

PRSAnotes

A newsletter by and for the 200+ members of the Central Iowa Chapter
February 2000

[February program](#) :: [Directory Delay](#) :: [Are you a late decider?](#)
[Members reflect on 'millennium' developments](#)
[Dutcher forms PR consultancy](#) :: [Froehlich opens Marshalltown office](#)
[Columbine crisis spokesman](#) :: [E-mail changes](#) :: [Bridge the Gap](#)
[Outstanding Chapter](#) :: [Jobs](#) :: [What's Happening?](#)

Mark your calendar....

PRSA Institute 2000

Thursday, April 20
Hy-Vee Conference Center
West Des Moines, IA
...and watch your mailbox for details.

Post-merger observations highlight February program

"Post-Merger: Corporate Communications in Transition" is the topic for discussion at the Thursday, Feb. 17, meeting of the Central Iowa Chapter PRSA at the University Park Holiday Inn in West Des Moines. Keith Hartje, senior vice president and chief administrative officer for MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company, and Mary O'Keefe, APR, senior vice president of corporate relations and human resources for The Principal Financial Group, will share the podium for the presentation.

"Our speakers have significant experience in coordinating the internal and external communications efforts of large corporations undergoing significant change through mergers," says Kevin Waetke, APR, program chairman. "Their presentation will move beyond the merger 'announcement' to integrating two (or more) diverse departments from predecessor companies." "They'll address the challenges which must be faced to keep internal audiences informed of the merger keeping in mind that it's often easier to announce the merger to employees than it is to address all of their key issues during the period of time before closing and certainly post-closing," he added.

"In addition, our speakers will address their personal experience in their given industries, trends or changes they see on the horizon, provide hands-on tips about what works well, and tell if there are any 'right' answers to a complex situation."

[top of Notes](#)

Behrends explains directory delay

As many as one-fourth the members of Central Iowa chapter have not yet paid their local dues, according to a report by Todd M. Behrends, APR, membership chairman, at the January chapter board meeting.

He cited that situation as the principal reason an updated chapter directory has not been produced. "We certainly want to include as many dues-paying members as possible in this update, so if they could please return their local dues to Felicia Johnson promptly they can be reasonably assured that their names will appear in the directory when it is published in the spring," he said.

On an additional note, Behrends asked that members who change jobs or addresses, etc., notify him immediately by phone, fax or e-mail. "That way we can be assured that they will continue receiving information from the chapter and that their directory listing will be current when directory updates are mailed," he said.

Behrends' work phone is 515/222-2960; fax: 515/222-2994; and e-mail address is: tbehrends@ncmic.com.

[top of Notes](#)

Are you a late decider?

If you decide at the last minute to attend a chapter meeting, please take a moment to call or e-mail Allan Urlis to let him know you are going to make it. Most of the time just showing up makes no difference because the hotel prepares seating for 10 people more than are reserved for. At the November meeting there were 16 extra people and the University Park Holiday Inn staffers were able to adjust. They rolled in a couple more tables and everyone who came was seated and served lunch.

Not a big deal, but it is a distraction for a speaker at the lectern and inconvenient for members who've just written a \$23 dollar check (\$18 plus the \$5 late fee) and don't have a place to sit. Thank you in advance for thinking of your fellow PRSA members. Urlis' telephone number is 515-226-0818 and his e-mail is auris@wpnworld.com.

[top of Notes](#)

Members reflect on 'millennium' developments

What's occupying your professional attention as the new year, century, millennium and legislature open? What's otherwise new with you? These questions were posed to a handful of Central Iowa PRSA chapter members recently and so far two have responded.

Here's what Kristie Wildung, APR, had to say:

Governor Vilsack has made it one of his priorities to address the issue of surface and ground water in the State of Iowa. Since water is a recyclable resource, even as a rural water provider, we are concerned about surface and ground water quality.

At Central Iowa Water Association (CIWA) I am following this issue and working on behalf of our system on legislation which may impact how we provide water. In addition to that, CIWA is initiating some innovative sewer projects that involve unique partnerships. This is a new experience for our company and preparing communications about sewer services has been a learning experience. CIWA is also experiencing tremendous growth. This growth can closely be correlated to the statewide problems with contaminated ground water and our current "drought" type conditions.

CIWA currently serves 11 counties in Central Iowa and has potential to provide service to five additional counties. As our growth continues, I have the opportunity to focus many of my efforts on our expansion and communication to those customers in our designated expansion areas. The challenge is learning what motivates individuals in a particular area to pursue rural water for their community and then marketing to those needs.

