



# ARCLIGHT

WINTER 2010/2011

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## CHANNELING THE POWER OF RESOLVE

**By Deron Johnson,**  
**ARC President**

I don't know about you, but I've been feeling resolute lately. This has nothing to do with New Year's resolutions, as tempting as it may be to make that assumption in these dawning days of 2011.

Instead, it has to do with a suddenly intense desire to take control of my own destiny after two-plus years of a deeply wounded economy and a host of other beyond-my-control things that, together, left me feeling less *accomplished* than *done to*.

I can't be alone on this, can I?

It's time for agriculture to channel a similar level of resolve in 2011. We all know the discouraging story. A cadre of forces—consumers and their growing ignorance about where their food comes from; legislators who don't understand the realities of farming; activist groups with an agenda of putting producers and growers out of business—are conspiring against agriculture. The result is a scenario in which agriculture is continually on the defensive, instead of proactively showing that farmers are producing more food than ever, more efficiently than ever, at a time when a fast-growing global population needs it most. Someone tell me: Why is agriculture not seen as the rock star in this situation?

Ag PR professionals have the opportunity—the imperative—to change this narrative and redefine the terms of the debate in 2011. We should aspire to do that as individuals, and the Agricultural Relations Council should aspire to lead the way.

I can and do promise ARC's leadership, but the true strength of this organization has always been the individuals who make up our membership. We are not a faceless monolith that can just power through and get our way. We are individuals, thinking and networked and social—all of whom can, together, do a lot with relatively little. So while it's nice for me as ARC president to say, "Let's go!," it will take the collective membership to really move the needle.

All of which brings me to a question: What is your level of resolve in the new year? Or, more to the point, how important is it to you to finish 2011 feeling more *accomplished*, less *done to*?

Let me know what you think by e-mailing me at [djohnson@rkconnect.com](mailto:djohnson@rkconnect.com). Let's do this.



Deron Johnson

To register for the 2011 ARC Meeting and/or become a member, visit [www.agrelationscouncil.org](http://www.agrelationscouncil.org).

## HERE COMES THE SUN — ARC STYLE A LOOK AT THE 2011 ARC ANNUAL MEETING IN FORT MYERS, FLORIDA

**By Den Gardner**  
**ARC Executive Director**

What theme fits better than The Beatles hit song “Here Comes The Sun,” as ARC members get fired up to descend on Fort Myers, Florida, for the annual meeting Feb. 23 – 26 at the Crowne Plaza. It’s clear that I can say I’m eager to get to Florida because for ARC members, “It’s been years since we’ve been here.”



The Crowne Plaza in Fort Myers, Florida

The meeting for 2011 is filled with education and information, through workshops and tours. The ARC Program Committee, made up of Rebecca Colnar, Deron Johnson, Amy McDonald and Mace Thornton, is furiously putting together a program that will capture all that’s great about Florida agriculture and look at the issues facing the ag industry related to such challenges as fertilizer use, water consumption and livestock regulations.

Registration forms and other materials are on our website. Registration for this year’s meeting is again \$300.

### Meeting Highlights

- Representatives from the Florida Fertilizer and AgriChemical Association, along with representatives from the Florida Water Quality Coalition, will share how they’ve had to work with regulations and perception—including lots of public relations on Florida water quality issues.

- Measuring the effectiveness of social media. We all know how to get on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, but is your pro-ag message really getting out there? Tracy Irani will clue you in on how to tell if you really are getting your point across—and how to do it better.
- Thinking more strategically from a PR standpoint.
- The Steak and Orange Juice Tour—Not only will our Friday tour cover a small farm with a unique “direct to consumer” approach, but members of the Florida Beef and Citrus industries are cooking up some great information—and food—on this informative (and fun) tour. Oh, and we just might get to see how Florida is doing with malting barley products, too! Thanks to Gary Cooper, Southeast Ag Network, for support in arranging the tours.



Den Gardner



Longino Ranch, a citrus and cattle operation, is a highlight of the Steak and Orange Juice Tour.

