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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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PENNSYLVANIA SEEKS TOURISM, ECON DEV PR

Pennsylvania, the Keystone State, has kicked off a review of its tourism PR account with an RFP process through April.

The state's Department of Community & Economic Development issued an RFP on March 15 to promote PA as a "top-tier" business and tourism destination and "refresh" its domestic and international image.

The work encompasses strategic planning and consulting, business and media outreach, and related tasks.

Tierney is the incumbent agency.
Proposals are due April 18, 2016.
RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1Rw6n5t>.



NEW HAMPSHIRE REVIEWS TOURISM PR

The Granite State has launched a review of its US tourism PR account.

Travel and tourism is New Hampshire's No. 2 industry, accounting for \$5.1B in visitor spending and about 68,000 jobs.

New Hampshire's Division of Travel & Tourism Development, based in Concord, on March 15 released an RFP for the work with plans to award a two-year contract that carries two option years.

Budget is around \$200K per year. Lou Hammond & Associates is the incumbent. GYK Antler handles the state's \$5M-a-year ad account.

Proposals are due April 14. View the RFP documents at visitnh.com.

TESLA COMMS CHIEF OUT AHEAD OF LAUNCH

Ricardo Reyes, VP of global communications for Tesla Motors, has left the automaker after less than two years.

Reyes, who reported to Tesla chief Elon Musk, exits just head of the launch of the company's Model 3 electric sedan. Bloomberg noted the PR post is particularly critical at Tesla because the company does not advertise on the scale of traditional automakers.

Reyes was VP of brand marketing and comms. for digital payments company Square after first leaving Tesla in 2012. He returned to Tesla in November 2014.

Earlier, he held communications and public affairs posts at YouTube and Google, and was a comms. manager for Bracewell & Giuliani after working in the George W. Bush administration.

Tesla is slated to unveil its new vehicle on March 31.

EDELMAN'S \$840.9M LEADS O'DWYER RANKING

Edelman cracked the \$800M mark in 2015 with growth of 5.5%, heading a group of firms in the top 25 where 15 showed double-digit growth and only two firms posted down years. Overall, 67 of the 122 firms taking part were up 10% or more.

Top 10:

- #1 Edelman, New York, NY - \$840.9M, +5.5%
- #2 APCO Worldwide, Wash., DC - \$119.8M, +1.4%
- #3 WE, Bellevue, WA - \$98.7M, -7.4%
- #4 W2O Group, San Francisco, CA - \$95M, +15%
- #5 Ruder Finn, New York, NY - \$74M, even
- #6 Finn Partners, New York, NY - \$71.4M, +35.3%
- #7 LEWIS, San Francisco, CA - \$68.5M, +11.6%
- #8 ICR, New York, NY - \$56.2M, +10.8%
- #9 Zeno Group, New York, NY - \$47.3M, +18.6%
- #10 PadillaCRT, Minn., MN - \$34.8M, +10.1%

See pages 4-5 for full ranking of 122 firms based on '15 net fees.

Leading gainers in the top 25:

- #25 Spectrum, Washington, DC - \$14.8M, +83.5%
- #6 Finn Partners, New York, NY - \$71.4M, +35.3%
- #16 Prosek Partners, New York, NY - \$24.4M, +20.2%
- #9 Zeno Group, New York, NY - \$47.3M, +18.6%
- #13 Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ - \$27M, +17.3%
- #4 W2O Group, San Francisco, CA - \$95M, +15%
- #22 LEVICK, Washington, DC - \$19.5M, +13.7%
- #18 5W PR., New York, NY - \$21.4M, +13.2%
- #19 French|West|Vaughan, Raleigh, NC - \$21.1M, +12.9%
- #24 Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA - \$18.1M, +12.7%

Leading gainers ranked 26-50:

- #37 Gold PR, Corona, CA - \$10.5M, +65.8%
- #43 Bliss Integrated, New York, NY - \$9.4M, +40%
- #33 Inkhouse, Waltham, MA - \$12.1M, +34.3%
- #36 Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA - \$10.9M, +33.9%
- #45 Bateman Group, San Fran., CA - \$8.6M, +28.9%
- #31 PAN Comms., Boston, MA - \$13.1M, +24.1%
- #51 Jarrard Phillips Cate, Brentwood, TN - \$7.4M, +21.8%
- #48 rbb Public Relations, Miami, FL - \$7.6M, +18.8%
- #49 360 PR, Boston, MA - \$7.5M, +14.6%
- #40 ReviveHealth, Nashville, TN - \$10M, +12.6%

PR Specialties highlighted

O'Dwyer's has the only rankings by PR specialties. Technology and healthcare led the way with 71 and 67 ranked firms respectively. Charts for all 12 specialties, including professional services (55 ranked), food and beverage (51 ranked), financial and investor relations (49 ranked) and travel (40 ranked), environmental/public affairs (35 ranked) are at odwpr.us/ODwyers-PR-Firm-Rankings.

