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Editor-in-Chief

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## FINN WINS MICHIGAN ECODEV PITCH

The Michigan Economic Development Corp. has selected Finn Partners after a competitive pitch to promote The Wolverine State as a world-class business location and a great place to visit.



Weber Shandwick had the MEDC for about a dozen years, but the business shifted to Interpublic sister firm Current Global about a year ago.

Finn Partners will generate awareness of Michigan's growing economy and the full range of services offered by the MEDC to support new businesses and communities.

The independent firm also will increase Michigan's visibility as both a regional and national four-season travel destination.

Andy Schueneman, senior partner in Finn's Detroit office, will manage the multi-year MEDC account that covers media relations, events/partnerships, thought leadership and social media duties.

Peter Finn looks forward to helping MEDC shine the spotlight on Michigan's "thriving business opportunities."

[Finn Partners ranks No. 4 in O'Dwyer's rankings](#) of independent firms with 2020 fees of \$108.9M.

## BLACKBERRY'S CLYNE TAKES BCW TECH POST

Karen Clyne, who was head of communications at BlackBerry, has joined [BCW](#) as executive VP & technology practice leader for North America.



**Karen Clyne**

She takes over for Michael Ann Thomas, executive VP & global tech lead, who joined BCW from [APCO Worldwide](#) in 2018. Clyne assumed her BlackBerry post in 2019 after a three-year stint at MWWPR, which is now [MikeWorldWide](#), where she was executive VP, western region leader and tech chief.

At BlackBerry, she set up the corporate communications structure and guided its global rebranding effort.

Earlier in her 20 year-plus career, Clyne was senior VP at Eastwick, VP at Herrick Media, and senior director of corporate communications at Brisbane Digital Consulting Group.

Clyne reports to Brooke Hovey, global chief growth officer and NA president. She will remain in San Francisco.

## PARK CITY, UTAH SEEKS PR SERVICES

Park City, Utah is seeking an agency that can provide public relations services that will represent and raise awareness of the mountain tourism destination.

The Park City Chamber of Commerce has issued a request for information for qualified agencies with strong demonstrated national media relations capabilities in the tourism sector that can conduct outreach to U.S. and Canadian media.



The agency ultimately chosen for the work will be assigned a three-year contract.

Agencies should announce their intent to bid no later than 5 p.m. (MST) on October 15 via email to [dan@visitparkcity.com](mailto:dan@visitparkcity.com). They will then be asked to respond to a formal RFP with a deadline of January 10, 2022.

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

## RUDER FINN ACQUIRES UK'S MANTIS

[Ruder Finn](#) has acquired Mantis, a British medtech company that targets companies operating in the public sector.

Mantis has a dozen staffers who counsel 23 clients, 85 percent of which work with the National Health Service, social care providers and private healthcare sectors.

Ruder Finn has momentum in the medtech space and has been looking for the right partner to take it to the next level, according to Nick Leonard, UK MD at the independent shop.

"Many agencies claim to target the MedTech space but very few will have the clinical and technical credentials and capabilities of our combined proposition," he added.

[Ruder Finn ranks No. 6 in O'Dwyer's rankings](#) of independent PR firms with 2020 fees of \$87.8M.

## LINK MOVES FROM OGILVY TO INKHOUSE

[Inkhouse](#) has appointed Megan Link executive vice president and general manager of its New York City office. Link comes to Inkhouse from Ogilvy,

where she most recently served as executive vice president and worked on integrated marketing communications programs for consumer technology companies. Before Ogilvy, she was a group vice president at Ruder Finn, and she has also held several roles at WE Communications. At Inkhouse she will focus on growing and managing the agency's New York City team and client base.



**Megan Link**

## **NEW ROCHELLE NEEDS NEW BRANDING**

New Rochelle seeks marketing communications partners to help it enhance its brand in the post-COVID-19 world.

The Westchester County city is in the midst of a transformation geared to the shift the pandemic has made in the way people experience cities, according to the RFP.

The redevelopment thrust is paying particular attention to the global growth of the ESG principles and investment.

