

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

## Global Meeting Industry Day

On April 6, join the PCMA Capital Chapter and MPI-Potomac for the Second Annual GMID. Don't know what GMID is? It is a day when the meetings and events industry will come together to support the importance of face to face collaboration.

In 2016, Meetings Mean Business ([www.meetingsmeanbusiness.com](http://www.meetingsmeanbusiness.com)) and its partners hosted over 100 events in more than 30 countries to showcase the power of meetings, events, conventions, exhibitions, and more. These events were put on in part to education elected officials along with local communities in general on the value of meetings in almost every walk of life. From small business to medical, breakthroughs to law enforcement, and even social causes; face to face meetings bring results. They foster an atmosphere of collaboration and provide ancillary benefits to the communities in which they are held.

As meeting and hospitality professionals, it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to support the initiatives of the Meetings Mean Business coalition focusing on the three tenets outlined below:

**Personal Connections:** Through personal connections and conversations information is shared and discussed resulting in tangible outcomes.

**Positive Business Outcomes:** When companies provide travel for their employees to attend conferences and tradeshow the tangible benefits they come back with far outweigh the costs.

**Building Strong Communities:** The economic impact to local communities is huge. It creates jobs, generates commerce and creates far-reaching community impact.

PCMA is part of the Meetings Means Business coalition and has been very instrumental in moving the initiatives forward. We encourage you to be involved in the campaign and support the efforts of our industry. Educating our elected officials is paramount in the fight to increase international travelers to our country. Regardless of whether or not your meeting has an international attendance, you should be supporting these efforts.

Mark your calendars for April 6 and watch this space for additional information. •

by Annette M. Suriani, CMP, Chief Meeting Strategist, AMS Meetings Solutions, LLC

## The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

**Mission:** The mission of PCMA and the Chapter is to be the leading organization for meeting and event professionals by delivering superior and innovative education and promoting the value of professional convention management.

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Diane Kovats, CAE, CMP  
International Society for Computational Biology  
760-522-8805  
dkovats@iscb.org

**President-Elect**

Jim Kelley  
PRG Corporate & Tradeshow Services  
404.214.4833  
jkelley@prg.com

**Treasurer**

John Rubsamen  
Americans for the Arts  
202.371.2830  
jrubsamen@artsusa.org

**Secretary**

Kimberly Allison, CAE, CASE, CTA  
Visit Baltimore  
571.910.6041  
kallison@baltimore.org

**Immediate Past President**

Joy Womack, CMP  
Experient  
703.239.7504  
Joy.womack@experient-inc.com

**Directors**

Mary Beth Baluta, Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau  
703.892.0330; mbbaluta@cincyusa.com  
Marcus Eng, CMP, Meeting Manager, American Public Transportation Association; 202.496-4874; meng@apta.com  
Sarah Haywood, CMP, National Foundation for Infectious Diseases  
301.656.0003; shaywood@nfid.org  
Mary Kreins, Disney Destinations  
202.222.4816; mary.kreins@disney.com  
Geraldyn Krist, CMP, CTA, Visit Kansas City  
816.691.3822; gkrist@visitkc.com  
Malene Ward, CMP, CEM, Adestra, Inc.  
malene.ward@adestra.com

**Committee Chairs****Communications**

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Capital Chapter: [pcmainfo@ascent-management.com](mailto:pcmainfo@ascent-management.com)

If you have any comments, suggestions or would like to write an article for *The Chatter*, email: [PCMAchatter@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter@gmail.com)

## Message from the Board

*Mary Beth Baluta*

*Regional Director of Sales - Washington DC  
Cincinnati USA Convention and Visitors Bureau*



As I reflect on the Capital Chapter's The cWith literally dozens of crises to face every day, it's not surprising that meeting professionals' focus on public policy questions is not always top of mind. When concentrating on hotel contracts, meeting promotion schedules, speaker and session logistics, the loftier issues in the government relations arena may not occupy a large part of a meeting professional's day.