INGRAM SUCCEEDS MARTINEZ AS JWT CEO

Following last week's bombshell news that a lawsuit had been filed in New York federal court by J. Walter Thompson Company chief communications officer Erin Johnson against the agency due to inappropriate remarks allegedly made by chairman and CEO Gustavo Martinez, parent company WPP today announced that Martinez has resigned by "mutual agreement" from his post at the international marketing agency.

Tamara Ingram, WPP's chief client team officer, has now been appointed Martinez's successor.

Ingram, who has held the chief client team officer role since 2015, was previously president and CEO of WPP's Team P&G group. Prior to that she was group executive vice president and managing director at WPP unit Grey Group, and was group CEO at IPG subsidiary McCann Worldgroup. Ingram assumes her new position as JWT CEO immediately.



Ingram

WPP global business development director George Rogers, meanwhile, will succeed Ingram in the role of WPP chief client team officer. Rogers joined WPP in 2005, first serving as CEO of the ad/PR combine's Detroit-based offices before becoming director of global business development in 2011. Prior to joining WPP, Rogers was executive vice president of advertising and marketing communications agency Mullen.

In the lawsuit, Johnson, an 11-year employee with the company, alleges that Martinez repeatedly used offensive language when referring to Jewish and African-American people, and also allegedly made jokes about raping her and other female staff. The suit also alleges that Martinez slashed Johnson's bonus and kept her out of meetings after she complained to JWT management about Martinez's behavior.

The suit was first reported by the *New York Post*.

JWT this week hired WPP firm Finsbury for crisis PR support in wake of the lawsuit. The ad agency has also retained law firm Proskauer Rose to conduct a review of Johnson's claims. Johnson, who is seeking unspecified punitive and compensatory damages, is currently on leave from the firm.

Martinez, who was appointed JWT CEO in 2015, released a statement soon after the lawsuit's filing in which he denied Johnson's allegations. Martinez stated that "there is absolutely no truth to these outlandish allegations and I am confident that this will be proven in court."

PMK ACQUIRES PRIME PR

PMK*BNC has acquired entertainment boutique Prime PR, adding two executive VPs and an entertainment strategy and development unit.

Prime was formed in 2009 by PMK alum Joy Fehily and Endeavor vet Michael Donkis, who take EVP titles at PMK*BNC. Joining also are five Prime publicists, Rachael Reiss, Maria Herrera, Rebecca Taylor, Cassandra Vargas and Caitlin Scott, in addition to a handful of administrative staff.

Los Angeles-based PMK*BNC CEO Cindi Berger

said the deal followed a year of talks, adding she has known Fehily for several years.

Key Prime clients include Aaron Sorkin, Robert Downey Jr. and Olivia Wilde, among scores of others.

The new EVPs will head a new department within PMK's entertainment division under Berger and alongside its other departments covering film, talent, television, music and events/lifestyle.

PMK's roster include Sandra Bullock, Matthew McConaughey, Robert Redford and Shonda Rhimes, among other A-list entertainers and talent.

FED INVESTMENT BANK SEEKS PR

The Overseas Private Investment Corp., the federal government's development bank, is reviewing its PR account with an open RFP process through the end of march.

The work supports OPIC's office of external affairs and burnishes the image of the corporation and its projects. It includes media strategy and support, event planning, social media and related tasks.

Washington-based OPIC essentially directs private investment in development projects that advance US foreign policy goals.

Inkhouse PR of Boston is the incumbent.

Proposals are due March 31.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1Rfcig3>.

KANE NAMED PRSA COMMUNICATIONS CHIEF

Laura Kane, senior VP and global head of media relations for Marsh, has joined PR Society of America as communications chief.

She replaces Stephanie Cegielski, who stepped down last summer after two years. Cegielski had replaced Arthur Yann, who died while serving as VP of PR of the Society in 2013.

Kane reports to PRSA CEO Joseph Truncale and takes the title of chief communication officer, a new title at the trade group.

Kane led corporate communications at insurer Aflac and was senior VP of communications at the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

She earlier worked in media overseeing e-commerce at ABC-TV and consulting for Japan's NHK.