New Rochelle plans to hire at least three firms to handle marketing, digital content, graphic design, website hosting/maintenance and social media management for the ultimate goal of bolstering awareness of its vibrant downtown to attract new, prospective and current residents.

Proposals are due Oct. 13. They must be labeled “Spec #5406” and sent to: Purchasing Office; New Rochelle City Hall; 515 North Ave.; New Rochelle, NY 10801; Attn: Sandi Murray, Purchasing Specialist

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

## **NYS AG JAMES TALKS TO SKDK**

New York attorney general Letitia James, who is weighing a primary challenge to governor Kathy Hochul, may bring on SKDK Knickerbocker for political counsel, according to the *New York Post*.



**Letitia James**

James has ties to SKDK through Javier Lacayo, senior VP at the firm, who was her press secretary while she was New York City’s public advocate.

The *Post* noted that SKDK’s relationship with Cuomo may not be a good look for James. The firm worked for him during the successful effort to legalize same-sex marriage.

Democrat strategist Hank Sheinkopt said reaching out to SKDK shows James is “seeking a pro-establishment kind of outlook.”

SKDK played a key role in Joe Biden’s presidential run.

Partner Anita Dunn was a senior advisor to the campaign and the firm led its direct mail and vote-by-mail operations. She took a job at the White House helping Biden with messaging but is now back in SKDK’s Washington office.

## **USA GYMNASTICS HIRES GEER AS CCO**

Embattled USA Gymnastics has recruited Jill Geer as chief communications and marketing officer.

The Indianapolis-based organization has come under fire for its mishandling of allegations lodged against disgraced Larry Nassar, who was USAG’s doctor.

Geer will be responsible for driving internal and external communications, social media, branding, marketing, digital strategy, content development and media relations.



**Jill Geer**

Most recently, Geer was CMO at the American College of Education. Before that, she led communications and marketing for USA Track & Field from 2000 to 2018.

Geer looks forward to making “a positive impact on an incredible sport with the best athletes in the world from youth through elite,” and promises to communicate “authentically and effectively” as USAG evolves.

## **NEWS OF FIRMS**

[The Bliss Group](#) launches [NextTech Communications](#), a new firm that will be formed through its acquisition of technology-focused Savarese Communications. Savarese Communications founder and CEO Janine Savarese will lead NextTech Communications as

CEO and The Bliss Group managing partner Cortney Stapleton will serve as chairwoman. The new firm, which is based at Bell Works, the Bell Labs



Holmdel Complex in Holmdel, NJ, will work with tech clients, offering business and professional services, financial services, health care and technology-driven products and services.

**WPP and Snap Inc.**, the camera company behind Snapchat, launch The AR Lab, a global partnership to help brands build and deliver immersive experiences for consumers using Augmented Reality. As Snap’s inaugural agency AR partner, WPP will collaborate with the company on new products and technology, such as the recently launched Snapchat Trends tool. In addition, WPP and Snap will implement a co-developed custom optimization scorecard for WPP clients, which will be used to generate more effective campaigns.

**Reportable**, which builds and distributes press releases, is collaborating with NewsRx on Life Science Monitoring, a media monitoring service tailored to the life sciences industry. The customized concierge service delivers daily digests and/or real time alerts to customers who provide key terms in their industry. It makes use of NewsRx’s artificial intelligence, which monitors and reports on the latest scientific research, patents and clinical trials.

**CommunicationsMatch**, which powers [PRSA’s Find a Firm agency and professional search tool](#), is partnering with ratings and reviews platform **Clutch** to provide agencies, professionals and service providers the option of adding Clutch reviews to Communications Match profiles. Agencies and service providers can now add Clutch reviews; directly request, review, and approve client recommendations; and create links to reviews on client-facing websites or third-party platforms.



**Creative Artists Agency** reaches a definitive agreement to acquire **ICM Partners**. The transaction is expected to close later this year. “The strategic combination of CAA and ICM bolsters our collective resources, expertise and relationships to deliver even more opportunities for our world-class clients to build their careers and their brands across multiple disciplines and platforms in an evolving marketplace,” said CAA’s Bryan Loud, Kevin Huvane and Richard Lovett.

