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EPA LOOKS FOR PR SUPPORT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued a “sources sought notice” to identify firms to provide national media services.



Goal of the contract is to provide EPA headquarters and its 10 regional offices with services such as distributing press releases, tracking media contacts and monitoring media analytics.

The contractor also will handle “regional, program-specific and national daily briefings that highlight

significant news relevant for each target audience,” according to the notice.

Those briefings will summarize public content and content behind paywalls. The coverage “should interweave online, print, television, radio and other media sources and be available on mobile devices and in print.

The firm will be on call 24/7 and assist the EPA “in triaging issues as they arise.”

Responses are due Jan. 28 and go to Daniel Fox at fox.daniel@epa.gov.

[Download Notice \(PDF\)](#).

SKDKNICK'S DUNN REJOINS TEAM BIDEN

Anita Dunn, a founding member of SKDKnickerbocker who returned to the firm after serving as a senior advisor to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris during the campaign, is rejoining Team Biden to work on the transition.



Anita Dunn

She is taking a leave of absence from the New York firm, which is part of Stagwell Group, and plans to return to it during the summer.

At the White House, Dunn will work closely with press secretary Jen Psaki and communications director Kate Bedingfield.

During the campaign, Dunn advised Biden/Harris on messaging, debate preparation and communications strategy.

She was a chief strategist in Barack Obama’s White House.

EDELMAN FINDS ‘INFORMATION BANKRUPTCY’

Richard Edelman says the U.S. is living in an “era of information bankruptcy” as leaders lie to the public, which views media outlets as politicized and biased.

Edelman believes the Jan. 6 invasion of the U.S. Capitol and the fact that only a third of Americans plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine highlight the dangers of misinformation.

Business (61 percent) replaced government (53 percent) as the most trusted institution since the mid-May update of the Barometer.

“Guarding information quality” at 5.8 percent ranks as the top action that can “increase likelihood” of trust. That’s followed by embracing sustainable practices (5.7 percent), robust COVID-19 health and safety response (4.8 percent), driving economic prosperity (4.7 percent) and long-term thinking over short-term profits (4.6 percent).

The Barometer gauged the trust levels of Biden and Trump supporters following the November election.

It found a 19 percent overall trust gap between Biden voters (53 percent) and Trump backers (34 percent).

Both factions recorded the same level of trust in business (55 percent), but split on trust in government (45 percent for Biden, 30 percent for Trump).

There was a yawning gap (39 percent) in trust in the media. Fifty-seven percent of Biden voters trust the media, compared to 18 percent for Trump people, which was a 15 percent plunge from the 2020 Barometer update.



ALLISON+PARTNERS BUYS SOMMERFIELD

Allison+Partners has purchased Sommerfield Communications, a New York-based boutique corporate communications firm. Sommerfield Communications founder and president Frank Sommerfield will now serve as a managing director at Allison+Partners, and will focus on growing the agency’s financial services offerings and ESG communications capabilities.

Allison+Partners global president of worldwide client services Matthew Della Croce said adding Sommerfield and his team enhances Allison+Partners corporate capabilities. “Frank and his team’s experience, coupled with their proven entrepreneurial success, will help us maximize opportunities for our clients to successfully transform and grow,” said Della Croce.

CENTRAL AR WATER SEARCHES FOR PR HELP

Central Arkansas Water of Little Rock is gathering qualifications from firms interested in handling its PR, advertising, marketing, special events, consumer education, social media and public policy initiatives.



The company, which serves a metropolitan area of 500K people, intends to hire more than one firm to handle the various communications disciplines.

The selected firms will help CAW execute an ongoing communications campaign that leverages media and PR initiatives to speak to the needs of target audiences, according to the RFQ.

They will be “mindful of incorporating utility core objectives to provide safe, low-cost, abundant, dependable, high-quality water from forest to faucet” into outreach efforts.

Another goal is to accelerate CAW’s use of new technology “to affirm its commitment to reaching customers through their preferred communications medium.”