ARMY TANK PLANT SLATES PR

The Lima Army Tank Plant, the Ohio site run by General Dynamics that builds Abrams tanks for the US Army, wants a firm to develop a communications and social media plan as it faces changes.

The plant, known as the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center, has increasingly turned to making tanks and other vehicles for foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Israel, as US Army requirements have dwindled.

The Army for years sought to shutter the plant but Congressional support won out with \$367M appropriated for 2016, mostly for Abrams work and Stryker tanks. Bradley Fighting Vehicles are also made at the plant.

Proposals are due April 4.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1U1km9Z>.

FEDS SUE TO BLOCK LAT, OC REGISTER DEAL

The US Justice Department has sued to block the *Los Angeles Times*' acquisition of the *Orange County Register*.

The Justice Dept. filed an anti-trust suit seeking a temporary restraining order a day after LA Times parent Tribune won an auction for the assets of bankrupt Freedom Communications, parent of the Register.

The Justice Dept. contends Tribune would acquire a virtual monopoly over news in the region as it would account for 98 percent of newspaper sales in Orange County and 81 percent of English-language newspaper sales in Riverside County.

"If this acquisition is allowed to proceed, newspaper competition will be eliminated and readers and advertisers in Orange and Riverside Counties will suffer," said Assistant Attorney General Bill Baer. "Newspapers continue to play an important role in the dissemination of news and information to readers and remain an important vehicle for advertisers."

Tribune said it will fight the suit and suggested the government's justification is outdated.

"The [Justice Dept.] is living in a time capsule, with a framework that predates the arrival of iPhones, Google, Facebook, and modern media outlets that are killing the traditional newspaper industry," corporate comms. director Dana Meyer said in a statement. "It wasn't competition from the L.A. Times that forced the Register into bankruptcy. It was the Internet and related technology."

Tribune on March 17 won the auction for Freedom, agreeing to pay \$56M in cash for its assets (including the Register and Press-Enterprise) and real estate in Santa Ana and Riverside, Calif.

**TIMES EDITOR LATTMAN TO JOBS GROUP**

Paul Lattman, a deputy business editor for the *New York Times*, is moving to the Emerson Collective, the philanthropic group created by Laurene Powell Jobs, widow of the Apple founder.

Lattman is slated to take the post of managing director of media, overseeing the Emerson Collective's media initiatives around supporting and investing in journalism and content.

Lattman was a financial reporter and media editor for the *Wall Street Journal* before the Times.

Emerson Collective has taken a behind-the-scenes role in philanthropic pursuits, including immigration and education.

Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined the group this month as a managing partner.

Lattman profiled Ms. Jobs' entry into philanthropy in 2013 for the Times.



Lattman

NEWSSTAND MAG SALES FELL 13% IN 2015

Newsstand magazine revenues in North America declined 7.6 percent during 2015's fourth quarter and 13 percent for the year, causing total industry revenues to fall to near-record lows of \$2.5 billion, according to a report released this week by magazine industry group MagNet.

Nearly 16 percent fewer magazines were sold at North American newsstands in 2015 than 2014, according to MagNet. Publishers of North America's top 100 magazine titles experienced year-over-year declines of 8 percent, publishers behind the top 50 titles saw dips of 10.7 percent, and publishers of North America's top 25 magazine titles fared the worst, plummeting 11.3 percent.

Some categories weathered the year better than others. Teen/children's magazines took the hardest hit, suffering declines of 29 percent from the year prior. Magazines focusing on crafts were down 18.6 percent in 2015, and women's magazines — consistently one of the industry's most popular categories — fell 18.4 percent. Automotive and general interest magazines were other magazine categories that experienced noticeable declines, falling 18.3 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively.

There were several bright spots. For the second quarter in a row, magazines in the game/puzzle/crossword category revealed growth — now up 4.2 percent year-over-year — and entertainment magazines experienced a modest uptick of 1.2 percent. Most impressively, magazines focusing on science increased by an impressive 7.3 percent. MagNet noted that a new subject category — adult coloring books — has stirred marked buyer interest at newsstands, accounting for more than \$10 million in sales during 2015's fourth quarter alone.

"On a unit sold basis, publishers' costs are increasing as they sell less of what they produce," the MagNet report noted.

BENNET TO NY TIMES EDIT PAGE DIRECTOR

Atlantic editor-in-chief James Bennet, who held various newsroom positions at the *New York Times* a decade ago, will return to the newspaper of record, this time as its newest editorial page director.

Bennet begins his new role in May. The news was first reported Sunday by *Politico* and confirmed today by the Times.

