



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

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## ARC RELEVANT IN DEMANDING COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT

**By Mace Thornton**  
**ARC President**

These are busy, exciting and relevant times for those of us who are neck deep in the field of agricultural public relations.

Whether you are a sole practitioner, a member of a PR firm, or an in-house PR staffer, one look around the environment in which we work today offers plenty of opportunities. That's as true for the strategist as it is for the tactician.

The confluence of the social media age with what is best termed the foodie movement has created a perfect storm for agricultural PR. Either we are engaging audiences ourselves, or we are empowering those we represent to do just that. I like to say this convergence is equivalent to the Green Revolution of agricultural public relations.

More people are demanding more information, more transparency, more immediacy from us on an endless list of issues that many of them are only beginning to realize have tangible connections to agriculture. While food is today's big focal point, we also must be ready at the blink of an eye to converse and share on topics related to animal care, the environment, economics, labor and energy. In short, they want it all and they want it now.

It's not like our keyboards were not already full with traditional duties. So the contrast offered by the blending of our old and new jobs is stark indeed. I often joke that my work, depending on the platform, can either result in 4,000 words or 140 characters.

But what it all really means is that we have to work even smarter. And that is where the Agricultural Relations Council comes in. This organization gives us the ability to reach out to our fellow communicators—people who share our language, understand our rules and comprehend the unique challenges we face.

ARC, as the only national organization totally devoted to public relations practitioners in the field of agriculture, has always offered its members the ability to make quality, targeted connections. As we continue to build ARC, we will retain the personal touch that has always been this organization's hallmark.



Mace Thornton

## 2012 ARC MEETING SET!

**By Den Gardner  
Executive Director**

The location for next year's annual ARC spring meeting is in Charleston, S.C. Mark your calendars for March 21 – 24, 2012. The meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn.



The annual meeting, held in February the past several years, was moved to March by the ARC board of directors at its meeting in Fort Myers in February. "The board felt moving the meeting a month forward to late March would get us beyond most of the major mid-winter ag trade shows," said Mace Thornton, ARC board president. "We are excited about Charleston and the move to March."

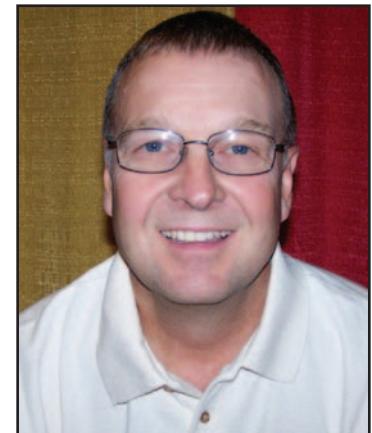
Mayor Joe Riley, in welcoming ARC to Charleston, offered these comments about the historic southern city.

"We are excited about this opportunity to visit with you. The City of Charleston is a progressive and energetic city and our goal is to provide our visitors with the best vacation or business trip that a city can provide.

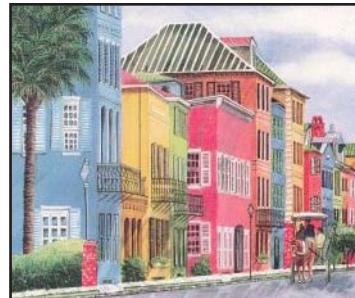
"Charleston is a special and unique city. The combination of our unequaled beauty, warm hospitality, and unique public spaces provide a wonderful backdrop for residents and visitors.

"You will see that our history and heritage has been thoughtfully preserved. Charleston was the first city in the country to enact a preservation ordinance. We have an active and ongoing interest in the protection and restoration of our buildings which tell the story of our past. Through careful conservation, creative and innovative financing, and meticulous planning, Charleston is a city which celebrates a rich history."

Watch for more information from ARC on the program for the meeting. If you're interested in serving on the program committee, please contact the ARC office at (952) 758-5811 and ask for Den or Barb.



