

On behalf of the entire incoming Executive Committee, I thank you for your confidence in us to successfully and responsibly serve as the Association's leadership team in the coming year. We pledge to do our best to, as Past President Jennifer Moss, APR, CPRC, would say, to exceed your every expectation. It is truly an honor to serve each and every one of our members during this milestone 75th anniversary year as we celebrate the past, present and future of FPRA.

We had a productive meeting yesterday and each of the members of the Executive Committee has set goals for the upcoming year, which we will finalize at our strategic planning retreat in September.

However, we are not the future of FPRA. Each of you and our fellow members who could not be here today, as well as our future members, will all shape what our Association will look like 75 years from now and beyond.

Will our business model shift from one based on revenue from membership dues to a model more reliant on fees for on-demand services and resources? How will we leverage our financial and human resources to address the preferences of not only current, but future PR practitioners? How will we maximize the use of ever-evolving technology to meet the changing needs and expectations of those we serve? These are just a few of the questions we could ponder about our future. Unfortunately, I do not have the answers.

Though how we practice our profession is changing, and will continue to change, we must never lose sight of our tried and true strategic thought process. In my opinion, this

applies not only to how we create solid public relations programs, but also how we ensure the continued success and longevity of our Association. As we move into our next 75 years, we must carefully analyze our situation and do our research. We must set realistic, measurable objectives. We must identify and implement the best tactics achieve our objectives within the framework of a realistic and fiscally responsible budget. And last but certainly not least, we must evaluate our efforts.

So, what I can tell you as we embark on our anniversary is this. We will operate from a business plan and that all decisions made will be based on historical data, projected trends and member input. As I jokingly told the Executive Committee yesterday, they will probably get tired of me asking questions like “What does the research show?” “What are our members telling us?” “How does what we are discussing increase member value?” and “In this situation, what would you do if this were your own company?”

AS Past President Ginnie Duffey Troyer, APR, CPRC used to say FPRA R Us. I was reminded of just how many of us there are when I signed the membership renewal letters on the way here. I agree with Ginnie, and want each of you to know that I value your input. If you have ideas, questions, or concerns, please share them. Though we have local and state leadership structures and people who have taken on specific roles and are the expert in their area of responsibility, I welcome your direct personal contact. Please do not hesitate to give me a call or shoot me an email. Just don't look for me on Facebook. Betty White and I are not there.

In closing, I'd like to share a story that I shared with the Pensacola Chapter in 2006 when I was installed as Chapter President. It is even more true today than it was then.

I quote from the speech: "I am by no means the sharpest stick in the woodpile.but when I moved back to the US about 6 years ago and settled in Pensacola to start over with some clothes, a few boxes and no friends in high places, I, thankfully, was smart enough to realize that I needed to hitch my wagon to FPRA. I took advantage of the professional development opportunities and learned from fellow members, here and around the stateand made some great friends along the way. I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today, professionally or personally, without FPRA. So I challenge each of you to take in a couple of links of your chain and hitch your wagon tighter to FPRA....and hang on.... Because it is going to be a great of a year!"

I thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your president. With your help and enthusiasm, we will be off to a great start toward the next 75 years and beyond. As America's oldest public relations organization, we are a respected industry leader with much to be proud of and I am confident there are more great things to come.

Have a great conference and please plan to join us next August when we return to the Vinoy in St. Petersburg, the old stomping grounds of our founder Lt. Col. John W. Dillin, to celebrate our past, embrace our present and enthusiastically look forward to a long and successful future.