Bennet, who joined the *Atlantic* in 2006, was named editor-in-chief in 2012, becoming the first Atlantic staffer to have been appointed to that position, and has since been credited with revitalizing that publication and transforming its website and live events presence. Prior to his 10 years at the Atlantic, Bennet worked at the *New York Times*, which he joined in 1991 and served as White House correspondent and Jerusalem bureau chief.

His brother is Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO).

As editorial page editor, Bennet succeeds Andrew M. Rosenthal, the influential editor who joined the Times in 1987 from the Associated Press. Rosenthal, who was appointed editorial page editor in 2007, will leave his post in late April, but will pen a column prior to his departure covering the 2016 presidential election, among other subjects.

O'DWYER'S RANKING OF PR FIRMS

Firm	2015 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2014
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$840,923,379	5,936	+5.5
2. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	119,858,300	680	+1.4
3. WE, Bellevue, WA	98,782,000	645	-7.4
4. W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	95,010,000	427	+15.0
5. Ruder Finn, New York, NY	74,000,000	535	even
6. Finn Partners, New York, NY	71,481,000	476	+35.3
7. LEWIS, San Francisco, CA	68,585,000	568	+11.6
8. ICR, New York, NY	56,208,757	153	+10.8
9. Zeno Group, New York, NY	47,343,821	317	+18.6
10. PadillaCRT, Minneapolis, MN	34,813,666	190	+10.1
11. Global Strategy Group, New York, NY	31,000,000	87	-4.5
12. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	29,247,347	194	+7.2
13. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	27,000,000	184	+17.3
14. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	25,012,724	142	+1.7
15. Regan Communications Group, Boston, MA	24,547,269	87	+2.0
16. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	24,400,000	102	+20.2
17. Taylor, New York, NY	22,100,000	105	+1.8
18. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	21,467,473	133	+13.2
19. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	21,166,208	96	+12.9
20. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH	20,554,236	119	+10.4
21. Hunter PR, New York, NY	20,500,000	102	+2.0
22. LEVICK, Washington, DC	19,586,431	71	+13.7
23. Peppercomm, New York, NY	18,234,544	88	+11.9
24. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	18,172,771	122	+12.7
25. Spectrum, Washington, DC	14,840,000	60	+83.5
26. IMRE, LLC, Baltimore, MD	14,600,000	85	+9.0
27. Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications, Boston, MA	14,105,981	44	+6.9
28. Cooney Waters Unlimited, New York, NY	14,020,725	46	-9.1
29. Makovsky, New York, NY	13,500,000	60	+2.3
30. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	13,300,000	48	+9.0
31. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	13,161,819	94	+24.1
32. RF Binder Partners, New York, NY	12,700,000	68	even
33. Inkhouse Media + Marketing, Waltham, MA	12,110,173	80	+34.3
34. Max Borges Agency, Miami, FL	11,842,541	65	+10.6
35. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	11,119,100	54	+9.2
36. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	10,994,175	55	+33.9
37. Gold PR, Corona, CA	10,512,180	4	+65.8
38. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	10,392,086	32	+4.0
39. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	10,055,190	48	-3.7
40. ReviveHealth, Nashville, TN	10,000,500	45	+12.6
41. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	9,985,000	28	-2.7
42. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI), New York, NY	9,617,526	47	+5.9
43. Bliss Integrated Communication, New York, NY	9,495,000	49	+40.0
44. Podesta Group, Washington, DC	9,020,909	20	+10.3
45. Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	8,643,281	46	+28.9
46. FoodMinds, Chicago, IL	8,287,748	33	+2.6
47. Dodge Communications, Alpharetta, GA	7,736,000	50	+8.7
48. rbb Public Relations, Miami, FL	7,605,889	45	+18.8
49. 360 Public Relations, Boston, MA	7,504,871	44	+14.6
50. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	7,500,000	55	+10.3
51. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Brentwood, TN	7,421,545	26	+21.8
52. Quinn, New York, NY	7,303,494	58	+34.4
53. Lambert, Edwards & Associates, Grand Rapids, MI	7,058,000	42	+3.2
54. Lou Hammond & Associates, New York, NY	6,966,994	40	+3.2
55. Walker Sands Communications, Chicago, IL	6,939,903	63	+52.1
56. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	6,834,979	38	+9.7
57. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	6,806,534	59	even
58. Pierpont Communications Inc., Houston, TX	6,501,919	33	+1.1
59. JPA Health Communications, Washington, DC	6,056,952	29	+30.8
60. J Public Relations, New York, NY	6,015,467	46	+25.1
61. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	5,948,056	25	+18.6
62. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	5,830,475	48	-7.6