Den Gardner



## ARC SILENT AUCTION AT AG MEDIA SUMMIT: BIGGER THAN EVER

**By Deron Johnson**  
**Immediate Past President**

**Big bargains in the Big Easy.** For the third consecutive year, ARC is staging its popular silent auction fund-raising event at this year's Ag Media Summit in New Orleans, July 23 – 27. The ARC silent auction raises thousands of dollars each year, benefitting ARC and the student attendees of AMS. A typical auction features more than 40 items, ranging from autographed books and artwork to western jewelry, food baskets and wearables.

Don't miss this chance to support two very worthy organizations and to get in early on one of the annual highlights of AMS.

**Auction donations wanted!** Members and Friends of ARC are urged to contribute items to this year's auction. Items should have a minimum value of \$50 and are due by July 22. All items can be sent to ARC offices or hand-delivered to AMS.

**Yes, we take cash!** If you prefer, we'll gladly accept your cash donations with which we will buy some "NOLA-flavored" local items for the auction. Leave the legwork to us—just send us the request and funding!

**Giving credit where credit is due:** We will give you and your company full credit for the item, providing paperwork as needed. Remember, your ARC silent auction items are tax deductible.

**For more details and to make a donation,** contact ARC Staff Den Gardner or Barb Ulschmid at (952) 758-5811 or Deron Johnson at deron.johnson@pfizer.com or (973) 660-5567.

Thanks in advance for your support and for making this year's silent auction in the Big Easy bigger than ever.

## THE AG RELATIONS COUNCIL CONTINUES TO GROW

Our current membership number is 82. We are always looking for new members to add their ideas to our organization and become a part of the ARC revival. If you know of anyone who would be an asset to ARC, send their contact information to Rebecca Colnar, membership chair, cowcamp@wavecom.net.

We're still working to get renewals, so if you know someone who has been an ARC member but has not renewed, please drop them a note and encourage them to do so. Tag-teaming can help, too. Make the first contact letting the prospective or lapsed member know about ARC membership and its many

benefits. Rebecca will follow up with an email or phone call, or she can send an introductory letter and then you can do a follow-up call or email.

If each ARC member sent in even five names of prospective members, and only two of those joined, we'd still be rapidly expanding our membership numbers. Encourage them to visit our website and discover all of the benefits of belonging. Our 2012 annual meeting in Charleston makes a good carrot. Who doesn't want to be in that lovely southern city in March?

## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA STUDENTS EXPLORE AGRICULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

University of Florida Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow (ACLT) members (left to right) Avery Sams, Bridget Hodges and Arielle Claude and ACLT advisor Ricky Telg were among the attendees of the ARC annual meeting. ACLT members were the guests of ARC during the three-day conference.

ACLT members are students in UF's Communication and Leadership Development undergraduate specialization, which focuses on a core of leadership and communication courses, including leadership development, digital media, interpersonal skills, working with groups, presentation development, intercultural communication, public relations campaign strategies for agriculture, and technical writing.





AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS COUNCIL

## AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS COUNCIL

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## 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### July 23 – 27, 2011

AMS/ARC Silent Auction  
Downtown Marriott  
New Orleans, LA

### March 21 – 24, 2012

ARC Annual Meeting  
Hilton Garden Inn  
5265 International Blvd.  
North Charleston, SC 29418

## MEMBER NEWS

### ARC Welcomes the Following New Members

Dalene Hodnett, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau

Sara Uttech, American Society of Agronomy

### 2011 ARC Board of Directors

**Mace Thornton**  
American Farm Bureau Federation,  
board president

**Mike Opperman**  
Charleston|Orwig,  
first vice president

**Deron Johnson**  
Pfizer Animal Health,  
immediate past president

**Janice Person**  
Monsanto,  
second vice president

**Rebecca Colnar**  
Cow Camp Communications,  
secretary-treasurer

**Mark Ingbritson**  
Communications consultant,  
director

**Amy Keith McDonald**  
McDonald Marketing  
Communications,  
director

**Erik Ness**  
Rosa del Rio Media,  
director

**Steve Simms**  
Illinois Farm Bureau,  
director