**News Direct**, a news and content distribution service, launches SimpliFi, a feature intended to streamline the process of creating and distributing financial content such as earnings releases. Using SimpliFi, IR professionals will be able to copy and paste their earnings content, including tabular data, directly into the News Direct Content Studio. Key stakeholders can then comment on drafts in a protected environment where changes can be made and tracked. The platform is built with cloud isolation technology and advanced encryption protocols, providing what the company says is the industry’s highest level of protection.

## **MEMO TO BIDEN: AVOID 'WISHFUL THINKING'**

After less than a year in office, it's already clear the Biden Administration will go down in history, with an emphasis on "down."

Consider the disaster that was September: chaos in Kabul, Haitian horse-whipping at the border and France recalling its ambassador over a sneaky sub deal.



**Fraser Seitel**

But rather than simply rub salt in a wound that becomes more gaping each day, it's better to offer instead some time-honored public relations advice in an effort to limit the damage over the next three-plus Biden years.

That advice: No matter the subject, fight the urge to be overly optimistic or self-assured in predicting results. In other words, avoid wishful thinking.

There are many egregious examples of the dangers of wishful thinking. Let's look at some example from the Biden administration.

First, has there ever been anyone in a position of power as dull as Secretary of State Antony Blinken? (No fair counting Homeland Secretary Mayorkas or Defense Secretary Austin!)

Blinken is a lifelong bureaucrat, generally meticulous in the bureaucratic art of talking much and saying little. He's circumspect in his speech, careful not to extend himself to a point from which he can't recover.

In July, Secretary Blinken assured the NBC's Chuck Todd that the American departure from Afghanistan would be orderly. By September, of course, when his prediction proved disastrously wrong, Blinken's tune with Todd had changed. He repeated the Biden talking points that the Trump Administration's flawed agreement with the Taliban had tied the new Administration's hands and that no one expected the Afghan army to give up so quickly.

Then there's Gen. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Gen. Milley, a career soldier, is self-confident, articulate and political. Whereas Secretary Blinken and Milley's ostensible "boss," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, are halting, unsteady communicators, Milley is brutally blunt.

But even the take-no-prisoners Milley had been guilty of one memorable slip into wishful thinking that will cost his reputation forever. In the final September days of Kabul chaos, Milley famously labeled a U.S. drone attack that killed 10 people a "righteous strike." A week later, the general was made to retract his pronouncement.

Finally, there's the President himself, the most guilty of letting wishful thinking cloud his thinking and sink his speech.

By now, President Biden's ill-chosen words on Afghanistan are well-known:

"The withdrawal was an extraordinary success."

"The troops will stay until every American who wants to be out is out."

"The likelihood there's going to be the Taliban overrunning everything and owning the whole country is highly unlikely."

Anyone who's ever advised a leader in crisis understands that the most difficult thing to deliver is "bad news." A leader, understandably, wants to be optimistic and confident and upbeat that "this will all turn out good in the end."

Your job, as public relations counsel, is to encourage

your client to focus instead on what we plan to do and how we plan to do it. You must disabuse him or her of "wishful thinking."

From historic highs, Joe Biden's approval ratings have tumbled to levels descending toward Donald Trump's. Part of the blame lies with advisors who succumbed to the President's wishful thinking.

*Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He's author of the Pearson text "The Practice of Public Relations," now in its 14th edition, and co-author of "Rethinking Reputation" and "Idea Wise." He may be reached directly at [yusake@aol.com](mailto:yusake@aol.com).*

## **TEXAS NEEDS PR TO PUSH FLOOD RELIEF**

Texas is seeking proposals for an economic development and diversification plan for the Lower Rio Grande Valley that was devastated by the 2019 floods.

The Texas General Land Office wants to address the issue of workforce deficiencies and lost businesses in Hidalgo, Willacy, Cameron and Starr counties.