Responses are due Jan. 21. They go to: Central Arkansas Water; ATTN: Purchasing Section; 221 East Capitol Ave.; Little Rock, AR 72202

[Download RFQ \(PDF\).](#)

SONORAN WORKS TO PARDON ASSANGE

Sonoran Policy Group, which has close ties with the Trump White House, is working to obtain a presidential pardon for Julian Assange.

Its Stryk Global Diplomacy unit is to “facilitate meetings and interactions with the president and president-elect administrations for client to obtain a full pardon for Julian Paul Assange, an Australian citizen, journalist and publisher, and will perform additional duties on an agreed-upon basis,” according to the Jan. 9 agreement with Blueprint for Free Speech.

Blueprint is a non-profit Australian charity that “works internationally to promote the right to freedom of expression without undue interference or intrusion.”

SGD is working on a pro bono basis.

The Justice Dept. is appealing a British judge’s decision blocking the extradition order of Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, to the US to face trial for violating the Espionage Act and conspiring to hack government computers.

Donald Trump has issued dozens of contentious clemency grants since losing reelection, noted the New York Times.

Assange supporters worry that Trump may not issue any more pardons in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 Capitol Hill riot.

L’ORÉAL HIRES HEINEKEN’S JUTI

L’Oréal has recruited Blanca Juti as chief communications & public affairs officer. Juti joins L’Oréal from Heineken, where she was chief corporate affairs officer. She has also served as chief brand officer at Rovio Entertainment and vice president of marketing at Nokia. Earlier in her career, Juti spent five years working as the cultural attaché for the Mexican Embassy in Finland. At L’Oréal, she succeeds Lucia Dumas, who had held the position since January 2018. She will relocate to France and assume her new position in April.



Blanca Juti

NEWS OF FIRMS

Finsbury, The Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener have completed their merger and management buy-in of 49.99 percent of the combined business to form **Finsbury Glover Hering**. WPP will remain a 50.01 per cent investor and Mark Read, CEO of WPP, will join the board.



Carter Eskew and Roland Rudd are co-chairmen of FGH, with Alexander Geiser serving as global CEO and regional CEO for Europe; Mike Feldman and Winnie Lerner as regional Co-CEOs for North America; and Faeth Birch as regional CEO for the United Kingdom, Middle East and Asia.

Power Digital Marketing has acquired digital media buying and creative company **Social Method**. PDM’s offerings currently include SEO, content marketing, paid media, social media marketing, public relations, influencer marketing and web development. The acquisition, PDM’s fourth in the last two years, was carried out in partnership with Periscope Equity, a private equity firm that invests exclusively in lower-middle market technology-enabled service and software companies. PDM says the addition of Social Method will allow it to provide clients with expanded paid and social creative capabilities. Social Method clients will gain access to paid and organic marketing services powered by PDM’s proprietary technology solution SPRnova.

St. John & Partners, which has offices in Jacksonville, FL and Greenville, SC, has been renamed St. John. The change also includes a refreshed brand identity and enhanced website. The agency says that the rebrand is meant to reflect its broad range of creative and consulting services for national, regional and local clients.

5W Public Relations has launched a specialty division focused on PR for the cryptocurrency industry. Services offered to cryptocurrency public relations clients include media relations targeted outreach to crypto industry publications, content creation, digital media campaigns, speaking opportunities and celebrity relations. Last year 5W guided business intelligence firm, MicroStrategy, through the announcement of its purchase of \$250M in Bitcoin.

Finn Partners managing partner, global health Gil Bashe takes co-chair spot at the International WELL Building Institute’s IWBI Health Equity Advisory. The advisory’s mission is to identify opportunities to make healthy places available and accessible to all individuals, no matter their identity, location, background or level of ability. “People are worried about returning to workplaces,” Bashe told *O’Dwyer’s*. “If not this pandemic, then the next is a concern for millions. This mobilization of the International WELL Building Institute is a mobilization to address these health priorities.”