Consider, however, just two examples of legislative and regulatory issues that could have a significant impact on the meetings industry. Could increased scrutiny of foreign travelers into the U.S. cause difficulty in obtaining the necessary travel documents for international meeting attendees? Or will enhanced border enforcement affect the labor markets for the hotel and restaurant industry and impact their pricing models?

These and other government relations issues will be discussed at the Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) Event to be held on April 6th. This event, which is a joint effort of the PCMA Capital Chapter and MPI Potomac Chapter, is an ideal forum to assess, debate and network with other professionals who understand the importance of government policy and regulation in our professional lives.

This is a great opportunity to invite other members of your organization's staff whose primary responsibility is government relations to provide their insight and to demonstrate that the travel and meetings industry has a big stake in the outcome of government policy and regulation and are committed to positive advocacy in these areas.

I, along with the PCMA Capital Chapter leadership and the MPI Potomac Chapter leadership, encourage you and your colleagues to attend this valuable, thought-provoking event.

I hope to see you on April 6th to inform and network on these subjects of critical importance to the future of the travel and meetings profession. •






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## The Do's and Don'ts of Congressional Visits

With a new administration and a new Congress in session the opportunity to educate your representative and/or their staff on issues that are important to our industry or to you professionally is here. It is unclear what effect the new administration and Republican controlled legislature will have on the constituencies of PCMA but we can take the initiative by actively engaging our elected officials. So when you escape your office and visit your Senators or Congressman here are some tips on how to effectively communicate your position.



### The Do's

1. **Be Prepared** – The visit begins before you head out the door. Know the position you are advocating for, have facts to back it up, and know the stances that your legislator has taken on it in the past.
2. **Bring a Brief Informational Handout** – Your representatives and their staff work 12-14 hour days while in session and can have 10-11 meetings a day. This is a lot of input. Having a one page document outlining your position and its merits will allow them to remember them much better.
3. **Take a Colleague** – The impact level is higher if you can find another professional that is from the same state or congressional district as you. This is a common industry practice for associations who send their members to the Hill. Multiple voices make for a stronger stance.

### The Don'ts

1. **Schedule Back to Back Meetings** – This may seem like an efficient way to spend a day advocating but let's be serious Congress was designed to be inefficient and it is likely that the time will be adjusted for one of your meetings mid-visit.
2. **Do All the Talking** – Take a breath; provide an opportunity for the legislator or staffer the opportunity to ask questions or make a comment. You are teaching here, you want the engagement of your student.
3. **Pretend You Know Something** – If you are not 100% on an answer to a question do not offer incorrect or incomplete information. Flip this momentary lack of knowledge (sometimes we just forget) and use this as an opportunity for post-meeting engagement. A follow up email with an answer is a great way to continue the conversation. •

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*by Kyle West, MBA, CMP – WorldTEK Events, LLC*

## Keeping it Local: Tips for Staying Informed on What Matters Most

As meeting professionals, we have the privilege of working around the country and the world. It can be overwhelming to keep up with local news and legislation both at home and in our host destinations that affects our families and our meeting attendees. Here are a few tips to help you zero-in on the local issues that can directly impact your attendees and family.

- Sign up for emails lists and follow social media of your local officials, whether you agree with them or not. This is a primary source which will tell you their top priorities and legislation they are sponsoring. Planners can follow the Mayor of their host destination to keep abreast on the city's most pressing concerns.
- Subscribe to communications from the business improvement district of your meeting's host facility. Keep your finger on the pulse of the latest initiatives and possibly construction that may have an impact on your meeting.
- With this fast-changing political climate, local legislation affecting your attendees can develop unexpectedly. If your membership is sensitive to a certain issue you can set a Google alert to receive an email notifying you of any articles that are published about that issue in the location where your meeting is being hosted. Go to [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts) and enter keywords such as "Gun Legislation + Ohio" or "Immigration + Miami".
- Subscribe to a local news source--and pay for it! Purchase a weekly paper or online subscription. By supporting a local paper, you ensure coverage of the issues that will have the most impact on your family.
- Don't have time to read through every article, post, or e-newsletter? That's okay, few people do. Although headlines can be misleading or unnecessarily provocative, sometimes skimming the headlines is a good first step to keeping informed while on the run. Be sure to save articles for later reading when you have the time to dedicate to them, like when sitting on a plane or commuting to work.

