

PRCA MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER NEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This is my favorite time of year – the holiday season that begins with Thanksgiving and ends with New Year’s. I admit a good bit of my excitement is the anticipation of good food and surprises that come in brightly wrapped packages. Of course, I’m also filled with gratitude and ever mindful of the true meaning of the holiday season.

That’s why I’m looking forward to our December program. It’s true, we’re going to learn why giving back to our community is good PR for our organization, our companies and ourselves, professionally speaking. But, I think most of us would agree that selfless giving of our time and/or resources is just plain good. I hope you will plan to attend and won’t forget to bring a gift for a "Forgotten Angel."

Speaking of giving back, think about why you renew your PRCA membership each year. We had a fairly good showing at our first regular PRCA meeting last month with a slightly above-average attendance. Unfortunately, our average attendance represents only 25 to 30 percent of our chapter’s membership, which is nothing to get excited about. Many of you renew for the networking and opportunities to learn. Some of you, I suspect, renew simply because you’ve always been a member or for added fluff on your résumé. I would like you to consider another reason: giving back to others. There may be months when a program holds no particular interest for you, but you might just have the best advice for an up-and-coming PR professional or know the solution to a problem faced by one of your long-time peers or sit next to a new member who wants to know about the best restaurants in town. We may not all get something out of every PRCA event, but we all can be a part of a cycle of teaching and learning, giving and receiving that is never ending.

Make this the time of year that you make a commitment to "give back" and become more active in PRCA-Montgomery.

Stacy

Our Newest Members

- ◆ **Rebecca White**, Public Information Specialist, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- ◆ **Scott Godwin**, Director of Communications/Member Services, Alabama Association of REALTORS (R)

Notice About "No Shows"

During the November board meeting, a new policy was created that will take effect in January. PRCA-Montgomery will now bill "no-shows" at all future meetings. If you RSVP for an upcoming meeting, but fail to actually attend, you will be billed for the lunch cost.

PRCA-Montgomery charges members only what the chapter is charged for lunch. The chapter does not make money on monthly meetings. In fact, it often loses money. The chapter must guarantee a number of attendees prior to the meeting and is charged for that number no matter what. In the past, the cost for the lunches of members who RSVP but do not show, has simply been absorbed by the chapter; however, this cannot be continued. So please, make every effort to attend meetings if you RSVP, and keep in mind that you have until noon on the Friday before the meeting to cancel your reservation without incurring charges.

Your Opinion Counts, And We Need You To Voice It

In order to provide our members with the best meeting experience possible, PRCA-Montgomery is currently conducting a survey regarding its monthly programs and our meeting location. To complete this survey, please visit www.prcamontgomery.org and click on the link on the home page.

December Meeting Features Added Opportunity to Help Others

PRCA-Montgomery is excited to announce that Lee Ellis will serve as guest speaker at our December meeting. Mr. Ellis is the executive vice president of operations at Alfa and is currently serving as the 2006 River Region United Way Campaign Chairman. He will explain the importance of corporate citizenship and how it can make our community a better place to live.

We hope you will not miss the chance to learn more about this important topic, which is especially meaningful during the holiday season. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to participate in a very special project to benefit the Salvation Army. Please see the article about our "December Service Project" for more details.

December Service Project *by: Alicia Atcheson, VP Projects*

I remember as a little girl watching out my bedroom window on Christmas Eve, hoping to catch a glimpse of the jolly ol' man in red and his eight tiny reindeer. I had worked so hard that day, baking cookies with my Mom to leave out for him along with a thank you note I had written him on white construction paper in red crayon. I was so ready for Christmas Day that I could hardly sleep. I finally did drift off, but I was out of bed bounding down the hall in my footed pajamas by 4 a.m. I was so excited to see what Santa left me!

Unfortunately, many precious little boys and girls across our area will wake up on Christmas morning with that same excitement yet may find nothing under their tree. So, we need some special Santa's helpers to make sure that Christmas morning for these precious ones is as special as it was for us when we were children.

In conjunction with our December meeting, we will have the chance to join in with the Salvation Army's Forgotten Angel program. As most of you know, the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program allows individuals to personalize a gift for a child in need by adopting an Angel and purchasing toys or clothing items for that individual child. However, each year some children are not adopted.

To help these Forgotten Angels, our members can bring a toy or board game for a child, age 1 month - 13 years to the meeting. If you choose to wrap your gift, please attach a card identifying the age range. These gifts will be delivered to the Salvation Army following the meeting.



CHAPTER MEETING

Corporate Citizenship: The Importance of Giving Back to the Community

Monday, December 11, 2006

Guest speaker:

Lee Ellis

Alfa Insurance

Mann Museum

11:45 a.m.

Members: \$10

Non-members: \$20

RSVP to Diane Christy:

dchristy@ascpa.org

RSVP Deadline:

Noon on Friday, December 8

Developing PR for PR

Although we public relations people are great at promoting our clients, we often neglect ourselves. The PRCA State Board of Directors has been exploring the possibilities of a "PR for PR" campaign for several years now. This past spring, under the direction of instructor Pat Hartman, APR of the Mobile Chapter, a PR Campaign class at Springhill College in Mobile took on this project for their course work. The students accomplished a phenomenal body of work. Now it's time for us to launch this campaign at the statewide level!

If you would like to be a part of this effort, please contact Peggy Collins at peggy.collins@tourism.alabama.gov, or call 334-242-4545.

Get Accredited in 2007! *by: Linda Lee, Accreditation Chair*

What is Accreditation in Public Relations?

The examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is a universal, voluntary certification program for public relations professionals that aims to unify and advance the profession by identifying those who have demonstrated their knowledge, experience and judgment in planning and managing public relations activities. Accreditation enables PR practitioners a common credential that increases the visibility, credibility and perceived market value of the profession. Successful completion of the accreditation process results in the awarding of the designation APR to qualified PR professionals. The APR examination is administered through the Universal Accreditation Board, of which the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) is a partner. Members in PRCA that are in good standing are automatically members of SPRF and qualify to seek the APR designation.

Why APR?

Successfully completing the APR examination indicates a PR professional has demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field. The examination seeks to improve public relations. The designation APR signifies a high professional level of experience and competence.

What Is Its Value?

Preparing for accreditation helps professionals broaden, validate and refresh their knowledge. Having the APR designation demonstrates a serious commitment to the profession to corporate management, colleagues and clients. More and more employers are seeking accredited candidates for senior- and management-level positions.

Is Accreditation Good For Life?

Yes, with fulfillment of maintenance of accreditation requirements (applies to professionals who have received the APR credentials since Jan. 1, 1998). Every three years, accredited professionals must accumulate the required number of points in continuing education, professionalism or service categories as part of the maintenance of accreditation program. This further strengthens the value of the APR credential and keeps professionals actively involved in the currents of the PR profession. APRs must also maintain membership in an affiliated organization, such as SPRF.

What Is The Cost?

Currently the cost is \$385 per person; however, SPRF will subsidize \$100 of the cost of completing the examination. To receive the subsidy, a member must complete and submit the APR Examination Subsidy Form, which can be found on the SPRF Web site at www.sprf.org, attach a copy of the receipt for payment of the examination fee and return it within 30 days of completing the process. (This subsidy is not retroactive. A member may receive the subsidy only once.) PRCA also offers a one-time \$100 subsidy to members; visit www.prcanet.com for more information.

Do I Have to Study for the Examination on My Own?

No. Method of study for the examination is based on individual preference. While some candidates prepare on their own, the Universal Accreditation Board offers a thorough on-line study course, which provides candidates with a multimedia opportunity to review the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) covered in the APR examination. Course content is divided into 10 modules that are narrated by accredited PR professionals. Participants learn through self-study, group discussions, assignments and Web conferences with other participants. Candidates can complete the course at their own pace. Technical and subject matter assistance is readily available.

The course, which can be easily accessed at www.online2learn.net/APR (live demo available), costs \$195 for a one-year subscription for SPRF and other UAB participating organization members and \$295 for non-members. A new discount program; however, offers both chapters and individuals an opportunity to save money by registering as a group. Chapters that recruit five people for the on-line study course can receive a \$100 rebate for the chapter. If a chapter chooses to pass the savings along to its members, each candidate in a group of five receives a \$20 discount on the course. Contact Linda Lee if you want to register for the on-line study course this year.

How Do I Get Started?

The Universal Accreditation Board Web site, www.praccreditation.org, offers a wealth of information and will give you a broad overview. If you're ready to take the plunge and join other chapter members who have earned this distinction, contact Linda Lee at 954-2543 or llee@aap.net for an application and further details.

New Job Postings on the Web site

Marketing & Public Relations Director

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts | Posted 11.20.06

NATURE OF WORK: Responsible for creating and designing documents, coordinating projects with vendors, disseminating information, coordinating or assisting in the coordination of special events or programs, developing and executing short and long-term public relations strategies, and performing various other administrative duties. The complete job description may be obtained from the City Personnel Web site or the Personnel Department.

Closing date is December 6, 2006. For more detailed information about the position, and how to apply visit <http://was.montgomeryal.gov/personnel/pdf/jobbank/06CI7580.pdf>.

Events Coordinator

City of Montgomery, Riverfront Facilities | Posted 11.21.06

NATURE OF WORK: Book and coordinate special events such as weddings, concerts, and festivals for public assembly facilities. The complete job description may be obtained from City Personnel Web site or the Personnel Department.

Closing date is December 13, 2006. For more detailed information about the position, and how to apply, visit <http://www.prcamontgomery.org/jobs/New%20Folder/Special%20Events%20Coordinator.pdf>.

PRCA Ethics Advisory

Did you know that PRCA has a Code of Ethics? If you answered "No" to this question, that's okay - you are not alone.

Ethics is an important issue in the Public Relations profession. PR practitioners come from varied backgrounds, with different educational and work experiences. Although this diversity exists, we should all strive to follow the same set of ethical standards when performing our professional duties in serving our clients and our companies.

PRCA is committed to ethical practices in the PR profession and in the workplace. As members of PRCA, we are automatically affiliate members of the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF). Thus, we honor the SPRF Code of Ethics as our guide to conduct ourselves ethically. Please familiarize yourselves with the SPRF Code of Ethics at http://sprf.org/code_ethics/code.htm.

Additionally in 2004, for consistency regarding Accreditation preparation, SPRF adopted the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Code of Ethics. Refer to: http://prsa.org/_About/ethics/preamble.asp?ident=eth3.

Acting in an ethical manner may be interpreted as a matter of personal judgment. The Code of Ethics will help you better interpret what is "Ethical." If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Collins at 334-242-4545.

November Meeting Notes

PRCA-Montgomery was honored to have Captain Huey Thornton with the Montgomery Police Department as our guest speaker at last month's meeting. Captain Thornton has been with the department for 17 years and has served as its spokesperson since 2001. Most recently he has been visible handling media relations during the shooting and death of Montgomery Police Officer Keith Houts. Captain Thornton shared with us what it was like to maintain professionalism while dealing with such a tragic event on a personal level.

He also told us of other challenging situations he has encountered during his career and offered excellent advice on how to deal with each should we ever experience something similar in our positions. Everyone who attended the meeting had the unique opportunity to learn valuable lessons from a seasoned professional. We are grateful to Captain Thornton for taking time to speak to our members, and also thank everyone who joined us.