Firm	2015 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2014
63. Moore Communications Group, Tallahassee, FL	5,782,153	34	+40.7
64. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	5,581,445	35	+16.5
65. Sachs Media Group, Tallahassee, FL	5,468,382	28	+6.6
66. Dukas Linden Public Relations, New York, NY	5,264,021	21	+15.1
67. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	4,736,816	20	-28.9
68. Konnect Public Relations, Los Angeles, CA	4,735,131	36	+46.7
69. KYNE, New York, NY	4,592,165	19	+25.8
70. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,459,649	23	-5.3
71. Status Labs, Austin, TX	4,414,872	29	+55.7
72. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, NJ	4,339,299	20	+52.3
73. Randle Communications, Sacramento, CA	4,173,887	18	+21.4
74. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations, New York, NY	4,025,000	29	+17.3
75. LANE, Portland, OR	3,986,728	23	+3.6
76. Beehive PR, St. Paul, MN	3,843,700	10	+41.5
77. Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations Inc., New York, NY	3,840,000	23	+8.4
78. Intermarket Communications, New York, NY	3,755,000	14	-1.6
79. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,648,421	20	-4.6
80. North 6th Agency (N6A), New York, NY	3,434,669	28	+65.9
81. Hotwire, New York, NY	3,137,558	17	-4.8
82. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	3,006,606	21	+25.4
83. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	2,896,296	17	+9.6
84. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	2,876,746	20	-9.5
85. Ripp Media/Public Relations, New York, NY	2,598,311	7	+3.7
86. LaVoieHealthScience, Boston, MA	2,517,515	10	+100.0
87. Cashman + Katz Company, Glastonbury, CT	2,485,000	26	+16.4
88. Wilbert Group, The, Atlanta, GA	2,470,664	10	+58.4
89. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	2,368,272	24	+20.8
90. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2,300,000	16	even
91. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	2,261,093	13	+27.3
92. Gatesman+Dave, Pittsburgh, PA	2,134,000	73	+18.6
93. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	2,132,410	15	+79.4
94. Dedit Communications, LLC, New York, NY	2,022,112	15	+35.2
95. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,999,050	20	+38.9
96. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	1,994,343	14	-1.9
97. Crosswind Media & Public Relations, Austin, TX	1,900,000	21	+7.8
98. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	1,825,595	14	+48.9
99. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	1,768,589	10	+5.0
100. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	1,730,000	15	+2.4
101. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,674,250	9	+5.2
102. Devine + Partners, Philadelphia, PA	1,449,683	6	+18.2
103. Wise Public Relations, New York, NY	1,430,000	5	+30.0
104. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	1,375,533	9	+3.9
105. Butin Integrated Communications, St. Simons Island, GA	1,314,646	7	+16.7
106. Power Group, The, Dallas, TX	1,235,829	9	+18.4
107. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	1,198,973	10	+9.4
108. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	1,081,225	7	+38.3
109. Red Sky PR, Boise, ID	1,052,566	9	even
110. KCD Public Relations, San Diego, CA	1,014,928	7	+58.5
111. TransMedia Group, Boca Raton, FL	1,007,231	6	-15.9
112. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	819,467	4	+22.9
113. Butler Associates LLC, New York, NY	811,425	5	-1.7
114. Leverage PR Inc., Austin, TX	805,596	7	+28.3
115. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	758,572	10	+99.8
116. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	718,655	6	+3.4
117. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	669,108	7	+138.1
118. Weiss PR, Baltimore, MD	651,925	3	+17.6
119. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	617,500	4	-6.3
120. Bizcom Associates, Addison, TX	595,490	5	+7.5
121. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	248,501	3	+21.7
122. Notability Partners LLC, Austin, TX	30,364	1	even

The firms ranked have satisfied the O'Dwyer ranking rules – supporting fee and employee totals with income tax and W-3 forms and providing a current account list. O'Dwyer's rankings should be regarded as an expression of our judgment of a firm's standing within the industry, and are not warranted to comply with any specific objective standards.

NEWS OF SERVICES**AVENUE REPS AMA**

The American Medical Association has hired boutique Democratic healthcare lobbying firm Avenue Solutions for Capitol Hill representation on a series of issues related to healthcare policy and Medicare.

Avenue Solutions will specifically help the country's largest physician association on lobbying issues regarding implementation of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 — which was signed into law by President Obama in April 2015 — as well as implementation of the Affordable Care Act, opioid abuse and health information technology.