Our meeting attendees and families depend on us to be leaders and advocate for their best interests. By strategically targeting your local news sources you can be informed and the first to respond when crises arise. •

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*by Christine Frye  
Account Executive, National Trade Productions*

# Bathroom Bill (and other) Legislation and Meeting/Venue Contracts: What Would You Do?

First, some definitions and assumptions:

- A bathroom bill, in short, is a law or legislation proposed to define (and usually restrict) access to public restroom facilities.
- Bathroom bills are often disproportionately discriminatory to transgender individuals.
- Bathroom bills have been proposed in at least 13 US States. And the list of proposed bathroom bills is quickly growing.
- As meeting professionals, we all know it is important to make sure our Attendees, Sponsors, Clients, Corporate/Group Mission, other stakeholders, and our financial interests are protected. And these bathroom bills often times directly contradict these interests.

We have seen many groups cancel or threaten to cancel events in states that have passed bathroom bills. It usually always comes at a cost to someone, if not both parties. A cancellation fee may be paid by the group to the venue. And/or, many times there is lost business to the hosting venue.

So, with the increase in proposed legislation, and the likelihood that the legislation could contradict our interest, what can we do to (contractually) protect ourselves?

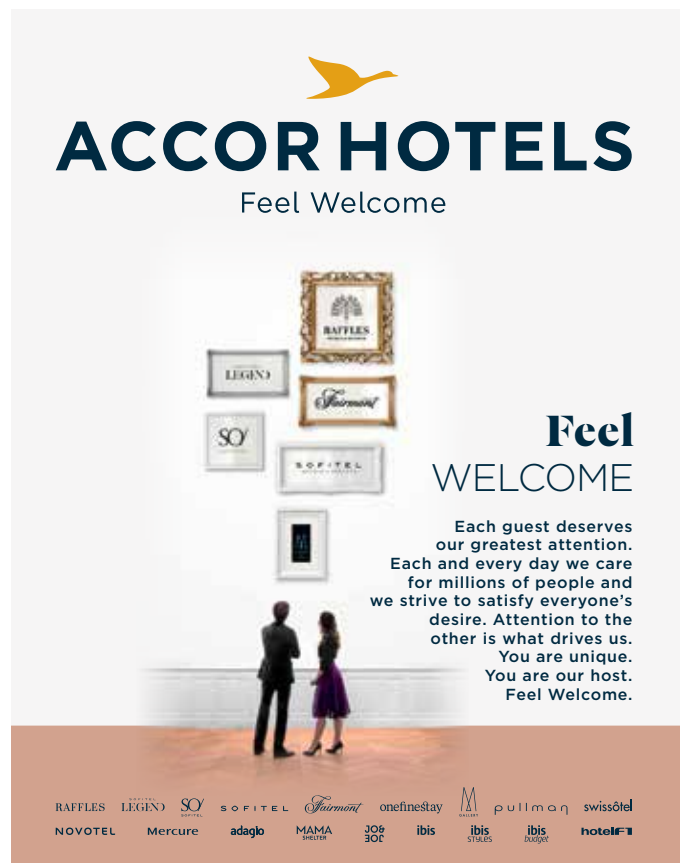
Many hotel and venue contracts have Impossibility or Force Majeure clauses in them. They usually allow termination of a contract without liability based on things outside of the control of the venue and the group. If these bathroom bills continue to be passed outside the control of the venue and group, can we write them into our impossibility clauses (or similar ones)?

**Buyers:** How about something like *“If proposed and/or passed legislation is introduced into the state where VENUE is located, and such law is in opposition to GROUP’s stakeholder’s interest (included but not limited to the anticipated attendees of meeting, or GROUP’s mission statement), the performance of this contract is subject to termination without liability”*. This statement actually can include bathroom bills but accommodate for any new legislation. How can you tailor this to your specific group’s interests and the worry your stakeholders have that law/outside forces may interrupt your meeting?

**Suppliers:** Could you accept that above statement? What could you propose to protect the group’s interest, yet also secure the business and keep your stakeholders satisfied?

