

# PRSAnotes

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

March 2000

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## **Mark your calendar....**

### **PRSA Institute 2000**

Thursday, April 20

Hy-Vee Conference Center

West Des Moines, IA

...and watch your mailbox for details.

## **Third PRIME awards competition offers new categories, more prizes**

It's time for the third annual central Iowa PRSA awards competition, PRIME, the Public Relations Institute Mark of Excellence Awards, says Jennifer Perry of Blank Children's Hospital, who serves on the PRIME committee.

"The competition allows your outstanding public relations work to be critiqued and recognized," she said.

"We're excited about the competition this year. We've modified the categories and added a 'Best of Show' award winner," she added.

For more specific information, view the [call for entries PDF](#). You also received a hard copy of the call for entries the first week in February. Submit your entries by 4 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 29 to Brenda Wiarda at CMF&Z. Cost for members is \$30 (first entry) and \$20 for each subsequent entry. Winners will be announced at the Public Relations Institute at the HyVee Conference Center April 20.

"Take this opportunity to showcase your talents and see the work of other talented professionals from the area," Perry urged.

She extended a special "thank you" to CMF&Z for its work related to the call for entries and Wilson/Edwards Communications for print production services.

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## **PRSA Institute offers peek at consumer trends**

How do you spend your leisure time? Do you spend it on pure enjoyment for yourself? Or on something else?

Results of the latest national Roper Report study of consumer attitudes show that 39% of Americans say they more often spend their leisure time "getting ready for work." That is up nearly 200% from when the question was asked in 1991.

And 36% of respondents say they spend most of their leisure time "trying to wind down from the stresses of work."

Bottom line: Only 28% of American workers say they are "completely satisfied" with the number of hours they work, a drop of 18% since 1973. Americans are seeking "higher peace" as they meet the demands of "higher pace" in their lives.

This and much more on social and consumer trends will be presented by Roper Starch Worldwide through its partnership with Hanser & Associates at this year's Central Iowa PRSA Institute April 20.

Watch the mail for Institute details.

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## **Tom Blackett gains credential**

Tom Blackett, Assistant VP Marketing, NCMIC Group, Inc., was notified this month that he passed the PRSA accreditation examinations given last fall. Tom studied with the last class of Central Iowa chapter candidates but deferred taking the exams from March until September.

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## **Behrends called 'up & comer'**

Todd Behrends, APR, public relations specialist for NCMIC Group, Inc., was featured in the Feb. 7 edition of the Des Moines Business Record as one of the paper's "Up & Comers." Now working for a chiropractic malpractice insurer, Behrends has served in five different industries in the past 15 years.

"It's been an interesting journey, and one I've had a lot of fun completing. And it's not over yet," the paper quoted him.

A graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, Behrends also is an adjunct public relations instructor at Simpson College.

## What's occupying our professional attention?

What's occupying your professional attention as the new year, century, millenium and legislature open? What's otherwise new with you? These questions were posed to a number of Central Iowa PRSA chapter members recently and responses from two of them appeared in last month's Newsletter. Now here are some more:

Brooke Benschoter, APR, has left Meredith Corporation and moved to the ITAGroup, whose initials originally meant International Travel Associates. That travel agency is now a subsidiary of ITAGroup, whose work in performance marketing was a page-one feature in the Des Moines Sunday Register's business section Jan. 23. Brooke writes:

"For me, the growth that comes with a job change and the decision to make that change has been very valuable. I am leading a new initiative for ITAGroup and my public relations skills will be invaluable as I work to get people on the 'Brand Wagon' as I call it.

"ITAGroup's management has the vision to understand how branding will help them succeed in the performance marketing industry in the future. It is one of their growth strategies (who could ask for more?)."

"The company has some challenges as people in their own backyard don't understand what the company does and how it has grown from its roots in the travel agen-cy business in just 35 plus years. Many peo-ple think ITAGroup is an insurance company or a financial group. It's our goal to make ITAGroup synonymous with Ideas To Action – creative, results-oriented ideas that motivate people to action helping clients meet their business goals - whether financially driven, quality driven or product driven."

Brooke comments she is "hoping to hire some staff soon."

Community activities? "Third year as co-chair of the school-based council at Edmunds Academy of Fine Arts. We may have increased the money for schools but there are clearly some challenges that money can not fix."