The account will be handled by Tracy Spicer, a former senior aide to Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA); Amy Tejral, former legislative director to Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE); and Elizabeth Barnett, former legislative assistant to Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR).

Avenue Solutions, which specializes in health policy, is one of Washington's few all-female lobbying firms. Clients include Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, ExxonMobil, the Healthcare Leadership Council, Merck and UnitedHealth Group.

BRIEF: MDC Partners has appointed Stephanie Nerlich, president and CEO of Grey Canada, as chief marketing officer and managing director, Canada, a newly expanded role at the ad/PR combine created to maximize business growth and align client demand with partner agency expertise. She begins her new role in April.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**BOB HOPE USO PICKS POLLACK**

Los Angeles-based Pollack PR Marketing Group has been retained by Bob Hope USO to raise awareness of the nonprofit and support ongoing issue management needs.

Bob Hope USO provides United Service Organizations programs, services and live entertainment to troops and their families at military installations throughout southern California.

The independent organization also serves military personnel and their families while traveling, operating centers at the Los Angeles International Airport, the Ontario International Airport, the John Wayne Airport and the Palm Springs International Airport. PPMG will work to raise awareness of the organization's services and programs and will share its mission of supporting troops and their families with community leaders.

The agency will also provide counsel on challenges facing the organization as it prepares to relocate its flagship center at LAX.

PPMG, which was founded in 1985, holds additional offices in New York.

BRIEF: Weber Shandwick has joined the Affiliates Program at Columbia University's Data Science Institute in New York to collaborate on data solutions and adopt capabilities that will help the global PR agency improve how it benchmarks audience engagement with brands.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Julie Cram to HDMK, Washington, D.C., as a partner.

Cram had been running her own shop since a stint as senior VP at DDC Advocacy. She was a former director of PA at Burson-Marsteller after serving various PA and communications roles in the George W. Bush administration and campaign, including deputy assistant to the president and director of the public liaison, and director of PA at the International Trade Administration. She was a PR deputy for the Bush-Cheney re-election in 2004 and held a similar role at the Republican National Committee. Cram was also VP of corporate communications at TerreStar Networks.

**Cram****Promoted**

Glenn Gray to VP, Buffalo Brand Invigoration Group, Reston, Va. He joined the firm in 2010 and was formerly a marketing and sponsorship coordinator at golf academy and tours operator Junior Sports Corporation. Prior to that he was a marketing specialist at Nike.

Jessica Larkin to VP, McBee Strategic Consulting, Washington, D.C. Larkin, a healthcare pro, works biopharmaceutical and medical device clients.

Mark Duffy, former senior A/E, Qorvis MSLGROUP, where he worked the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, was promoted to senior manager on the international communications team handling FARA work for the Government of Japan, among other clients.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

MMGY Global, New York/Los Cabos Tourism Board, as AOR for North American PR, following an RFP review. Los Cabos, on the tip of the southern Baja California Peninsula in Mexico, features a range of beachfront resorts, as well as desert and mountain landscapes. The area was hit hard by Hurricane Odile in 2014 and is looking to pitch its comeback. Carolyn Izzo Integrated Comms. was the incumbent. MMGY will tackle PR in the North American market for Los Cabos, which claims 15,000 hotel rooms and another 3,000 in the works.

Southwest

Ward, Houston/Sotherly Hotels, real estate investment trust, for the relaunch of its hotel property formerly known as the Crowne Plaza Houston, located in Houston's Central Business District. Sotherly acquired the high-rise hotel in 2013 and embarked on a \$5M renovation of its 260 guest rooms, lobby and restaurant. The relaunched property, which is slated to open in April, will revert to its original name, the Whitehall, which originally opened in 1963.

International

Speyside Corporate Relations, Sao Paulo/Amadeus, travel industry IT provider, for communications support in five markets across the Latin America region, following a competitive pitch. The markets include Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay.

HUNTSWORTH REVEALS MODEST GROWTH

After experiencing a turbulent 2014 and first-half declines last year due in part to profitability losses at PR unit Grayling, global PR group Huntsworth plc today reported yearly revenue of £168.4 million (\$238.7 million), with like-for-like revenue growth up 1.5 percent from 2014's £164.7 million (\$233.5 million).

The numbers reveal a return in revenue growth for the British PR group for the first time since 2011. Headline operating profit was £15.3 million (\$22 million), revealing a downturn from 2014's £18.2 million (\$26 million).

Huntsworth Health — now the communications group's largest division — boasted a particularly strong performance, revealing £72.3 million (\$103 million) in 2015 revenue, a 13.7 percent uptick in like-for-like growth from 2014's £59.7 million (\$84 million). Huntsworth Health's operating profit was £13.8 million, compared to 2014's £12.3 million.