My newest job responsibilities have been in conjunction with a non-profit organization. I have been provided as a half-time Public Relations/Marketing Manager to Positively Iowa. Positively Iowa focuses its energies on assisting rural Iowans determine their greatest needs and then establishing working groups which are seeking new solutions to some of their challenges. It seems there are common concerns across the state; however, unique concerns exist in specific regions of the state.

Positively Iowa is the catalyst which is assisting rural Iowa focus groups to communicate concerns, new ideas, and solutions to key decision makers and legislators.

On a personal note, Mike and I moved a 2-story home, built in 1928, 18 miles to our current acreage (100 acres in Jasper County) in November. We are in the process of preparing the home for our occupancy, which will occur sometime in 2000. The move was a remarkable experience and we have enjoyed tremendous community support in moving and renovating this home. My most recent reading materials have focused on "How To House Renovation"! We look forward to hot air ballooning in our balloon "Tranquillity" this spring when the weather warms up! (Note: Kristie's previous job was as director of the National Balloon Festival in Indianola.)

Jennifer McCoy, APR, manager of investor communications for the Meredith Corporation, wrote:

What's currently occupying my professional attention? We're releasing second quarter earnings Jan. 18 so I'm working on the earnings release, script for the investor conference call and Q&A (19 pages single spaced!) Also, we have a board meeting in late January so I'm preparing Bill Kerr's presentation. We're beginning preliminary work on the annual report (selecting a designer, compiling the schedule, interviewing group presidents, etc.). It will be mailed in late August or early September.

From a broader perspective, I'm investigating many of the same issues affecting the IR industry in general: How can we enhance our web site for investors? How can we/do we want to incorporate new technology into our program (i.e., Internet broadcasts of investor conference calls, posting investor presentations online)? How can we improve our investor targeting so we're spending our time with the long-term, value-oriented investors who are most likely to buy and hold our stock?

What's otherwise new with me? Had a baby boy named Jack William on May 13. Building a house on Easter Lake southeast of Des Moines. Expect to move in late spring.

[top of Notes](#)

Dutcher forms public relations consultancy

John Dutcher, APR, has announced the formation of Dutcher & Associates, L.L.C., a public relations consultancy in Johnston. "The consultancy offers on-point public relations counsel and marketing public relations services to firm clients, as well as to national and regional communications agencies seeking to better communicate with Iowans," Dutcher says. As president and senior public relations counsel, Dutcher brings 14 years counseling and public relations experience to the firm.

"I've worked alone and within the structure of advertising agencies, and have concluded that an independent approach to public relations is healthier for my clients and for me," says Dutcher.

"In my agency, we offer marketing public relations and PR consultation services. Advertising is a very useful tactic we can provide, but it's just a tactic. PR leads in marketing public relations by strategically managing multiple dimensions of the marketer's relationship with key audiences," he adds. "Public relations professionals provide a more holistic approach to marketing and communications than many of their advertising counterparts. And clients are quick to note the benefits."

"Marketing public relations is really a new paradigm for the communications industry and one that is catching on," Dutcher notes. "Increasingly, clients are abandoning their traditional 'full-service' advertising or marketing communication agencies for public relations

professionals who can guide their companies and brands in reputation management efforts targeted at valued customers or other constituencies."

Prior to founding his own firm, Dutcher served for two years as vice president and director of public relations for Zimmer-man, Laurent & Richardson, Inc., and seven years at CMF&Z Public Relations' Des Moines office. Dutcher is a 1985 graduate of The Ohio State University and was accredited by the Public Relations Society of America in 1992. He was admitted to the PRSA Counselors Academy in 1994.

"We offer a wide array of services to help clients manage perceptions, build informed opinions and achieve measurable results through management consultation, corporate identity and reputation management, public and legislative affairs, crisis communications, media relations, community relations, labor relations/ employee communications, public education initiatives, and special events and observances," Dutcher says.

The firm may be reached by phone 515-334-3464; fax 515-334-3457, or e-mail dutchapr@aol.com.

[top of Notes](#)

Froehlich opens Marshalltown office

Ronald L. Froehlich, APR, has opened an office of Froehlich Communications, Inc., in Marshalltown.

The Newton-based advertising and marketing communications agency was founded in 1984 and provides advertising, public relations and graphic design services to business and institutional clients in Iowa and throughout North America.

The agency specializes in consumer, agricultural, non-profit and business-to-business related marketing programs. Froehlich's son, Scott, manages the Marshalltown office. The agency's web site is at <http://www.froehlichcomm.com>.

