

PR Pulse

Volusia/Flagler Chapter of the
Florida Public Relations Association

December 2009

Holiday Social set for Dec. 10

Celebrate the holidays with your FPRA colleagues at the Daytona Lagoon from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10. Included in the \$20 fee are heavy hors d'oeuvres; your choice of go karts, miniature golf, laser tag or rock climbing; and one drink ticket with happy hour special afterward.

There is a separate \$3 parking fee at the Earl Street Garage that cannot be included in admissions checks. Dress as you wish – in formal or casual attire.

Reservations are required by Dec. 4 and may be made by contacting **Wendi Jackson** at (386) 878-8756 or wjackson@deltonafl.gov.

The evening will feature a food drive and silent auction. Please bring nonperishable food items to the meeting or drop them off at the Homewood Suites by Hilton, Bill France Boulevard, Daytona Beach. If you would like to donate an item for the silent auction, contact **Marisol Moreno** at islandgirl6977@yahoo.com.

Michelle Coats earns CPRC



Coats

Congratulations are in order for **Michelle Coats, APR, CPRC**, who recently passed rigorous oral and written examinations to become a Certified Public Relations Practitioner.

The certification is offered exclusively by FPRA to accredited members with 10 or more years of experience. There are fewer than 80 CPRCs in Florida, and seven of them are members of the Volusia/Flagler Chapter!

During the oral examination, candidates are asked to pitch a communications plan in 30 minutes or less. The six-hour written test consists of 16 case-study essays designed to test problem-solving skills.

Coats is a community information specialist for Volusia County Government and a former chapter president.



Mark your 2010 calendar

Mark your calendar for FPRA Volusia/Flagler's 2010 schedule, which will include a mixture of new ideas and long-time traditions. Locations and additional details will be announced in future newsletters.

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12

Speaker: Tim Suddard, publisher of Grassroots Motorsports and Classic Motorsports

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9

Speaker: Joe Curley, APR, CPRC, of Stingray Solutions, Tampa

March 12: Full-day professional development conference

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 13: Great Communicator/Image Awards Luncheon

Tuesday, May 18: Joint social media meeting with the Daytona Beach Advertising Federation at the Daytona 500 Experience

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 8

Speaker to be announced

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 13

Speaker to be announced

August: No meeting due to the annual state conference in Naples

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14: Officer installation

President's column: Getting into the holiday spirit



Dorn

The holidays are a good time to give something back. As we shrug off a tough year for the economy with high hopes for a better 2010, there are others who did not weather the year so well and youths facing the prospect of entering a tough job market in the next one to four years.

Please bring canned or non-perishable goods to the holiday social or to **Marisol Moreno** at the Home-wood Suites by Hilton, Bill France Blvd., Daytona Beach. This year, we're splitting the donations between food banks in Volusia and Flagler counties, so we hope to have more to give. A good way to store up more is to set aside the second box or can of buy-one-get-one free specials from grocery stores.

I had the pleasure of getting to better know some of our members on the phone before the Thanksgiving holidays and will continue to call others. What I hear the most is that people join for networking. The holiday social at the Daytona Lagoon is the best networking opportunity of the fiscal year, with no speeches to slow down your chance to get to know other members. I hope to see you there.

At the social, FPRA also will host a silent auction to benefit student members. Our FPRA chapter is providing three dues scholarships in December to Bethune-Cookman University students and would like to do more through scholarships or the Florida Public Relations Education Foundation. We've already had some wonderful and valuable donations including fun activities, hotel stays and an original painting. Please donate an item, gift certificate or gift basket to make the silent auction entertaining and successful. Small items can be grouped with others, so anything is appreciated.

The holidays also are a good time to begin to give something back to the chapter and hone your leadership skills through volunteerism. Through the years I have discovered you truly do get out of FPRA what you put into it. Committee spaces are still available for the March 12 local conference and the April Image Awards/Great Communicator Luncheon. Committee involvement can be a first step toward future board positions. I can help place you in the best volunteer opportunity if you contact me at (386) 679-4792 or prexpert@earthlink.net. Those with interest in future board positions should contact Immediate Past President **Melissa Sheets, APR**, by March at (386) 313-4040 or msheets@flaglercounty.org.

Congratulations to recent member and past board member **Dai Durrance** on her engagement to marry in March. Best wishes from your friends at FPRA for your marriage and your change to a marketing role with Halifax Health.

- Mary Dorn, APR, Chapter President

Chapter champions

October: Pam Hamlin



In the first two months of her third year as vice president of membership, **Pam Hamlin** had to raise her initial goals for new members because she already has met them! The chapter is ahead of the state average in renewals and was second in the state for meeting membership goals during every quarter of 2008-2009. Hamlin also gives back to the community by volunteering to raise awareness for the 2010 Census. She is always eager to help and offer valuable advice to the chapter leadership. When FPRA announced her award at the October membership meeting, members around the room gave their cheerful consent. Congratulations, Pam! You deserve it.

November: Gretchen Smith



Seeing a need to feed the hungry in Flagler County, **Gretchen Smith** of the Flagler County Chamber of Commerce joined a steering committee of Flagler County leaders, professionals and volunteers to organize a communitywide Thanksgiving meal. The goal was to raise enough money to serve 2,000 struggling residents of Flagler County. Teaming with Flagler County's PIO, Carl Laundrie, Smith coordinated a media relations and e-mail campaign to solicit funds and volunteers. The effort raised more than \$12,000 in three weeks and 375 volunteers to serve the meal. (They even had to turn away volunteers due to overwhelming interest.) For caring about your community and making a difference, we're proud to announce Smith as the November Chapter Champion. Good luck in your continuing campaign.