Gil Bashe

Frank Coleman Strategies, a consulting firm focusing on public affairs, media relations, and reputation and event management, has been launched by Frank Coleman, who was previously senior advisor to the CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. Before joining DISCUS as a senior vice president in 2001, Coleman was vice president at the US Chamber of Commerce.

BIDEN'S CLIMATE AGENDA

On January 20, we will begin to see a monumental shift in federal policies to address climate change and the environment. President-elect Biden has said that he wants to be a global leader on climate issues and plans to enforce new climate policies whenever he can. He has promised a \$2 trillion investment in clean energy and environmental justice, to make electricity carbon-free by 2035, net-zero emissions in the United States by 2050, and an immediate return to the Paris Agreement. He has pledged to make climate a focus in every federal agency.



Michael Kempner

The Biden-Harris team has already announced several important staff selections confirming that the new Administration intends to make climate and the environment top priorities, including Gina McCarthy, who led the EPA under President Obama and wrote the first climate change regulations; Brenda Mallory, who formerly worked at CEQ as their top lawyer; and Michael Regan, the current head of the North Carolina Office of Environmental Quality.

We can expect the EPA to renew its focus on science-based policy making, developing public health protections that create a healthy environment, and reducing the influence of industry. Environmental justice will be another strong area of focus for the Biden Administration. We expect to see significant changes through the Biden Administration's establishment of a new climate and environmental division at the Department of Justice. This will likely lead to more regions referring cases to the Justice Department.

Companies with sustainable business models can expect to fare well under the Biden administration. Biden believes that every American company has a "moral responsibility, societal obligation and business imperative" to curb climate change and build a sustainable future.

He will demand more from companies and has pledged to raise taxes on corporations to fund major climate initiatives. Biden plans to sign an executive order requiring public companies to disclose climate change-related financial risks and greenhouse gas emissions in their operations.

Passing sweeping climate legislation to address climate change will be difficult, since it would require more than the slim Senate majority, but Democrats will likely try to pass tax provisions including tax incentives for clean energy, a carbon tax, and other revenue-related climate measures through the budget reconciliation process.

Biden plans to create a new Advanced Research Projects Agency on Climate to target affordable, game-changing technologies to help America achieve his 100 percent clean energy target. He plans to create one million jobs in clean energy.

There are over 100 environmental rules and regulations that were undone, put on hold, or weakened during the Trump administration that Biden will likely reinstate or strengthen.

Democrats have begun discussions on a green infrastructure bill that would include significant climate mitigation and greenhouse gas reduction provisions. Additionally, Congressmen David McKinley (R-WV) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) introduced a bipartisan bill in December that among other things would create a clean electricity standard and may be a starting point for climate legislation that could pass the Senate.

Biden plans to sign executive orders instructing agencies to develop new methane limits for oil and gas wells, to reinstate and strengthen fuel economy standards, and to tighten efficiency standards for appliances and buildings. He plans to cancel the 2017 executive order that lifted restrictions on offshore energy exploration and production.

On the international front, Biden selected John Kerry as his global climate envoy and included a seat for him on the National Security Council. Former Secretary of State Kerry was a key negotiator of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Biden plans to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord, which will incentivize further development of the clean energy industry.

The Biden administration will be focused on renewing America's leadership and persuading other world leaders to make climate-friendly policy changes a high priority, including negotiations on international climate treaties and participating in U.N. climate talks designed to further global emissions reduction efforts.

Michael Kempner is founder and CEO of MWWPR.

POWERVISION SEEKS U.S. TECH PR PARTNER

Unmanned aerial vehicle manufacturer PowerVision is looking for a PR agency based in the United States specializing in technology and consumer electronics.

The Beijing-based company, which mass-produces smart drones supported by AI technology, including aerial drones as well as underwater and water surface drones, is looking for a PR agency that can provide media outreach, key opinion leader marketing and community forum management.