Its Citigate unit, on the other hand, slipped 7.1 percent in like-for-like growth, from £21.9 million (\$31 million) in 2014 to £20 million (\$28 million) in 2015, revealing operating profit of £3.1 million compared to 2014's £4.5 million.

PR flagship Grayling fared worse, offering 2015 revenue of £63.2 million (\$89.5 million), a 7.4 percent drop in like-for-like growth from 2014's £70.8 million (\$100 million). Grayling's operating profit in 2015 was £2.6 million compared to 2014's £5.4 million. Grayling, during the first half of 2015, suffered a similar 8.8 percent decline in revenues.

Huntsworth CEO Paul Taaffe in a statement said he had "looked forward to a second half year in which Huntsworth Health would continue on its double-digit growth trajectory and Grayling would return to stronger profitability after a poor first half year."

Taaffe, who led PR powerhouse Hill & Knowlton for eight years, officially succeeded Peter Chadlington as Huntsworth CEO last April.

"These full year results show Huntsworth returning to modest growth led by Huntsworth Health which delivered double digit revenue growth and is now the largest part of company," Taaffe said. "After a year of significant change, Huntsworth is now well positioned to see the benefits of the restructuring flow through to its results in the coming year."

WEBER WORKS TO OPEN CUBA SHOP

Global PR agency Weber Shandwick today announced it has obtained a license from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, thereby granting the Interpublic unit permission to pursue opening an office in Cuba.

When complete, that shop's induction would represent one of the first U.S.-based marketing services firms to establish a ground presence in the Caribbean nation.

The recently obtained Treasury Department license, authorized by the department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, gives Weber Shandwick permission to participate in the transactions needed to establish an office in that country, which has seen a marked improvement in U.S. diplomatic relations in recent years due to efforts led by President Obama. Those renewed diplomatic ties have

stirred demand from U.S. companies expressing interest in establishing a Cuban foothold. Both countries in 2015 inked a deal to reopen embassies in their respective capitals.

Havana, Cuba Weber Shandwick now has permission from the U.S. government to employ staff, market its services and open and maintain accounts at Cuban financial institutions.

The agency in a statement said it now plans to embark on discussions with the Cuban government for the purpose of securing the further permissions needed to open and operate a shop that serves clients in that country. Weber Shandwick has since submitted an application with the Cuban government, and is currently awaiting invitation for an official visit with Cuban authorities.

The agency said it would seek to establish a presence in Cuba's capital, Havana.

"For us, having an early presence on the ground in Havana is an important step as we provide support to our clients who are interested in entering the market," Micho Spring, Weber Shandwick global corporate practice chair, told O'Dwyer's. "We've been advising companies regarding Cuba for many years in anticipation of change. Interest has dramatically risen with the Obama administration's new policy towards Cuba and we look forward to continuing to help our clients navigate this complex political and economic landscape, which we know well."

Weber officials today confirmed with O'Dwyer's that the agency doesn't know at present when it would be able to break ground on its planned Havana shop. Spring in a statement said its goal is to open an office "as soon as it is legally permissible."

IPG subsidiary Weber Shandwick currently operates offices in 126 cities across 81 countries.

PODESTA REPS DEM PARTY OF ALBANIA

The Democratic Party of Albania has hired Washington, D.C.-based public affairs giant Podesta Group in a bid to improve relations with the United States and facilitate a dialogue with the government's executive branch, as well as members of Congress.

Conservative political body The Democratic Party of Albania came to power in 1992 following its win of the parliamentary election that year, and became Albania's leading political party following the 2005 parliamentary elections. The party, which is a member of the international right-of-center political alliance International Democrat Union and Centrist Democrat International, is based in Albania's capital, Tirana.

Podesta will counsel the Party on relevant U.S. policies and Congressional activities, will research and analyze issues of concern and will also possibly arrange meetings with U.S. executive branch officials and members of Congress. The public affairs firm will also assist in communicating relevant "priority issues" regarding the United States-Albania bilateral relationship to U.S. audiences for the purpose of strengthening ties between the two countries.

Duration of the account and its fees have not yet been determined.

Anthony Podesta signed the contract.

Thousands are expected at Wi-Fi Now 2016, the “World’s premier Wi-Fi conference” April 19-21 in the D. C. area. Wi-Fi health advocates say they will protest. New York’s Con Ed is spending \$1.5 billion on Wi-Fi utility meters. Wi-Fi is also coming to NYC buses.