If you know a member who has promoted the profession, assisted the board in its efforts, created an inventive campaign or shows initiative in volunteerism, please contact chapter President **Mary Dorn, APR**.

PR in the news

FPRA thanks past president **Joe Radcliffe, APR**, for answering the call of the chapter's Past Presidents Council to submit an article to the Volusia/Flagler Business Report about the trials PR professionals face in the market.

The article is reprinted in its entirety on page three.

Spin doctors or public relations professionals?

Local pros push profession forward



by Joe Radcliffe, APR

After joining the City of Ormond Beach as its first public information officer in September 2001, I soon experienced the pros and cons of working in government as a public relations professional.

At my first city commission meeting, the mayor introduced me to the packed house of about 250 citizens. Minutes later, during public comment for the annual budget, a citizen read through a list of items that should be cut.

“Public Information Officer, \$40,000?” he said. “That’s just a spin doctor.”

At that, a man sitting next to me leaned over and whispered, “Welcome to Ormond Beach.”

Having worked in city government before, as well as for businesses and nonprofit organizations, I was used to the unique public scrutiny that comes with local government. However, many of us in the public relations profession will never get used to being labeled spin doctors, PR hacks, or worse.

At the same time, we know the profession includes those who don’t follow the profession’s code of ethics. Mention “PR,” and most people conjure up images of publicity flacks feeding phony drivel to the tabloids, press secretaries for corrupt politicians, or corporate spokespersons downplaying the impact of a toxic waste spill.

That was the view I had of public relations professionals when I was a journalism student. They were the enemy, barriers to Truth, Justice and the American Way.

Years later I left journalism and joined the PR profession, or “turned to the dark side” as the joke goes.

To my surprise I learned that the profession had extensive ethical standards and that PR pros usually worked with—not against—journalists.

Public relations, I learned, is very diverse. It includes businesses, nonprofit organizations, hospitals, schools, colleges, associations and government agencies. Top PR executives provide expert advice to the president/CEO and department heads in identifying, avoiding and solving problems.

I would add “prognosticating” since media relations is a key responsibility for PR professionals, especially when things go wrong. It’s a tough job to predict the needs of the media with today’s 24/7 news cycle and the online social media, while keeping a balance between the rights of the media, the public and your company.

Other responsibilities include branding, publicity, newsletters and brochures, Web sites, videos, institutional

advertising, direct mail, speeches, presentations, fundraising and special events. Specialties include employee communications, investor relations, lobbying and fund development.

Leading the drive to advance the profession are organizations such as the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) and the national Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The PRSA code of professional standards pledges that members “exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out their dual obligations to their clients or employer and the democratic process.”

Unlike certain professions, courts have ruled that no state licensing is required to practice public relations. So anyone – regardless of their lack of education, expertise or ethics – can describe themselves as a PR professional.

In response, the PRSA started an accreditation program in 1964, the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation. Even more advanced certifications include Certified Public Relations Counselor (CPRC). Among local FPRA members, 16 are APRs and six are also CPRCs.

Accreditation emphasizes the continuing cycle of research, planning, implementation and evaluation. Also required is extensive knowledge of ethics and law, communications theories, business management, crisis communications and media relations.

Local PR professionals serve as spokespersons for the area’s top businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Residents in Volusia and Flagler counties saw our PR professionals in the international spotlight during the 1998 wildfires, 2000 presidential election recount and the 2004 hurricanes.

Many FPRA members, as well as public information officers for public safety agencies in the area, coordinate emergency information through the Volusia /Flagler Public Information Network.

Just as in other professions, public relations may always be tainted by those with lower ethical standards. However, I know there are people out there who appreciate the true professionals. After the 2004 hurricanes, I received an e-mail from a woman thanking me for the public information effort: “I know it helped me when all my communications methods were down, save the radio. It is interesting how hearing from someone of good repute in your own city can give some peace to the situation.”

I was gratified to be considered “someone of good repute.” Not bad for a spin doctor.

This article ran in the Nov. 9, 2009, issue of the Volusia/Flagler Business Report. It is reprinted with permission.



FLORIDA
PUBLIC RELATIONS
ASSOCIATION

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B-CU MASS COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR – FPRA board members visited Bethune-Cookman University’s Vision Chapter as it hosted its 15th Annual Mass Communications Conference Nov. 13. Pictured from left are Stephanie Redd, Karen Chrapek, Dr. Evelyn Bethune and Victoria McGuirk, APR. The event, which drew about 150 participants, addressed generational diversity, networking and getting ahead in the entertainment industry. The conference was well-executed and professional, and we are proud of the students’ efforts!

FPRA business beat

Florida Hospital DeLand begins construction on outpatient center

Florida Hospital DeLand recently broke ground for a new outpatient center on Victoria Commons Boulevard. The \$15.5 million center, set to open in 2010, will house a variety of outpatient services, including imaging, women’s diagnostics, rehabilitation and sports medicine, a laboratory, and physician offices.

The center is open seven days a week. For more information, please visit www.lyoniapreserve.com.

Lyonia Environmental Center opens in Deltona

Volusia County recently opened the Lyonia Environmental Center in the Deltona Regional Library complex to provide an insight into the county’s ecosystems. Through interactive educational displays, visitors can learn about the importance of the environment and how they can conserve energy and natural resources.

Halifax Health presents ‘Medical Matters’ on WDSC

Halifax Health has partnered with WDSC Channel 15 to present "Medical Matters." The 30-minute show airs at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays. Viewers may call in during the show to have their questions answered live and on air.

Is your organization launching a public awareness campaign, adding a new wing, promoting a new product, celebrating a milestone, or planning a special event? Let us help you spread the word!

Send news briefs about your business to **Pat Kuehn** at pkuehn@co.volusia.fl.us.

