.



The UAE will host COP28 in November. The session is expected to attract from 60K to 80K delegates.

The firm will reinforce attitudes among decision makers in Washington and across Europe regarding the strategic value of the UAE in the global fight to address climate change.

The consultant will mobilize its extensive network of contacts to ensure that the campaign's core messages reach the most influential and appropriate audiences.

If appropriate, FIR "could also activate or mobilize our connections inside the 'US Jewish Establishment' to help support the campaign's overall objectives," according to its agreement.

FIR chairman/CEO Zev Furst, president Doniel Furst and executive VP Joseph Schwirtz handle the Masdar push. The firm is to receive a fee of \$132,500 for its efforts in the US.

LAPD NEEDS RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN HELP

The Los Angeles Police Dept. is looking for a firm to handle a marketing and advertising campaign to encourage people to join the force.



LAPD has "encountered a crisis in recruiting new sworn personnel to the Department," according to the RFP. There are 700 openings in the LAPD. The cop shortage is responsible for staffing shortfalls, increased workloads and extended working hours.

Interested firms must attend a mandatory Aug. 31 pre-proposal meeting via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. They are required to stay for the entire session.

Firms must reserve a spot at the confab by Aug. 29 at LAPDRED@lapd.online with a copy to LAPDContracts@lapd.online. Proposals are due Oct. 5.

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

NYC MAYOR ADAMS SCOUTS FOR PRESS SEC

New York City mayor Eric Adams is in the market for a press secretary after upping Fabien Levy to the first-ever deputy mayor of communications position.



Fabien Levy

In his new role, Levy is to coordinate communications across the city's agencies to ensure that a unified message goes out to New Yorkers.

Levy has served as press secretary for Adams' 19 months in office. Prior to joining Team Adams, Levy worked on governor Kathy Hochul's successful run for Congress and then served as her communications director.

Levy joined the Obama administration as press secretary at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He also served as press secretary and senior advisor to New York Attorney General Letitia James.

TENEO TAPS AMBASSADOR SMITH

Teneo has named Dana Shell Smith, former US ambassador to Qatar, as a senior advisor to help plot its growth across the Middle East and Africa.

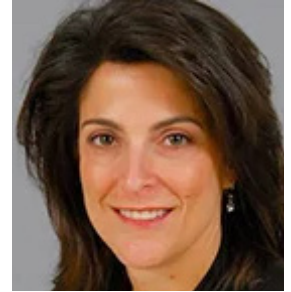
As ambassador from 2014 to 2017, Smith fostered military and security cooperation, investment opportunities and promoted partnerships in education, sports and culture.

She also did postings in Dubai, Taipei, Gaza, Tel Aviv and Cairo.

From 2011 to 2017, Smith served as Assistant Secretary of State for PA, where she managed strategic communications, global media relations and crisis management for Secretaries Hillary Clinton and John Kerry.

CEO Paul Keary said Teneo's "multinational clients are increasingly interested in expanding and deepening their operations and relationships across the region where Ambassador Smith is incredibly well respected."

She also will serve as a principal at Teneo's WestExec Advisors unit.



Dana Shell Smith

ZENO REPS ALDI AS IT ACQUIRES WINN-DIXIE

Zeno Group handles German discount supermarket chain ALDI as it agrees to buy 400 Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket stores from Southeastern Grocers.

"The time was right to build on our growth momentum and help residents in the Southeast save on their grocery bills, said Jason Hart, ALDI CEO. "The transaction supports our long-term growth strategy across the United States, including plans to add 120 new stores nationwide this year."

ALDI plans to retain the Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket brand at some locations, while other outlets will carry the ALDI name. It has invested \$2.5B in the US southeast since the mid-1990s.

ALDI operates stores throughout the EU, UK, US, China and Australia.



GREENOUGH ADDS TECH PRO MURPHY

Greenough has named Nicole Murphy, a 20-year veteran in devising PR programs for B2B and B2C technology companies, executive VP.

Murphy has handled PR, executive communications, brand marketing and social media campaigns for companies ranging from start-ups to global enterprises.

She joins Boston-based Greenough from Realtor.com, where she led consumer, product and innovative communications. Murphy also was in charge of global PR at Symantec and did stints at fama PR and Los Paul & Partners.

"Nicole's creativity, leadership, and deep knowledge of the tech space make her the ideal leader to help Greenough serve our growing roster of clients," said Nikki Festa O'Brien, Greenough president.



Nicole Murphy

COMMENTARY



Fani Willis

Fulton County DA Fani Willis flatters “The Don” with her charges that he and his “gang that couldn’t shoot straight” ran a criminal enterprise that aimed to undercut America’s democracy.