It aims to expand their economies to make them more resilient to future impacts while recovering from the 2019 disaster.

The overall mission is to establish sustainable economic goals for the region by using trend analysis, statistical data, economic modeling and stakeholder input.

TGLO's partner will conduct research and community outreach to analyze the job market, consumption of goods and socio-economic conditions of each county and the overall region. It will inventory assets and deficits regarding infrastructure, housing stock, education, quality of life amenities, technology, business climate and labor force.

The firm will prepare editorials, pitch news stories, produce fliers and manage social media to reach business owners, real estate professionals, community leaders, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders to inform them of the economic development program.

Texas will award a three-year contract. Electronic responses, due by Oct. 11, go to [box.com](http://box.com).

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



## **EDELMAN POWERS FLUENCE'S IPO**

[Edelman](#) handles Fluence, clean energy storage technology company, as it files an S-1 statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission ahead of its initial public stock offering.

The Arlington, VA-based company was created in 2018 between Germany's Siemens battery-based storage group and AES Corp. power generation company.

Fluence says it's the leading pure-play provider of energy storage globally. It calls battery energy storage technology the center of the clean energy transition as more renewables are added to the grid, and the transportation sector moves towards electrification," according to its S-1 form.

The company chalked up \$430M in revenues for the nine-month period ended in June and a \$75M net loss.

Edelman's Julia Fisher handles media for Fluence, while Alison Mickey is the company's director of communications.

Fluence's shares will trade on the NASDAQ.



## **MAINE WANTS TO BOOK TOURISM PR FIRM**

Maine wants to hire a communications partner to help plot its plan to position itself as New England's premier four-season tourism destination.

The goal is to "sustainably increase overnight visitation" by promoting the Pine Tree State in key US and domestic markets, according to the RFP.

Maine's goal is to distribute visitation more evenly across the state throughout the year, so as not to overburden communities and attractions.

Given the geographic diversity and product offerings of Maine, peak season is different in coastal vs. inland areas.

More than 16.5M people visited Maine in 2019, spending about \$6.5B. The pandemic walloped tourism spending, as it fell 27 percent in 2020.

Maine plans to issue a one-year contract with two one-year renewal options.

Proposals are due Oct. 15. They must be submitted electronically to [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov).

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

## **TOGORUN ANNOUNCES SPIN-OFF FROM OMC**

[TogoRun](#), the healthcare communications agency under Fleishman-Hillard, has officially announced its independence from former parent Omnicom PR Group.



**Gloria Janata**

TogoRun president and Chandler Chicco alum Gloria "Glo" Janata acquired the New York-based specialty healthcare shop last year and established communications and media company GMJ Global, LLC, which includes three other units: digital consumer health and beauty agency VegaRun, creative shop StudioTogo and publications and media company GMJ Global Media. Janata now holds the title of president and CEO.

In the year since spinning off from Omnicom, TogoRun has witnessed a 225 percent growth in its client roster and a 900 percent increase in revenue.

"In the midst of chaos, the silver lining is that companies are recalibrating business models to include ESG into all business practices—not because they have to, but because they want to," Janata told *O'Dwyer's*.

## **TULCHAN WORKS POLESTAR'S \$20B SPAC DEAL**

London's Tulchan Communications is handling Sweden's Polestar as the pure-play electric performance car company plans to go public in a SPAC deal valued in the \$20B range.

Founded in 2017 by Volvo Cars and its parent company Zhejiang Geely Holding of China, Polestar delivered 10K cars in 2020 and expects to produce 290K vehicles a year by 2024. The company will roll out its first SUV model next year.

CEO Thomas Ingenlath said the SPAC formed by Gores Group and Guggenheim Partners will position Polestar as a financially strong, future proof and global electric car company on the mission towards sustainable mobility.

Shares of Polestar Automotive Holding UK Limited will trade on the NASDAQ under the symbol PSNY. Leonardo DiCaprio is among investors in the company.

Tulchan's Simon Pilkington and Harry Cameron represent Polestar.