Wi-Fi Now is at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel in Tysons, Va. Full registration is \$1,499.

Opening March 21 in Las Vegas and running to March 25 is the International Wireless Communications Expo which has been conducted since 1977. More than 7,000 attendees will view 370+ exhibits at the Las Vegas Convention Center. More than 200 speakers are on the program.

IWC says its expo is “the leading event for communications technology professionals, bringing everything you need all together in one place.” Displays of products and workshops on all relevant subjects will be featured.

Con Ed’s March 8 announcement that it will install wireless meters, also known as “smart meters,” throughout New York City and Westchester, puts it in conflict with critics who claim such devices are harmful to health.

Some See Wi-Fi Health Hazard

The Santa Cruz, Calif., Board of Health has declared wireless meters to be “an immediate threat to public peace, health and safety” and issued a “Smart Meter Moratorium.”

Critics say the meters are dangerous to all and especially to those with acute sensitivity to wi-fi radiation. Consumers are radiated in their own homes and from nearby homes against their wishes and are forced to supply data to utilities, they say.

Protests by scientists, health workers and educators against forms of wireless transmission have sprouted in the U.K., France, South Korea, Canada, Israel and Russia, among other countries. One compilation tracked 29 such protests. <http://tinyurl.com/je9hqdj>

Schools and libraries have also been hit with pleas to remove wireless devices from their facilities.

Kill Zones USA is one of the most comprehensive websites on the subject of the dangers of radiation from numerous sources including the 205,000 cellphone towers.

Con Ed, announcing an eight-year “advanced metering initiative” to replace 4.7 million meters, says they will provide “real-time, two-way communication between customers and the utility, allowing for precise voltage control, demand response and a more streamlined incorporation of the myriad renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies envisioned for New York’s power grid.”

Thomas Magee, general manager, Smart Grid Implementation Group, said, “They facilitate the ease with which you can integrate these resources into the grid.”

Customers would be able to track when energy is most expensive and adjust their use, conceivably doing so remotely by using smart phones, Con Ed said. If voltage can be lowered to certain areas, the utility can send it to areas that need it more, it was further explained.

Hudson Valley Residents Beefed

Hudson Valley residents voiced their complaints about the meters at a nearly five-hour hearing Feb. 5, 2015 in Kingston conducted by the Public Service Commission. An hour PSC presentation was followed by nearly four hours of comments.

Residents said the meters produce electromagnetic pollution and the microwaves they emit when transmitting data are carcinogenic.

“Those so-called smart meters are not smart and they’re very dangerous, so please don’t dismiss the anti-smart meter movement,” said Joel Tyner, (D-Clinton), Dutchess County legislator.

There were also hearings on the topic in New York City and Buffalo that did not last that long reported the Mid-Hudson News Network.

New York Buses to Get Wi-Fi

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced March 8 that 2,042 buses of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, to be introduced over the next five years, will have free Wi-Fi and USB charging ports. This will replace nearly 40% of the fleet and cost \$1.3 billion. The first buses are due in April.

“Today’s world demands connectivity and we’re meeting that challenge with state-of-the-art buses and a major overhaul of the MTA’s fleet,” said Cuomo.

“Wireless connectivity is prevalent in the lives of our customers,” he said. “More and more people are using Wi-Fi enabled devices such as smartphones, laptops, tablets and e-book readers on a daily basis and the MTA can accommodate this trend by introducing high-speed connectivity and charging ports on buses.”

The 2,042 buses will be equipped with “Wi-Fi hotspots,” he said, with 75 making their debut later this year in Queens. About 300 more will join the fleet in New York, the Bronx and Brooklyn in the next two years. The project will be completed by 2020.

NYC Getting 7,500 “Hot Spots”

New York City and the boroughs are also getting in the next few years 7,500 wireless phone and Wi-Fi terminals that will replace the current curbside facilities.

The program, in which Sidewalk Labs is one of many partners, has been called “Wi-Fry” because of alleged dangers from radiation that is emitted up to 200 feet from the terminals; “Wi-Spy” because data will be collected from anyone who uses the terminals, and “Wi-Lie” because the major powers behind the \$200 million program are hidden from public view—Google and Titan Outdoor Advertising.

Critics say viewing the 4.5-foot digital ads on both sides of the terminals will be the principal experience most New Yorkers will have of them since most already have Wi-Fi and cellphone access.

They said the “Labs” in the title of Sidewalk Labs denotes an experiment is being conducted on citizens without their permission. Attempts to reach Sidewalk Labs and others in the program by phone or email have been unsuccessful.

— *Jack O’Dwyer*