Her use of Georgia’s “Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act” treats Trump as if he were a Mafia boss, which gives his ego a boost.

In his book, “The Art of the Deal,” Trump boasted about his [tough-guy dealings with Mob-connected firms](#) as he broke into the Manhattan real estate development market.

He bought overpriced cement that was used to erect Trump Tower and Trump Plaza apartment building from a firm controlled by Mafia Bosses Anthony “Fat Tony” Salerno and Paul Castellano.

Trump’s idol Roy Cohn, the notorious fixer lawyer, served as consigliere to Salerno and Castellano.

The *Wall Street Journal* contends that Willis’ indictment is unlikely to move public opinion, in part because of its breadth and timing.

The Georgia case will have zero impact on the hard-core MAGA cultists who will support their guy in the GOP primaries. Its influence will be on independents and Republicans who want their party to pivot back to its political roots.

A NPR/Marist poll released July 28 found that the percentage of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents who believe Trump did nothing wrong regarding the Jan. 6 Capitol Hill riot dropped nine points from 50 percent to 41 percent from the month earlier period.

More than half (52 percent) though think Trump did something illegal. That’s up 11 percent from March, just before the former president was indicted in New York for paying hush money to women that he has had sex with.

Georgia is the weightiest indictment against Trump. The former president will eventually rue the day that he decided to corrupt the Peach State’s vote.

Going Green at Hyper-Drive. “I don’t think in my career I’ve ever seen a law that has a bigger impact on economic development in this country,” said Gregory Wetstone, CEO of the American Council on Renewable Energy, in his ringing endorsement of Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act.

[The Financial Times reports](#) the IRA and Chips and Science Act have triggered a \$224B cleantech investment boom that is hardly noticed by US voters.

It counts more than 110 large-scale manufacturing announcements for semiconductor, electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and wind parts that will create 100K jobs.

Republican-leaning districts in the South are the major beneficiaries of the investments. They account for 80 percent of the outlays, with Georgia and South Carolina on top.

The GOP wants to scale back the IRA because it looks like

a winning hand for the president. To Republicans, politics is a bigger priority than providing opportunities for constituents.

Sleepy Joe has to step up his PR game.

Hit the books. China has a nifty way to deal with an inconvenient truth. It scrubs it from the books.

To cope with skyrocketing youth unemployment, China has stopped reporting jobless rates for people aged 16 to 24.

The youth unemployment rate clocked in at 21.3 percent in June, which marked the sixth consecutive record high.

China’s National Bureau of Statistics has now decided that the 96M people between 16 and 24 should be studying at school rather than be looking for jobs.

“The main task for students is studying,” said Fu Linghui, spokesperson for the Bureau. “There are different views over whether to include students who are looking for a job before graduation in the labor force survey and statistics.”

Fu better hope those 96M students are studying economics because China’s economy is in the dumps and its near-term future isn’t very rosy.

Yipee! We’re No. 2,642... Congratulations to Los Angeles-based Scenario Communications for ranking 2,642 on the [2023 Inc. 5000 roster](#).

It issued a press release on Aug. 15 to celebrate that triumph. “When we started Scenario just over four years ago, it never occurred to us that we would be sitting here now on this list of prestigious companies and obtaining the recognition of such a venerable publication as Inc.,” said co-founders Hayley Antonian, Ron Hofmann and Steven Wilson in the release.

There’s more good news from Scenario. The shop ranks No. 165 in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Anaheim regions, and No. 378 in California.

The Scenario co-founders say while the Inc. acknowledgment is “extremely gratifying for us at this early stage of our existence, we know the work is just beginning and there will be no resting on laurels.”

It’s upward and onward for Scenario.

Kudos to Apple CEO Tim Cook as the company amasses more than 1B subscribers to its Apple TV+, Apple Music and iCloud, driving Apple to an all-time high in services revenues during the July 1-ended Q3.

Cook, though, should keep the champagne bottle corked. Apple’s robust 8.2 percent in services growth to \$21.2M could not overcome the 4.4 percent profit dip to \$60.3M in product (Macs, iPhones, iPads) sales. Apple’s overall revenues fell 1.4 percent to \$81.8B.

Apple expects a revenue shortfall in the Q4 period, which would make four straight quarters of revenue drops.

Cook claims Apple’s quarterly Q3 results were strained due to heavy spending on the R&D front, especially in the AI sector.

Wall Street wants to see how Apple applies its AI expects to juice the sales of its high-margin product business.

—Kevin McCauley