We don’t know what’s coming next. And I don’t (currently) have a solution that I think would equally satisfy a group and venue. But if you have ideas, let us know! Comment on the PCMA Capital Chapter Facebook, or tweet your thoughts with the hashtag #PCMACC. •

—by *Matthew Fox*  
*Director of Registration, Meeting Management Services*



# The Trump Effect

I recently attended a luncheon at which Michael Dominguez, Chief Sales Officer for MGM Resorts International spoke on industry updates. He touched on the hotel industry's 2016 record year and that although we've built guestrooms in the limited service arena, it hasn't given planners the additional meeting space needed to easily do their jobs. Mike shared that ADR and F&B prices are growing faster than budgets and that all the fun and new technology "stuff" sadly comes with a price; all of which creates a highly complex environment for planners. Then Mike talked about President Trump and the new administration's anticipated effect on our industry. Here's what he said...

President Trump is the first business person to occupy the White House and to say there is some uncertainty would be an understatement. From a business perspective, there is great optimism that the business environment will be well positioned to grow. Investors have seen the same thing as the "Trump Rally" continues to drive the markets to all-time records. The optimism comes from a promise to review the tax code, roll back regulation that may not be necessary but are strangling small business and a focus on job growth. These are all positive notes to the business environment. There's still cause for some concern over global economic conditions in Europe and a growth in a populist movement; however, there are four things we know about the Trump Administration's agenda that lines up positively with our industry.

1. Trump is focused on trade and Travel and Tourism is the second largest US Export.
2. He is focused on infrastructure investment and as an industry we know this is critical for us as we prepare for new international visitation and continued growth. Our airports are in real need of modernization and of NextGen technology. Again, this aligns with President Trump's agenda.
3. His focus on job growth is a positive as the Travel and Tourism industry is bigger than the auto industry and has been one of the larger drivers of jobs during this recovery. His dedication to bringing American businesses back to the U.S. will certainly have a positive effect on our industry.
4. We are encouraged that President Trump is a hotelier and he knows our world. It allows him to come in at the "middle of the movie" with many of our issues and concerns. We have never had a president with that kind of knowledge and expertise.

Time will tell story and I think it should be an interesting one to follow. •

—by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, HPN Global  
with Michael Dominguez, MGM Resorts International



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## 2016 Ride with the Foundation – Visit Milwaukee, Supporting Sponsor

The road to greatness is not always equal opportunity. All too often we must be in the right place at the right time with the right drive. The PCMA Education Foundation's aim is for our community to own that road for the meetings and events industry. To ensure we each have a map to successfully navigate our professional future – through grants for scholarships - positioning the next generation of leaders to be in right place; through educational programming - providing us with knowledge at exactly the right time; and through thoughtful research - igniting our drive for innovation. The possibilities with each of us invested in our greatness will be extraordinary.

This year “Ride with the Foundation” raised over \$36,000 for the PCMA Foundation – Many, many thanks to our generous raffle ticket purchasers. Over 360 tickets were purchased over the year-long campaign. Proceeds from the raffle go directly to fund the future of our industry through scholarships, innovative research and educational programming.

“Ride with the Foundation” would not have been possible without Visit Milwaukee’s generous support and donation of the 2016 Street Glide Harley Davidson Motorcycle. Thank you Visit Milwaukee for your partnership and choosing to “ride” with PCMA on a tremendously successful journey for our industry.

We look forward to having everyone join the PCMA Foundation for more excitement in 2017 as the foundation raffles a beautiful Colnago C-60 Italian road bike and a trip to Paris for the Tour de France. Stay tuned for more details. Raffle tickets will be sold beginning in May.



# Safety Concerns in the Meetings Industry

Safety concerns that confront meeting planners today would have changed greatly. Concerns that were a top priority ten years ago, have evolved, and are quite different today.

Some of the main concerns in the industry today are the Zika epidemic, active shooter situations, and the overall safety of conference attendees. When sourcing their meetings and events, planners are asking more questions about these topics from the beginning. The destinations that the planners are working with need to be informed and have these answers readily available.

