

January 2008

2007 PRAM Mississippi Beach Officers

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Coliseum Execs to Share Exciting Plans at January 14 Meeting

Sold-out concerts, nail-biting hockey games, fun-filled festivals and interesting expos – the Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center plays host to a bevy of functions these days.

Damaged by Hurricane Katrina, the Coliseum re-opened less than a year after the storm in July 2006. With the return of several popular festivals and the homecoming of the Mississippi Sea Wolves for their 10th anniversary season last fall, the facility soon regained its position as a premier center for social life on the Coast and an economic engine for area business and tourism.

Just a few days ago, the Convention Center opened after a six-month hiatus with 180,000 square feet of newly renovated and decorated meeting space. In a few months, it will break ground on a 200,000-square-foot expansion. Groups are already lining up to be among the first to meet there as soon as the enlarged facility opens in 2009.

Join PRAM on Monday, Jan. 14, for our first meeting of 2008 as MCCC's Bill Holmes, executive director, and Matt McDonnell, assistant executive director, discuss their exciting plans for the facility and how they're using new tools to reach diverse audiences.

Lunch 'n Learn Seminars Being Planned

PRAM has subscribed to a library of online seminars in an effort to offer members more professional development opportunities.

We'll be offering these throughout the year as special "Lunch 'n Learn" workshops. Details are still being worked out, but if you're interested in hosting one, please contact President Kristie Aylett, APR. Sites need to have an easily accessible conference room with an internet connection, speakers and the ability to project slides onto a screen.

Sessions typically last one hour and include slides and handouts.

Some topics are:

- The Importance of Protecting Your Brand
- Managing and Motivating People to Succeed
- Connecting with Nexters
- Building Trust During a Media Maelstrom
- Embracing a Culture of Innovation for Business Success

All PRAM members are welcome to submit news to ImPRessions. Please e-mail Charmaine Williams (charmaine.williams@usm.edu) two weeks prior to any meeting.

Next PRAM Meeting

12 noon on Monday, January 14
Sunset Room,
Great Southern Club
(15th floor, One Hancock Plaza,
downtown Gulfport)

President's Letter

Dear PRAM Mississippi Beach,

In this first edition of *ImPRessions* for 2008, I want to start by thanking Ron Barnes for his outstanding leadership during 2007. With Ron at the helm, the Mississippi Beach chapter made great strides last year, and a few projects were initiated that will reach fruition this year. I also want to thank those colleagues who are returning to the board for their continued service to the chapter. Their experience provides a continuity that has proven invaluable. I am also looking forward to working with those who join the board this year. Their new perspective will help us stay fresh. Together, we will work diligently to help the chapter maintain its momentum.



In December, board members from 2007 and 2008 met for a three-hour strategic planning meeting. We came up with a long list of ideas – big and small – related to membership, professional development, communications, and giving back to the community and the profession. Some are now being implemented while others will take time to develop more fully.

We also want to make 2008 into a truly special year since it marks our chapter's 15th anniversary. In 1993, some visionary professionals thought there were enough PR pros in Harrison and Hancock counties to merit a new PRAM chapter. They've definitely been proven right. Now, the Mississippi Beach chapter boasts nearly 100 members and grows stronger every year.

Our first meeting of 2008 is set for noon on Monday, Jan. 14, at The Great Southern Club. Please join us to learn about the Mississippi Coast Coliseum's expansion plans and its marketing strategies.

My contact information, and that of the other board members, appears on the first page of this newsletter. We welcome your ideas for how the chapter can become more of a resource for you, helping you be a better PR practitioner and grow in your career. I hope to hear from you all.

Yours in PRAM,
Kristie Aylett, APR

15 Ways to Get More Out of Your PRAM Membership

1. Come to more PRAM meetings
2. Invite a potential member to a meeting
3. Host a Lunch 'n Learn seminar
4. Earn your accreditation
5. Greet guests at a monthly meeting
6. Serve on the 15th Anniversary planning committee
7. Mentor a student or new professional
8. Donate a door prize
9. Participate in community service projects
10. Enter your work in PRAM and SPRF awards programs
11. Buy a raffle ticket to support our scholarships
12. Sit next to someone new at the next meeting
13. Submit an item to *ImPRessions* newsletter
14. Attend the PRAM conference in Hattiesburg in April
15. Attend the SPRF conference in Destin in July

Notices for Dues on the Way

On the financial front, PRAM will soon be sending out dues notices for 2008 via email. The board voted in December to set dues at \$60 a year, an increase of \$5. It's been several years since the chapter last raised annual dues, but the additional funds will have a far-reaching impact.

Last year, our regional association, the Southern Public Relations Federation, increased its dues by \$2 a member and PRAM absorbed it until dues could be set for this year. SPRF is using the additional funds to upgrade regional activities, including the annual conference, Lantern awards program and its comprehensive Web site. The remaining \$3 will stay local to support additional programming, member services and student scholarships.

The invoice will also give you the option of paying for all your meeting fees at one time and receive a discounted rate. Attendees, be they members or guests, pay the Great Southern Club's buffet price, which is set at \$17 a plate for 2008. By paying in advance, you have the opportunity to save \$2 a meeting and pay \$15 a piece for all 12 meetings. A significant savings and a convenience every month to be sure, plus our members who get reimbursed can submit all PRAM-related expenses in one request.

Make Accreditation Your New Year's Resolution!

Lose weight, quit smoking, exercise more...most of us have made our New Year's resolutions, and chances are, some of those have already gone by the wayside. So, this year, try something new...earn your APR!

To help you reach your goal, The Universal Accreditation Board has launched a free online demo of the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). The demo allows users to work through 20 sample multiple-choice questions to acquaint themselves with the look and feel of the exam. Go see this great "get-acquainted" tool at www.praccreditation.org and click on the Online Demo banner.

For more information about the Accreditation process, contact Susan Perkins, APR, at susan.perkins@dmr.ms.gov or (228) 374-5000.

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