

July 2008

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New Executive Director for the CVB to Speak at July 14 Meeting

What's next for tourism on the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

Hear the answer directly from Richard Forester, the new executive director of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau, at PRAM's July 14 chapter meeting.

Less than two months after starting the job, Forester will share with PRAM members and guests the latest news from the CVB and his plans to develop a community vision for what the Gulf Coast can become as a destination.

Forester brings over 19 years CVB leadership experience to the Coast, including 10 years as the director of the Chamber of Commerce in Bryan/College Station, Texas, and seven years as president of the



Convention and Visitors Bureau in Topeka, Kan. (Visit Topeka, Inc).

Prior to taking the helm of these bureaus, he was the director of convention sales and service for the Longview CVB in Texas and he has 26 years experience in radio and television.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is a not-for-profit destination marketing organization that promotes South Mississippi as a tourism and convention destination worldwide. Its mission centers on attracting ever-increasing numbers of leisure, convention, sports and business visitors to the area. It is dedicated to maximizing the travel and tourism industry for South Mississippi.

The Mississippi Beach chapter of PRAM meets at noon, Monday, July 14, at the Great Southern Club in downtown Gulfport.

August Meeting Moved to Aug. 18

PRAM - MS Beach will meet on the third Monday in August so SPRF president Sabrina McLaughlin, APR, can travel to the Coast to speak to chapter members. The meeting date is now Aug. 18, instead of the previously scheduled Aug. 11.

In addition to leading the 1,200 members of the Southern Public Relations Federation, McLaughlin is the "Director of Decisions" for her agency, Insight Marketing

Communications, in Navarre, Fla. She is a sought after regional and national speaker on public relations, media training, creativity, presentation skills and leadership.

PRAM's Lunch 'n Learn teleseminar, "From Surviving to Thriving: Restoring Your Brand and Reputation in a Media-Centric World," will be held as scheduled on Friday, Aug. 15, at Tulane's Biloxi campus.

Next PRAM Meeting

12 noon
Monday, July 14
Sunset Room, Great Southern Club
(15th floor, Hancock Plaza, Downtown Gulfport)

President's Letter

Dear PRAM members,

Are you planning a "stay-cation" this summer?

With gas prices so high, staying close to home makes sense and saves a few dollars (plus it helps our local economy).

It also makes a great excuse (as if we need one) to ponder the talents of George Ohr, Walter Anderson and other local

artists, tour the newly re-opened Beauvoir and visit local shops and attractions.



Marketing the Coast's many attractions will be on the agenda for our chapter meeting July 14, with guest speaker Richard Forester from the CVB. I hope you'll be on hand to welcome him to the Coast and hear his plans to bring more visitors to the area.

If you are planning to get out of town for a few days, I hope you're making plans to go to Sandestin for this year's SPRF conference. Whether it's listening to top speakers or walking on the beach, it'll be a marvelous opportunity to refresh the skill set and the spirit.

Speaking of SPRF, be sure to change your calendar to reflect that our August meeting has been moved back a week to Aug. 18 so SPRF President Sabrina McLaughlin, APR, can attend. She's regularly tapped as a speaker at PRAM and SPRF conferences and I can't wait to hear what she has to share with us.

Yours in PRAM,
Kristie Aylett, APR

Community Service: Pocket-size Flags for Our Troops

Thanks to everyone who collected their used cell phones in April for the Harrison County TRIAD/S.A.L.T. Council to provide 911 emergency cell phones to senior citizens on the Coast. We were able to donate 20 cell phones to be reprogrammed for 911 emergency use and given to eligible senior citizens.

And many thanks to all who cleaned out their closets in May and June and brought their donations to a Goodwill Industries drop off center. Your donations made in the name of the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Non-Violence provided clothing to those in need. Vouchers were provided to women entering the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Non-Violence to be used to buy clothing for themselves and their children. Goodwill Industries received more than 175 bags of donated clothing from our members. Our donations will help numerous women coming into the center to obtain clothing and other items that Goodwill has.

In July and August, we will be folding and packaging 300 miniature U.S. flags to send to our troops overseas. The flags are folded into a 2-by-2-by-3-inch triangle, which is then placed in a 3-by-3-inch plastic bag with a note that reads: "A flag for your pocket so you can always carry a little piece of home. We are praying for you and we are proud of you. Thank you for defending our country and our freedom." We will supply you with flags, bags,

notes and folding instructions and ask that while you eat and visit you fold a few flags.

The Pocket Flag Project began in Colorado in 2001 when the five Webelos Scouts of Cub Scout Troop 204 were working on their citizenship pins. The chairman of the Project, LuWanda Ford, whose son Charley was a member of the den, said that at the end of 2007 she had shipped 1,149,700 flags to be folded by volunteers. In 2007 alone she shipped 234,300 flags to be folded. The objective of the Pocket Flag Project is to get as many pocket flags into the pockets



of our military personnel on the front lines and let them know we care and that we keep them in our hearts and prayers. The Pocket Flag Project does not sell flags to fold for any other purpose than to provide them to our front-line and deploying troops. The Project has an ongoing list of requests for flags from various military units. I will mail these out in August.

If you have any questions about this or other upcoming service projects, please e-mail me at lauren.thompson@dmr.ms.gov.

Deadline Looms for Scholarship Application

Applications for PRAM-MS Beach's \$500 scholarship are due by July 31.

Interested students must be a resident of Harrison or Hancock County, be entering their junior or senior year of college at a four-year university, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, be enrolled for at least three hours and have declared public relations or a related field

as their major or minor course of study.

Applications may be downloaded from the chapter Web site, prambeach.org. In addition to the application form, applicants must submit a current transcript, two letters of reference, professional resume and an essay about why they've chosen to study public relations.

Don't forget about the 2008 Southern Public Relations Federation Conference July 27 - 29 in Sandestin, Fla. Register for the conference at www.sprf.org.