## **FEWER GET NEWS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA**

[A recent study released by the Pew Research Center](#) finds that the number of Americans who get their news from social media has declined.

Pew's study analyzed Americans' use habits of the 10 most popular social media sites. It found that, overall, less than half of Americans now get their news from social media sites at least sometimes (48 percent), a five-percent decline from a year ago (53 percent).

Facebook remains the giant of social media platforms, being used by two-thirds of all U.S. adults (66 percent). In terms of sheer numbers, Facebook also remains the social site where Americans regularly get their news the most, yet the share of Americans who now regularly use the site for news has declined as well, from more than a third last year (36 percent) in 2020 to less than a third (31 percent) in 2021.

Video app TikTok, on the other hand, has seen a surge in the percentage of users who regularly turn to the site for news, rising from 22 percent last year to 29 percent in 2021.

The Pew report found that some social media sites are uniquely more "newsy" than others. For example, Twitter's total audience remains relatively small, used by only about 23 percent of the U.S. adult population. However, among those who do use the site, more than half (55 percent) regularly use it as a news source. While YouTube is more popular (used by 72 percent of all U.S. adults), a smaller portion of its users regularly turn to it for news (30 percent).

The Pew report surveyed 11,178 respondents drawn from the center's American Trends Panel, a nationally representative list of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted between July and August.

## **ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT**

[Rubenstein Public Relations](#) picks up **StereoLOGIC**, Ltd., whose platform enables companies to quickly and accurately analyze, improve and control their business operations. Rubenstein PR will execute corporate messaging and brand positioning for the company. It will also be tasked with developing and revamping StereoLOGIC's social media presence and platforms. "We are confident their strong media relationships and comprehensive branding and messaging strategies will generate successful results for us," said StereoLOGIC CEO Sofia Passova.

[imre](#) is named global public relations agency of record for **INFINITI Motor Company**, continuing a near decade-long relationship for another three years. As global agency of record, imre will play a key role in communicating the transformation of the brand. The agency will support corporate and internal communications, product launch strategy and execution, as well as guide brand tone, voice and visual identity. "Imre continues to impress me with their positive energy and their creative story-driven approach," said INFINITI global communications general manager Wendy Orthman.

**William Mills Agency** promotes **Finalytics.ai**, a fintech company that uses proprietary artificial intelligence to drive digital experiences between credit unions and their members and prospects. "We wanted their experienced and highly qualified team to help us build the company brand and more importantly help us bring this technology to a broader market," said Finalytics.ai CEO Craig McLaughlin.



## **FH PITCHES UAE AS GOOD PLACE TO DO BIZ**

[FleishmanHillard](#), which promoted the United Arab Emirates' "Hope Probe" mission to Mars in July, is now pitching the oil-rich state as a good place to do business.

The UAE, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, this month announced 50 initiatives to attract \$150B in foreign investment over the new decade as it competes with Saudi Arabia to become the economic engine of the Arab World.

It also is eager to rebound from a 6.1 percent economic contraction suffered during COVID-19-impacted 2020.

The Omnicom unit has a three-month pact for corporate positioning and brand management government media office of the UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future.

That work began Sept. 1.

FH's US arm provides media relations and stakeholder engagement regarding investment and business activity, targeting audiences here. It also backstops the work of FH's London office.

## **BGR TAPS TRUMP'S COVID CHIEF BIRX**

Dr. Deborah Birx, who as leader of president Trump's coronavirus task force received criticism for failing to push back at his wild claims about COVID-19, has signed on as a member of BGR Group's advisory board.

An image of scarf-wearing Birx sitting uncomfortably as Trump talked up ultraviolet light and disinfectants as treatments for the virus went viral in April 2020. She made no comment about the president's "remedies."

Behind the scenes, Birx, an infectious disease expert with more than 30 years of service in the US Army, State Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reportedly advised state and local public health officials on how to navigate the pandemic.

Upon leaving the task force when Joe Biden took office, Birx said Team Trump censored her "science-based guidance" and barred her from media appearances.