PowerVision specifically needs an agency that can achieve earned media in outlets in the U.S., APAC and Europe regions; can manage brand- and product-related posts on the company's social media pages (including YouTube, Instagram and Facebook); and oversee brand- and product-related posts on appropriate message forums.

Interested agencies should reach out to marketing manager Sherry Liu, sherry.liu@powervision.me, and with an introduction of your agency as well as a portfolio.

GOLIN UPS RYAN MARDIKS TO GLOBAL CHAIR

Golin has promoted Ellen Ryan Mardiks to global chairman. Fred Cook, chairman since 2017, becomes chair emeritus. Mardiks, who has been with Golin for over three decades, will be responsible for shaping work products and agency IP.

Her duties will include adapting and enhancing The Playbook, Golin's internal step-by-step planning process, which was designed to produce better earned-first, data-driven creative. She also will serve as an executive consultant to C-suite leaders for some of the agency's largest clients, including Humana, Nestlé and Walmart.

"Ellen is one of the most gifted and talented client counsellors in Golin's history," said CEO Matt Neale. "She helps clients, from our oldest to our newest, understand the value of earned-first ideas to drive business."



Ellen Ryan Mardiks

TRAVEL WRITERS READY TO HIT THE ROAD

More than nine out of ten travel writers say that they're ready to hit the road again in 2021, according to [a new study from Finn Partners](#).



One big factor in that: the new resident in the White House. A sizeable majority (63 percent) of the 400 travel writers and content producers surveyed by Finn in December said that they think international travel will be easier under the Biden administration.

The availability of a vaccine is also a big decision-maker. Well over a third (37 percent) of the survey respondents said they will only start traveling after they have been vaccinated.

They will also be keeping a close eye on the rate of infection in any travel destination, with 36 percent saying they would be open to heading to a location if its COVID-19 infection rate had gone down.

For a hardy few, however, trips have never been completely off the schedule, with 17 percent of respondents saying they had traveled in 2020 and plan to continue doing so through this year.

The survey also asked travel writers about their priorities in a post-pandemic travel market. More than 60 percent of those surveyed said they would like to visit places they had never been before. Japan was a top priority for those writers, with South America, Iceland and Australia just behind.

But that spirit of adventure is tempered with a desire to keep things local. Two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) said that "close to home travel" was a big content topic for 2021. Underrated destinations got the nod from 54 percent, and responsible travel, health and wellness, and travel safety were also listed as primary considerations.

"There is no denying there is a pent up demand for travel writers and content producers who are ready to get back to traveling with some sense of normalcy," said Virginia M. Sheridan, managing partner, travel, North America at Finn Partners. Sheridan also notes that PR professionals "will need to be ready and knowledgeable to share appropriate messaging with them."

WAGSTAFF LANDS ITALIAN TOURISM BIZ

Wagstaff Media and Marketing has been named North American PR firm for The Italian National Tourism Board.

Wagstaff's team, led by agency director Ernst Flach, will assist the organization as it aims to increase the number of American travelers to Italy.



The agency's work will focus on introducing some of the lesser-known and undiscovered experiences Italy has to offer, as well as promoting such developments as the launch of Milan's new

official convention bureau, YesMilano, which will support the country's hosting of the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympics.

"Wagstaff's expertise, creativity, and connections in the travel trade, consumer marketing, and media worlds will give us the competitive advantage we need to help accelerate our recovery in the U.S. market," said Caterina Orlando, country manager for the Board.

Wagstaff has offices in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Vancouver.

TENEO TAPS ROMETTY, JONES AS ADVISORS

Ginni Rometty, who was appointed president & CEO of IBM in 2012 and retired as executive chairman on Dec. 31, 2020, has joined Teneo's board of senior advisors.

She guided the transformation of Big Blue from computer hardware into a nimble cloud-based services, data, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and security systems provider.

