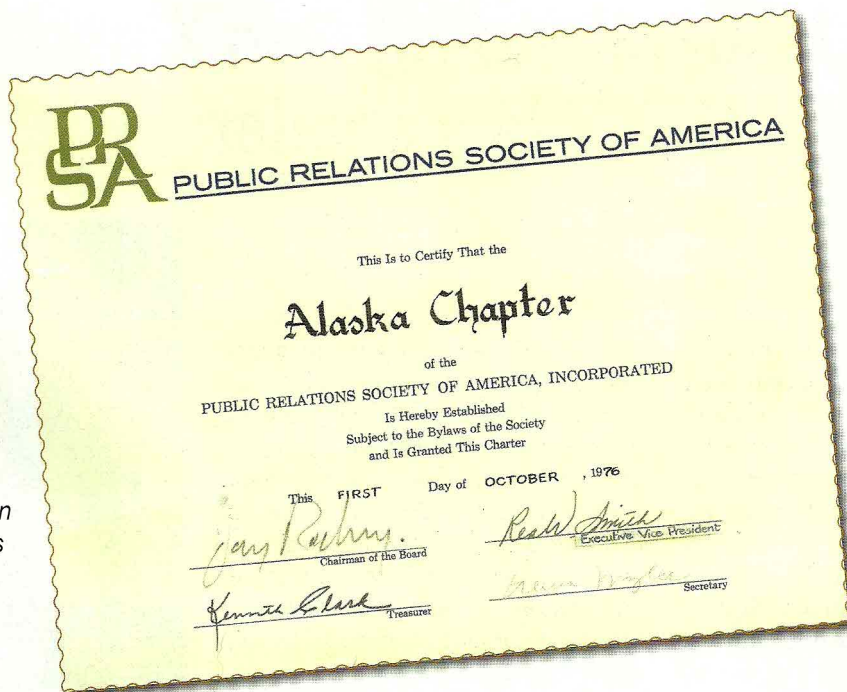


PRSA Alaska Plays Vital Role at 35

Provides learning and networking opportunities

By SUSAN SOMMER

The charter given from the Public Relations Society of America when the Alaska Chapter was formally recognized.



Public relations can make or break a project, a public figure or a company. Think controversial blueprint, politicians or introduction of a neighborhood liquor store. While PR is clearly only a piece of the whole enterprise pie, its role is often undervalued and its practitioners relegated to supporting cast. The Public Relations Society of America exists to help PR professionals overcome these obstacles as well as foster standards, learning opportunities and networking among its members. Alaska's chapter of PRSA celebrates its 35th year in 2012 and forges ahead as the state's premier organization for the industry.

ALASKA CHAPTER, NATIONAL REACH

PRSA Alaska, based in Anchorage, has about 130 members statewide and offers monthly networking luncheons, professional development seminars, webinars, a job bank, education opportunities, a mentorship program, awards recognition and accreditation preparation. Monthly subchapter luncheons are also held in Fairbanks. Members work

in numerous industries and include 14 accredited in public relations and seven PRSA fellows.

The Alaska chapter was founded by Anchorage-based Bruce Pozzi, who is still an active member. The group was certified in 1977.

"We give quality council and advice. You don't have to go to the bigger city," Pozzi says. "We've grown up, we've become professional. We're damn good!"

PRSA Alaska members call Pozzi the "George Washington" of the chapter; he was first and second year president, the first Alaskan to earn the APR (Accredited in Public Relations) credential and became a national PRSA fellow in 1993.

The state is no longer a communications desert since the introduction of email and the Internet, and its PR professionals have played a significant part in national public relations circles. Three PRSA Alaska members have served on the organization's national board of directors and seven local communicators have been inducted into its College of Fellows. To be inducted a person must dem-

onstrate a footprint on the profession through accomplishment, community service and leadership.

LUNCHING AND LEARNING

Committees within the local chapter include those focused on advocacy, accreditation, awards, education, fundraising, membership, mentorship, programs, publicity and state-wide unity. The monthly luncheons, though, are what everyone really looks forward to.

And no wonder, with guest speakers such as Ann Wylie, owner of Wylie Communications Inc., who shared her knowledge of how important writing is to good public relations. Jim Lukaszewski was another recent featured speaker at a local chapter luncheon. As a national leader in crisis communication strategy and strategic counseling, Lukaszewski shared his expertise and insight with Anchorage and Fairbanks members at a half-day seminar focused on how to be a company's trusted strategic adviser.

Longtime PRSA Alaska member Vivian Hamilton, who is accredited in