Haley Barbour, BGR founder and former Republican governor of Mississippi, said Birx's "insights honed from years of service across numerous government agencies will provide enormous value to our clients and bipartisan team."

## **WAPO WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT TO FGH**

Finsbury Glover Hering hires *Washington Post* White House correspondent Anne Gearan as a partner in its Washington office. At the Post, Gearan focused on foreign policy, national security and politics, and was the lead political reporter covering Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign. She is also an on-air political contributor for NBC News and MSNBC.

Before coming to the Post, Gearan was a reporter for the Associated Press, serving as chief diplomatic correspondent, Pentagon correspondent, White House reporter and national security editor.

At FGH, she will leverage her extensive foreign affairs and political acumen to provide strategic counsel to a broad range of FGH clients.



**Anne Gearan**



**Deborah Birx**

## **MARKETERS PLAN TO UP SPENDING IN '22**

Almost nine out of 10 marketing execs say their companies plan to increase marketing spend in 2022, according to [a new survey from 360PR+ and Engine Group](#). Only two percent say they aren't planning to up their marketing spend, with 10 percent saying that it's too early to make a prediction.

Most of those surveyed said that they have gotten better at their jobs in response to the demands posed by the pandemic. The biggest lesson they've learned: how to prioritize. More than three-quarters (76 percent) said the pandemic has helped them get more focused and better prioritize their objectives.

More than half (57 percent) said they have become more open to new approaches, 47 percent said they are more likely to think holistically, and 42 percent thought they had become more nimble.

There was general agreement (94 percent) that brand marketing and corporate reputation are becoming more closely tied together. Respondents also saw corporate leadership as being a bigger part of the storytelling process, with 68 percent saying they plan to increase the use of senior executives in brand communications, and 95 percent recognizing the importance of such execs being effective storytellers.

With an eye toward a lessening of the pandemic's effects, more than half (54 percent) said they plan to hold more in-person events in 2022. But virtual events are far from disappearing, with 44 percent noting that they will schedule more of them.

For the report, 360PR+ surveyed 200 marketing and communications leaders across the US during Summer 2021.

## **ON THE MOVE**

[Crosby Marketing Communications](#) appoints **Marcos Ballesterro** as vice president, digital creative director. Ballesterro comes to Crosby from Qorvis MSLGroup in Washington, DC, where served as VP, creative director. He has also held executive creative positions with Weber Shandwick, Ketchum and The NIH Cancer Institute. In his new position, Ballesterro will play a lead role in creative conceiving and user-experience design of digital marketing campaigns, websites and mobile apps.

ADT hires **DeLu Jackson** as chief marketing officer. Jackson comes to ADT from Conagra Brands, where he served as vice president of precision marketing. He was previously vice president, digital at Kellogg and vice president, global digital at McDonald's. In his new post, he will lead customer acquisition, marketing and advertising for ADT as well as activating such partnerships as ADT | Google and focusing on subscriber growth.

**4media group** adds **Jody Nicholes** and **Blaire Galaton** to its broadcast PR team. Nicholes joins the agency as senior vice president of production services, and Galaton is media relations manager. Nicholes served 27 years as a producer at NBC News Channel, covering a broad range of events. Galaton has been the executive producer and co-host of Cumulus Media's Jack Diamond Show and a talent booker for Envision Radio Networks. "They will add tremendous value to our clients," said 4media group global CEO and president Ed Cyster.



**DeLu Jackson**

## COMMENTARY



**There were some very fine people who stormed the US Capitol** on Jan. 6 and they should not be prosecuted for trashing the heart of America's government.

That's a growing feeling among Republicans, according to a Pew Research poll conducted Sept. 13-19.

Pew found that only 57 percent of Republicans say it is important or somewhat important for federal law enforcement agencies to prosecute the rioters.

That's a steep drop-off from earlier this year. Nearly eight in ten (79 percent) Republicans in March favored prosecution of the Capitol Hill mob.

Democrats held steady at 95 percent in favor of prosecution. Among the overall public, support for prosecution dipped from 87 percent in March to 78 percent.