Personal news? "Many people didn't know that Benjamin Mowitz was born 12/22/98 and was just 4 pounds, 5 ounces. It's been a tough year but Benjamin turned one weighing 18 lbs. He has two sisters that are spoiling him rotten."

Sara Huber, Advertising/Promotions Coordinator for the Iowa State Center in Ames, writes:

"As an employee at the Iowa State Center in Ames, the recent release of the new plans for the proposed arena in Des Moines is definitely a hot topic. The phone lines lit up with reporters wanting the Center's views on the plans. We will certainly be keeping track of the approval progress as it will become another competitor in the market.

"Another thing on the forefront at the Iowa State Center is the sale of Ogden's entertainment division. The company is in the process of writing a prospectus for the sale. Who knows when or from where change will come, but it looks like a public relations opportunity.

"Things have recently become quite busy as our Spring concert and event line-up comes to fruition. After a day of chumming with the stars, my leisure time is filled with planning my upcoming wedding (2001) and biking (always in training for RAGBRAI)."

Laurie Tilley, Director of Corporate Communications CDS, Inc., writes:

"At Communications Data Services (CDS), we have reached a milestone in our industry where we have surpassed our nearest competitor in terms of market share. This is a coup since our business of magazine, product and Internet fulfillment is highly competitive. There has been a bit of puffery by our industry's competitors, so our reputation of a solid, Iowa-grown service provider has become an even stronger one. Our PR opportunities abound.

"Also . . . we recently received word that our employee newsletter CDS Today is a winner of an Addy by the Advertising Professionals of Des Moines. On that note, we are seeking to fill an open position in our group for an advertising/marketing writer (see position description in "Jobs" section).

"Personally, I am getting married in March so my name will change to Laurie Bever (pronounced "Beaver"). Dan and I look forward to our new family of four boys, ages 5, 5, 7 and 8 (we have been called the Brady Bunch by a few!)."

David Krause, Director of Publications, Des Moines University, writes:

"Des Moines University is looking into market research to help develop a stronger 'brand' identity as we seek to be more effective in our student recruitment efforts. The purpose is threefold: to increase the number of quality applicants, to increase the retention of students already accepted into our programs, and to reduce the rate of attrition among enrolled students.

"As a part of the process, we want to identify the core values that distinguish DMU from other medical and health sciences universities. By gaining a better understanding of ourselves, we can then develop more focused themes and messages as we communicate to target audiences identified through research.

"Until recently, most of DMU's education programs had far more quality applicants than the number of available seats. So the need for formal market research wasn't well recognized on campus. But changes in the marketplace are demanding that we take a more systematic approach to student recruitment. Increasing competition through the growth of new programs, the decline of student applicant pools and changes in reimbursement for health care services have all affected our programs."

Murray Williams, Director of Public Affairs for the Iowa Credit Union League, writes:

"At this time each year, the Iowa Credit Union League focuses much governmental and public affairs energy toward the state legislative session. As the trade association representing the interests of Iowa's 202 credit unions, we strive to make sure that legislators are educated and aware of important credit union issues. My role in public affairs deals with grassroots mobilization, media relations, political action fundraising, and communication to legislators. In addition, our annual Advocacy Campaign attempts to reach legislators with our credit union message when they are not at the Capitol.

"Also, the League is currently going through final board approval to move ALL member communication to an electronic format by the end of 2000. As you well know, this provides many challenges – PR, management, technology, etc. I have been asked to lead this initiative as our organization moves forward. It is a great opportunity for the League and for our members. I'm looking forward to it!"

On a personal note, he said:

"Although I was married in April 1999, I still consider myself a newlywed. Amy (my wife) and I more recently became new homeowners in the Beaverdale area of Des Moines. We are loving married life. And home ownership has opened my eyes to the beauty of power tools!"

Dan Frahm, Director, Corporate Communications, Norwest Mortgage, Inc., writes:

"For our group, we've seen a real increase in demand for internal communications, as well as integrated efforts. We among other Fortune 500 companies, I'm sure are undergoing vast change. Communications is expected to work closely in that strategy in order to keep team members on target, through understanding and alignment efforts.

"Of course for Norwest, we're also very focused on name change efforts. All will be occurring throughout the course of the year."