Under her leadership, IBM made 65 acquisitions, while divesting businesses worth \$10B, and became a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Teneo also added CNN political commentator and social entrepreneur Van Jones as an advisor.

He founded and led REFORM Alliance, Color of Change, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and the Dream Corps.

Jones also was the green jobs advisor in the Obama White House.



Ginni Rometty

NEXT PRACTICES GROUP INVESTS IN BLISS

The Next Practices Group has invested in Bliss Integrated Communication, with the firm being renamed The Bliss Group. Michael Roth and Cortney Rhoads-Stapleton will become managing partners of The Bliss Group and NPG founder and chair Bob Pearson will serve as CEO.

"The Next Practice Group will make it possible for our team to provide a more robust PESO (paid, earned, shared, owned) marketing offering powered by human thinking, data science and technology," said Elizabeth Sosnow and Meg Wildrick, former managing partners for Bliss. Sosnow is leaving Bliss to form Two Paths Investment Partners, and Wildrick is remaining with the firm as a senior advisor.

Launched in July, NPG includes: The Next Practice, a global digital media firm; Ringer Sciences, a data science and analytics firm; Rocket Sauce Media Labs, a performance marketing firm; BrainTrust, a digital transformation firm; Victory CTO, a technology and software solutions provider; The Next Security Group, a cybersecurity, physical security and digital protection firm; and ChangeX, a social purpose firm.

"The Next Practice and Bliss offerings fit perfectly," Pearson told O'Dwyer's. "It was like we designed it this way."

MOTHER'S KINNEY OPTS FOR OGILVY

James Kinney, North American chief resources officer at Mother USA, has joined Ogilvy as global chief diversity, equity & inclusion office and North America chief people officer. He succeeds Donna Pedro, who joined Ogilvy in 2007 as chief diversity officer.

Kinney is charged with fostering an open environment for staffers to thrive and achieve their authentic selves, according to the WPP unit.

In his NA post, he will oversee talent management, recruitment, learning & development working in tandem with Jag Dhanji, global chief people officer, and Devika Bulchandani, who is joining the firm as CEO of Ogilvy NA.



James Kinney

WA COUNTY NEEDS COVID SOCIAL MARKETING

Whatcom County, Washington is seeking proposals from agencies that can conduct a COVID-19 social marketing campaign. The county is requesting proposals from firms that can implement a social marketing campaign to encourage residents ages 16-26 to adopt behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19.



Scope of work includes developing and managing creative assets and strategies for paid and owned media, marketing collateral and presentations; refining and adapting Whatcom County's communication campaign to meet evolving COVID-19 needs, guidance and requirements; advising and collaborating with project personnel; and monitoring and evaluating campaign objectives and outcomes.

Effective terms of contract will run from Feb. 1 to July 31, 2021, with the possibility of extension upon mutual agreement and funding availability. Estimated funding is \$200,000.

Mail proposals, due Jan. 26, to: Whatcom County AS-Finance; Attn: Sara Winger, Purchasing Coordinator; 311 Grand Ave., Suite 503; Bellingham, WA 98225

All bidding agencies should submit one unbound original of their proposal in a sealed envelope marked with the applicant's name and address as well as the words: "RFP #21-03 – COVID-19 Social Marketing Campaign."

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

FACEBOOK CREATES CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT

Facebook has hired Roy Austin, partner at Harris, Wiltshire & Grannis law firm, as VP-civil rights, a new position at the social media company.

He has more than 25 years of experience as a civil rights lawyer, beginning his career in the Justice Dept. civil rights division.

Austin rose to the deputy assistant attorney general post in 2010 and shifted to the White House's domestic policy council as assistant to the president for the office of urban affairs, justice and opportunity.

He co-authored a report on big data and civil rights, worked with president Obama's task force on 21st-century policing, developed the police data initiative and was a member of the president's My Brother's Keeper Task Force.

JOELE FRANK TEAMS WITH ISOS CAPITAL

Joele Frank handled the Jan. 11 launch of Isos Capital Management by the co-presidents of the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment).