GOPers also want the media to ease up on their reporting of the aftermath of the rioting and ongoing investigations.

Sixty-five percent of conservative Republicans say too much attention has been given to the Jan. 6 uprising. Forty-one percent of liberal/moderate Republicans agree with that viewpoint.

The nation dodged the bullet on Jan. 6. Republicans may outwardly cheer future rioters on the next time they seek to overturn the election results and squelch America's democracy.

**Have we no shame?** Part of the so-called American Dream used to include the idea that children will be better off than their parents. That sounds like a quaint notion these days.

A report in the journal *Science* says the average six-year-old today will live through three times as many climate disasters as their grandparents did.

That assumes the planet continues to heat at its current pace. Today's kid will witness twice as many wildfires, 3.4 times more river flooding and 2.3 times as many droughts as a person born in 1960 experienced.

Wim Thiery, an author of the report, told the *Washington Post*: "Young people are being hit by the climate crisis but are not in a position to make decisions, while the people who can make the change happen will not face the consequences."

Aggressive moves to reduce the use of fossil fuels can help stave off disaster.

**Canada gives the bid to export dirty tar sands oil to the US another PR shot** following the collapse of the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that president Biden spiked on his first day in office.

The Canadian Energy Center, which the *Edmonton Journal* calls the energy "war room" of the province of Alberta, has launched a \$240K digital billboard push in DC and New York to pitch Canada as a "better, closer and friendlier" oil supplier compared to Russia and Saudi Arabia. The effort also includes a grassroots component that encourages America to lobby Biden and lawmakers about the merits of importing oil from our north of the border ally and trading partner.

Tom Olson, CEO of the Centre, notes that though Keystone is dead for now, "there remains urgency in letting

Americans know any further threatened sanctions in the US on pipelines by state governments and activist-led court challenges will be detrimental to American families struggling to get back on their feet from the economic impacts of COVID-19."

The Centre says oil derived from tar sands is less dirty now than in past years. It claims oil-sands-produced greenhouse gas emissions went down 22 percent from 2011 to 2019.

Even so, renewable wind and solar power are the way to go for the US. We are happy that Canada is now wide open to Americans who want to visit and boost its economy.

**Greenwashing ESG.** Glass Lewis, proxy advisor, urges shareholders of BHP to vote against its Climate Transition Action Plan at the Oct. 14 annual meeting because it's more of a PR stunt than a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Glass Lewis says the CTAP falls short of the goals set by the Paris Accords. It applauded BHP, the world's biggest mining operation, for disclosing plans it plans to take to reduce global warming but believes it is "unclear if the company's current targets are science-based." The move by Glass Lewis will encourage institutional shareholders to challenge other climate plans put up for investor approval.

Dan Gocher, director of climate and environment at the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility, told the *Financial Times* that companies "will no longer be rewarded for their direction of travel and the climate plans will now be assessed on substance."

BHP plans to discuss the CTAP with Glass Lewis. "We believe that shareholders and other stakeholders benefit from greater disclosure and ambition, which the climate transition action plans delivers," it said in a statement.

Glass Lewis applauds BHP's disclosure and ambition. It's just that the proposals on decarbonization fall short of the mark.

**Had it not been for the reputational stain** that she earned while heading Donald Trump's COVID-19 task force, the recruitment of Deborah Birx for membership on its advisory board would have been a great "get" for BGR Group.

A client, though, may be hesitant to take counsel from Birx, who infamously remained mum while sitting near Trump as he spouted lunacies about ultraviolet lights and disinfectants being cures for COVID-19.

The Trump taint overshadows Birx's more than 30 years of service to her country focused on clinical and basic immunology, vaccine research and global health.

She began serving her country as an Army colonel and running some of the most high-profile programs at the State Dept. and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Birx led one of the first trials of the HIV vaccine in history that supported evidence of the potential effectiveness in preventing HIV infection.

Though the US Army and CDC granted Birx their highest honors for meritorious service, she will be remembered for not speaking out against Trump, a silence that may have resulted in unnecessary pandemic deaths. —Kevin McCauley