Let's talk Zika. Many think the Zika virus is new, however it has been around for over 70 years. The virus has not become wide-spread in the US, and thus, domestic meetings have yet to be affected. Planners overseas and in Latin America need to consider Zika as a concern for all attendees. Simple precautions such as bug repellent, long-sleeved clothing, and screened-in facilities are a way to avoid exposure to the virus.

Many resorts and hotels in the Caribbean and Latin America have taken steps to eliminate this concern by spraying the facilities and surrounding areas. The properties want to ensure a safe experience for all guests.

An active shooter situation is a subject not many of us feel comfortable talking about but it's more and more prevalent in today's world and must be addressed. Hotels and venues should make a point of communicating their plans with their meeting planners. Recently, I attended a conference where the exit points were recognized and stated before each breakout session began. This is a trend that was not common in years past. Each hotel and off-site venue should have an internal plan in place and present this to meeting planners during site inspections and planning process.

Face to face interactions are more important than ever and we as an industry need to stay informed on the precautionary steps required to keep our events and meetings safe. The safety discussion is constantly evolving and new ideas and threats emerge every day, we can never be too prepared. •



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by Alex Hurd  
*Destination Expert, Discover Newport*



# Are We There Yet? Commuting in DC and Understanding “Safe Track”

Commuting in DC has changed. In 2016, the Transportation Planning Board reported teleworking increased 25% from 2013. Carpooling decreased and the number of people utilizing public transit went up.

Last year, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) instituted the Safe Track initiative, aggressively accelerating their repair and maintenance schedule. The plan calls for Safety Surges that shut down parts of the system. This has impacted ridership. Last quarter, the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Ridership Report showed a 9.84% drop in Metro Rail ridership from last year with bus ridership also down 5.70%



Traffic is a concern but especially during Surges which can increase congestion. With road repairs and construction like the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project driving around town has become more difficult.

Running parallel to Safe Track, the extension of the Silver Line to Dulles is nearing completion in 2020. PlanItMetro, a blog about future planning at Metro, reports the Silver Line has not reached maturity. Parts of the line have plateaued due to infrastructure limitations such as parking. At some point though infrastructure should catch up.

President Trump pledged up to \$1 trillion dollars towards infrastructure. At the same time WMATA has a budget gap of \$290 million dollars. This should not be unexpected. Data shows that governments spend \$18 billion a year on public transportation, yet experts estimate it takes \$43 billion dollars a year just to repair and maintain what we have.

What does this all mean? It means in the short-term WMATA may still need to take more measures to safely operate their system. It also means your commute requires more advanced planning. However, DC is blessed with a multi-modal infrastructure. Rail of all types serve a wide area. Buses, including Circulators, provide options. Bike lanes are increasing and Capital Bikeshare remains popular. Uber and Lyft have a role too. Some planners have offered car sharing vouchers to their delegates. Did you know you can also purchase Convention Pass SmarTrip Cards with a savings of 30% off regular fares?

More funding is needed but the future of transportation is marrying all of these modes together so they complement each other. We just need to get a planner to make it happen. •

by Marcus R. Eng, CMP  
Meeting Manager, American Public Transportation Association



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## Member Spotlights

### Spotlight on a Planner

*Tana Stallato*

*Planner Advocate*

*Stallato Meeting Solutions*



The chances are good that if you're a meetings professional who has been on the circuit for any length of time you've met Tana Stallato. An active PCMA member and seasoned industry leader, Tana has led departments, managed conferences with more than 20,000 attendees, and, more recently, formed her own company. She has spoken to groups on industry topics and regularly serves as a mentor to her staff and PCMA emerging leaders.

One steps inside an industry event with her and it is immediately obvious that she knows almost everyone in the room. Her 20 years of PCMA membership have brought her respect and the knowledge that she can be approached by anyone in the industry.

Tana founded Stallato Meeting Solutions with the idea that she is a "Planner Advocate" and boasts an impressive guarantee to show ROI on conference program performance. Her idea quickly became a business success and within a few short years she had to expand to cover additional services. Stallato and team now provide full service meetings management, exhibit sales and floor management, contract and risk management, headliner concerts and awards programs. All of these services are founded on her original concept of increasing the value of meeting programs. Taking much of her time and energy, she finds balance through family, travel, and hobbies.