Michelle Wilson and George Barrios, who have worked as a team for more than 11 years, will guide Isos Capital Management as it invests in global sports, entertainment and media companies.

Prior to the WWE, Wilson worked as chief marketing officer at the US Tennis Assn., handled marketing for the XFL (partnership between the WWE and NBC), and held posts at the NBA and Nabisco. Barrios held finance jobs at the *New York Times*, Praxair, Time Warner and HBO.

[Joele Frank](#), [Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher](#) has Ed Trissel, Kate Thompsen and Tanner Kaufman handling the Isos launch.

THOMAS BROOKS TAKES PRSA HELM

Public Relations Society of American named Linda Thomas Brooks CEO, succeeding CFO Phil Bonaventura, interim chief since July 2019.

Thomas Brooks helmed The Association of Magazine Media, served as president of The Martin Agency's ingenuity media unit and did an 11-year stint as executive VP/managing director of GM Mediaworks.

Most recently, she was interim managing director of media and publishing divisions of SIAA (Software and Information Industry Assn.).

Michelle Olson, PRSA chair, said her group conducted a "very deliberative process to ensure we found the right person with the leadership and experience to guide the organization through this next era of growth."

Bonaventura will resume his full-time role of CFO, which he has held since 2017.



Linda Thomas Brooks

PROSEK PARTNERS HIRES SWAN

Prosek Partners puts Anne Swan in the chief creative officer seat. She joins Prosek from design company Dear Future, where she also served as chief creative officer. Before that, she was executive creative director at Siegel+Gale.

Swan has created work for such clients as Hewlett Packard Enterprise, CVS Health and American Express. Her appointment is intended to strengthen Prosek's marketing offering and signals the firm's commitment to building and protecting client brands.

"Anne's deep expertise in branding and design is a valuable addition to our current offerings," said Prosek Partners founder and managing partner Jennifer Prosek.



Anne Swan

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment NYC lands **WHOO**, fitness wearable brand. The partnership with WHOOP encompasses strategic global communications, media relations, thought leadership and events. In addition to working with the company to raise its profile in the US, the agency will oversee global strategy and collaborate on launching the brand in the U.K. and Germany with the M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment agencies in those markets.

JC Communications books **RailBookers**, a tour operator which offers rail vacations to destinations including Canada, Europe and the USA, to its roster of travel clients. The agency already manages PR for Railbookers' sister company, Amtrak Vacations. JC has also signed with **Venchi Fine Italian Chocolates of Italy**. It will do PR for the company's new store in New York City at Columbus Circle, as well as working to raise brand awareness across the U.S.

Virgo PR has been named PR agency of record for **Rebel Ventures**, a sports-oriented digital strategy company. Virgo will provide Rebel Ventures with such services as social media marketing and media relations. It has already collaborated with Rebel Ventures on "10 Days for #10," a campaign created in celebration of global soccer icon Pele's 80th birthday.

COMMENTARY



It is breathtaking to watch Donald Trump and the Republican “Sedition Caucus” scale new heights of hypocrisy each day in the aftermath of the Capitol rampage and impeachment of the president.

The shameless GOP is now moving on in its alternate reality world to the fight against COVID-19, which arrived in the US a year ago.

Republicans want to restore the virus, which has exited the front pages since their rampage at the Capitol, to its rightful place in the news cycle. It is a cynical ploy to divert attention from impeachment and their culpability for the Jan. 6 riot.

“Voters are opposed to impeachment and Big Tech censorship, and they want an orderly transition,” wrote Trump pollster John McLaughlin. “Voters strongly prefer that Congress deal with fighting coronavirus and not impeachment.

McLaughlin is just spinning another lie. Most Americans (55 percent) want Trump out, according to a CBS/YouGov poll conducted Jan. 11-12. They believe it “sends a signal that his behavior was wrong” (93 percent) and will bar him from running again (87 percent).