Cheryl Marsh, APR, Owner, Marsh, writes:

"Wish there was exciting stuff to tell you. There isn't. I continue to work away at the traditional 'stuff' of marketing and public relations. My pro bono work still revolves around Recovery Village, a program that addresses the needs of children and their recovering mothers. It is a start up so we have lots to do."

Allison Gregory Pope of Wixted, Pope, Nora & Associates, writes:

"From my perspective, one of the biggest challenges in the year 2000 in public relations and communications is the best use of 'new media' including webcasting, in-house television talk shows, streaming multimedia via an Intranet or the Internet, corporate satellite downlinks, online chat forums, virtual town hall meetings, and audio/video conferencing. Of course to be effective, at the center of these new venues must be a skilled messenger.

"WPN has been able to take its training programs on new media around the world to help executives become 'camera-ready'. In fact my Chicago partner, Stephanie Nora, and I were in London recently training executives of BPAmoco to be better 'presenters' for the company's webcasts which are becoming a key tool for its global internal communications.

"Wixted.Pope.Nora & Associates (WPN) has developed a range of communications training programs to address the demands of the 'new media' in addition to our fundamental business communications courses.

"We often hear from our client contacts that executives are still having trouble mastering the older methods. How many corporate videos still contain messages from a monotone CEO who is obviously reading from a teleprompter? How many of us still cringe when we have to sit through a presentation of overloaded PowerPoint slides that are read to us verbatim? This is the biggest complaint I hear regarding presentations inside large corporations.

"WPN celebrated its 10th year in business in 1999 by adding a Houston office in addition to our Chicago and Des Moines offices. While we don't plan to add any new offices this year, we do plan to continue to provide experienced, professional work for our clients around the world and here in Iowa."

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## Drake PRSSA resumes meetings after holidays

The holidays are over, university classes are back in session and the Drake University PRSSA chapter wasted no time getting back in action for the spring semester.

Christy Durand, president of Drake PRSSA, says the student chapter is actively recruiting new members, including graduating seniors. Students can join a PRSA chapter for a substantial savings with their active student membership.

The February Drake PRSSA meeting featured a popular, hands-on workshop on "building your own Web site," reports Mike Palmer, APR, Corporate Communications for Allied Insurance, who is the chapter's professional adviser.

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## ISU chapter has 21 members

John McCarroll, APR, professional advisor, reports the ISU PRSSA chapter has 21 members. They are meeting regularly and will have a booth promoting membership at an ISU club hockey game later this month.

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## Job opportunities in central Iowa

### Advertising/Marketing Writer

An exciting opportunity exists for an experienced writer to join the Corporate Communications Group of Communications Data Services, Inc. (CDS).

Responsibilities include serving as the writer for CDS' national and local advertising, annual report and other highly visible marketing and special promotional projects. The successful candidate will possess the ability to research and write about product information in a user-friendly, promotional tone. Must be a motivated self-starter with a demonstrated ability of working within a creative team environment. Requires a Bachelor's degree in Journalism or Advertising, with a minimum of two years writing experience. Internet writing and graphic design skills a plus. CDS is an international data management company serving the publishing, product, Internet and direct marketing industries. We offer a competitive benefits package to all regular full-time employees. Join one of Des Moines' largest employers.

Send cover letter and three writing samples to Brooke, Human Resources Communications Data Services, Inc. 1901 Bell Ave., Des Moines, IA 50315; FAX 515-246-6687 Job Line 515-246-6829 [Web site](#) EOE.

McCormick Advertising seeks qualified applicants to fill the following positions in its Des Moines, IA office:

### Account Executive

Must have strong strategic and communication skills, a food animal (beef)/agriculture background and the desire to provide superior client service. Solid copywriting a plus.

### Copywriter

Must have proven ability to write effective, strategic copy. Background or understanding of agriculture/food animal production helpful.

McCormick Advertising is a full-service communications company serving clients mainly in the agriculture industry. McCormick has four U.S. offices Amarillo, TX, Dallas, TX, Des Moines, IA and Kansas City, MO. Company ownership is held entirely by employees. Both client and employee retention and satisfaction are well above the industry norm.

To apply, send resume to Personnel, McCormick Advertising, 10550 New York Avenue, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50322.

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## What's Happening?

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

[end](#)

Posted 03.06.2000 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.