When not busy in the office or on the road Tana spends time with her husband Amato, her sons Jason and Brendon, and their two four-pound dogs Buddy and Kiki. She divides her time between Montgomery County and the Delaware Shore where she enjoys some of the most breathtaking sunsets available on the East Coast. On a warm day, you might even catch her out for a ride on her motorcycle! •

*by Mark Harvey, CGMP, CMP, CMM  
Ethos Meetings and Events, LLC*

### Spotlight on a Supplier

*Linda Worthington*

*Director of National Accounts*

*Richmond Region Tourism*



Linda Worthington has been the National Account Manager with Richmond Region Tourism for 15 years. In that time she has watched Richmond emerge from a city rich in historical significance, to one of a more boutique "foodie" destination, robust in unique culinary offerings with a restaurant and craft beer scene that gets better every month. And with the James River as

an anchor, Richmond reveals a stark natural beauty that, no matter the season, offers a distinctive urban charm and vibrancy.

Linda fell into the hospitality industry working summers during college at a hotel in Erie PA (her hometown). Inevitably, she abandoned her English Lit. major for a career in the hospitality industry -- ranging from hotel management companies to Hyatt where she was a Director of Sales, prior to moving to Richmond with her husband, Glenn, and beginning her career in the destination management world.

Linda has been a member of PCMA since January 2003 and has served on several committees including Sponsorship and Professional Development; the latter of which she chaired in 2012. She displays passion in her volunteerism pursuit with PCMA and believes that in organizations like PCMA, you truly get back 10-fold what you put into it -- specifically, in the realm of life long relationships and friendships built within this community of meeting professionals.

On the personal side, Linda and Glenn have two "fur children:" rescue kids, Max and Peanut; although it is debatable as to who rescued whom. For leisure activities, she enjoys golf, traveling, triathlon competitions and training, as well as teaching spin class, and running.

With a busy job, a family, and her athletic endeavors, what is her advice for balancing personal and professional life? "Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress: Working hard for something we love is called passion." •

*by Sara Torrence, CMP Emeritus  
Sara Torrence and Associates*



## News Bytes

Email your news: [PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com)

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## Mark Your Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register:

[www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital](http://www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital)

**April 6**  
Global Meetings Industry Day  
Jointly presented by PCMA Capital Chapter & MPI Potomac Chapter  
Thursday, April 6  
Register: <http://bit.ly/gmid17>  
Sponsored by The Sphinx on K, San Francisco Travel Association, Travel Alberta, Greater Miami CVB

**May 18**  
Education Event  
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**July 17**  
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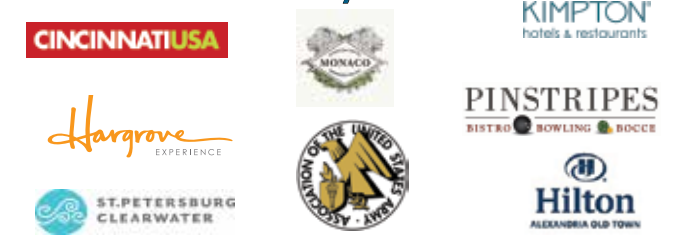
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**Capital Chapter of PCMA**  
**3337 Duke Street**  
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**Chatter Info...**

The Chatter is published by the  
 PCMA Capital Chapter  
 Attn: Emily Martin  
 3337 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-5219  
 Phone: 703.370.7436 x603, Fax: 703.342.4311  
 Email: PCMAinfo@ascent-management.com

**Issue Editors...**

**Kyle West**  
 WorldTEK Events, LLC  
 pk.kyle@gmail.com  
**Marilyn Atchue-Zuill**  
 HPN Global  
 matchue-zuill@hpnglobal.com

**Production Editors...**

**Shannon Burke, CMP**  
 NACAC  
 sburke@nacacnet.org  
**Tracie Howard, CMP**  
 AcademyHealth  
 tracie.howard@academyhealth.org

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