As for the pandemic, Trump botched the handling of the virus and then downplayed the risks, which has killed 400K Americans. Republicans now want to champion the fight against the virus. That is just the latest entry in the record book of deceit.

The White House’s assault on the First Amendment is going down to the wire as the Voice of America reassigned reporter Patsy Widakuswara for doing her job and asking a “tough question” to thin-skinned secretary of state Mike Pompeo.

In a Jan. 11 speech, Pompeo attacked VOA as the “Vice of America,” a news outlet hellbent on criticizing the US. “It’s not fake news for you to broadcast that this is the greatest nation of the world.”

As Pompeo was leaving the podium at VOA headquarters, Widakuswara asked him, “What are you doing to repair the US’ reputation around the world.”

Pompeo dodged the question and new VOA director Bob Reilly threw his reporter under the bus, declaring she was “out of order” for daring to ask the almighty one a question.

Widakuswara was reassigned and banned from president Trump’s Jan. 12 plane to Texas, where she was supposed to be the pool radio reporter.

Pompeo is the one who was out of order. VOA is not supposed to serve as the propaganda arm of the US.

The White House Correspondents’ Assn. ripped the reassignment of Widakuswara for “doing her job, asking questions.”

WHCA president Zeke Miller said punishing Widakuswara “harms the interests of all Americans who depend on the free press to learn about the actions of their government and gives comfort to efforts to restrict press freedom around the world.”

Jan. 20 cannot come soon enough for the press.

Paranoia runs deep... Media took a whacking in the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer as almost six of ten (59 percent) of respondents in the Global 27 countries surveyed believe 1) Journalists are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations, and 2) Most news organizations are more concerned with supporting an ideology or political position than with informing the public.

Look for an upswing in media trust in the next Edelman Barometer as the Twitter-less “Mr. Fake News” fades from the national scene.

Talk is cheap... Banking giant HSBC scored PR points in the environmental community last fall with its promise to become a “net-zero” carbon emissions company by 2050.

A bunch of institutional investors want the London-based bank to show the world how it expects to achieve that goal.

HSBC, which is an advisor to Saudi Aramco, is Europe’s second-largest financier of fossil fuels after Barclays, according to ShareAction, which promotes responsible investing.

The bank has provided more than \$86.5B in fossil fuel financing since the 2016 Paris climate agreement.

ShareAction rounded up institutional investors in HSBC to sponsor a resolution at the April annual meeting calling it to publish net-zero emissions goal targets and progress made toward meeting the goals beginning in 2022.

Jeanne Martin, senior campaign manager at ShareAction, told the FT that net zero ambitions by top fossil fuel financiers like HSBC are simply not credible if they fail to be backed up by fossil fuel phaseout plans.

If HSBC wants to talk the talk, ShareAction wants it to walk the walk.

The US Chamber of Commerce wants to help Joe Biden deliver on his promise to “Build it Back Better.” The Chamber and the Bipartisan Policy Center led a coalition of more than 130 business, labor and policy groups that kicked off a “Build by the Fourth of July” PR campaign on Jan. 14 to urge Congress to adopt “a fiscally and environmentally responsible infrastructure package” by Independence Day.

Tom Donohue, US Chamber CEO, said infrastructure “is not only one of the fastest and most direct ways to create new jobs and spur economic growth now, but also it will sustain the modern economy for the long term.”

Trump campaigned on the promise to strengthen the nation’s infrastructure, but he lost interest in the project once he took office and refocused his energy on tax cuts for the rich and demolishing the Obama legacy. He did replace a small part of his “big, beautiful border wall.”

Biden has promised to invest in a “modern, sustainable infrastructure and sustainable engines of growth—from roads and bridges, to energy grids and schools to universal broadband.”

He has a strong political ally in the Build by the Fourth of July campaign. Can Biden deliver the goods? Will Republicans jump on his infrastructure bandwagon? My hunch is yes.

—Kevin McCauley