[top of Notes](#)

Columbine crisis spokesman speaks Feb. 3 in Ankeny

"The Columbine Tragedy: Managing the Unthinkable" will be presented by Rick J. Kaufman, executive director of public engagement and communication services for the Jefferson County Public Schools in Colorado, Thursday, Feb. 3, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the conference center, Building 7, Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny.

Cost is \$29 for PRSA members and includes lunch and program. Contact Steve Jones at 515/270-9030 for availability of late registrations or walk-ins. The session is sponsored by Iowa School Public Relations Association and Heartland Area Education Agency 11.

[top of Notes](#)

E-mail changes . . .

New e-mail address for Leigh McGivern, information specialist at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is leigh.mcgivern@dnr.state.ia.us.

New e-mail address for Felicia Johnson of Selkis Information Specialists is selkis2@earthlink.net.

[top of Notes](#)

Annual institute to 'Bridge the Gap'

The Central Iowa Chapter of PRSA presents "Bridging the Gap," the 2000 Institute on Thursday, April 20. This year's institute is designed to help public relations practitioners bridge the gaps of time, communications and technology.

Along with a line-up of national speakers from a variety of disciplines, the day-long institute will include breakfast roundtable discussions and the Third Annual PRIME Awards Luncheon. During the day vendors will also be on hand to display the latest in public relations tools.

The institute will be held at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines. Registration fees are \$90 for members, with a \$10 discount for those who register by March 27. Registration deadline is April 7. Registration forms will be mailed in March. If you have questions about the institute, contact Kelly Sankey, APR, at 515-248-3815 or sankey.kelly@principal.com.

[top of Notes](#)

2000 Outstanding Chapter Awards

To receive nomination forms for the 2000 Outstanding Chapter Awards, please contact Darin Leach, Meyocks & Priebe Advertising, Inc., at phone 515/327-3445 or by e-mail at leachdd@outofthebox.com. Award categories this year include Outstanding Chapter Member, Outstanding Public Relations Professional, Outstanding Iowa Advocate and Outstanding New Member. Completed nominations are due Feb. 29 and awards will be presented during Institute April 20. Look for nomination forms in your February meeting notice.

[top of Notes](#)

Job opportunities in central Iowa

Two Positions at Hanser & Associates...

[Hanser & Associates](#), a full-service PR firm in West Des Moines, seeks applicants for two new positions Account Executive and Assistant Account Executive. Creative professionals with agency or corporate PR experience in health-care, financial services, technology, agribusiness and environmental industries are sought.

Account Executive

3-5 years of experience in several of the following areas: strategic communications and PR program planning and implementation, consumer research, media relations and media spokesperson training, marketing communications, crisis communications, event management and assistance in new business development. Excellent writing, media placement, oral communications, strategic thinking, and Internet research skills required. PR agency experience desired. Product launch/corporate marketing experience a plus. Bachelors degree in public relations, communications or related major required.

Assistant Account Executive

At least two years of experience in several of the following areas: PR program implementation, consumer research, media relations and media spokesperson training, marketing communications and event management. Excellent writing, media placement, oral communications, and Internet research skills required. Product launch/corporate marketing experience a plus. PR agency experience preferred. Bachelors degree in public relations, communications or related major required.

Beyond a competitive salary, we offer an excellent benefit package including performance bonus, 401k, medical insurance, career development assistance, on-site fitness center and flexible work schedule. Visit our web site at www.hanser.com to learn more about our practice areas and clients. For either position -- Mention in cover letter that you are responding to the PRSA Newsletter. Mail or fax a cover letter, resume and salary history by February 11 to: [Bonnie Hanser](#), VP, Hanser & Associates, Three Fountains Office Park, 4401 Westown Parkway, Suite 212, West Des Moines, IA 50266 Fax: 515-224-0991.

Communications Specialist

Norwest Financial Information Services Group, Inc. (NFISG) is seeking a full-time professional responsible for coordinating and performing internal and customer communication assignments. Duties include information gathering, designing, writing, editing and revising materials and other various communication vehicles. Qualifications include:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to interpret and communicate technical information
- Creative problem-solving skills
- Strong organizational and planning ability
- Degree in journalism or related field with minimum 3 years experience.

Please contact Jacki Fultz at 515-557-8270 or by email at jackifultz@nfisg.com.

[top of Notes](#)

What's Happening?

Send news about yourself, your business, your job openings, etc., to [Wayne Davis](#) for the next Central Iowa chapter Newsletter.

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Posted 02.02.2000 by [Ryan Hanser](#) of [Hanser & Associates](#).

EDITORIAL NOTE: Ryan also plays saxophone in [Hot Lunch](#) – a new Des Moines funk band – and urges PRSA members to support local art and music.