We also will be enlisting the assistance of the Agriculture Institute of Florida, an organization made up of Floridians involved in ag communications (from a PR and public affairs standpoint), plus individual farmers and producers from a diverse blend of agricultural associations, commodity producers and ag-interested businesses.

Regarding “fun in the sun” activities, ARC staff has arranged for a boat cruise and meal on Thursday night.

### Golden ARC Awards

After re-instituting the Golden ARC Awards in 2010 (based on 2009 work) and recognizing winners at the Ag Media Summit in St. Paul, the Golden ARC awards will award the best work from 2010 at the 2011 meeting in Fort Myers. That will take place on Friday evening, Feb. 25. And the organization will continue this recognition program in subsequent years, each year at the February annual meeting.

Amy McDonald, program manager, is busy working with the judges to finalize this year's winners. The recognition program

for 2011 includes work through November of this year. For details go to [www.goldenarcawards.com](http://www.goldenarcawards.com).

### Other Highlights

This year, for the first time, ARC will encourage student registrations through the Florida Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) chapter. A special registration price of \$100 will be offered to students—one-third the normal registration price.

Please visit [www.agrelationscouncil.org](http://www.agrelationscouncil.org) for additional details. Remember: "Here Comes the Sun"—and I say, "It's all right."

## ARC ANNUAL MEETING TENTATIVE AGENDA

### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 23

Board members arrive and ARC board dinner

### THURSDAY, FEB. 24

8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. – Board Meeting

11 a.m. to Noon – Registration

Noon – Welcome by Deron Johnson, board president

12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. – Ag Panel on Florida Issues

- Cathleen Vogel, Florida Water Quality Coalition
- Mary Hartney, Florida Fertilizer and AgriChemical Association
- Betsy McGill, Florida Ag Institute

1:45 p.m. to 2 p.m. – Break

2 p.m. to 3 p.m. – Measuring the effectiveness of social media

Tracy Irani, Center for Public Issues Education

3 p.m. to 4 p.m. – Strategic Thinking on PR

Gary Myers, consultant and former owner of Morgan and Myers

4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Break

4:30 to 4:45 p.m. – Board bus and depart for sunset dinner cruise.

5:30 p.m. – Depart by boat for sunset dinner cruise. Return by 8:30 p.m.

### FRIDAY, FEB. 25

7:15 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. – Breakfast

7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. – Annual business meeting

9:00 a.m. – The Steak and Orange Juice Tour

Not only will our tour cover a small farm with a unique direct-to-consumer approach, but members of the Florida beef and citrus industries are cooking up some great information – and food – on this fun, informative tour.

9:30 a.m. – Arrive at Worden Farm

Worden Farm is an 85-acre certified organic family farm in Southwest Florida.

Noon – Arrive for tour and lunch at Longino Ranch

Longino Ranch is a diversified citrus and cattle operation near Arcadia. Includes lunch and a follow-up discussion with Florida cattle and citrus industry leaders on industry issues.

2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Return to hotel

4:30 to 6 p.m. – Prepare for evening awards banquet

6:00 to 7:00 p.m. – Reception

7:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. – Golden ARC Awards banquet and program

### SATURDAY, FEB. 26

Optional program under consideration



A sunset dinner cruise aboard the Sanibel Harbour Princess is just one highlight of this year's annual meeting.



Enjoy a tour of Worden Farm, an 85-acre certified organic family farm in Southwest Florida.

## BACK FOR THE LONG HAUL

**By Mace Thornton**  
**ARC Membership Director**

A lot has happened in a small amount of time.

That is the best way to describe not only this past year, but really the past couple of years for the Agricultural Relations Council. Over the past 4 – 5 years, it's described the results of a dedicated leadership group determined to bring this organization back to life. It's been an interesting ride. It has been a situation where people have taken their turn in the harness, pulling others along.

Many have contributed. Granted, we are all busy with our real jobs. But all of the little things—the sustaining things that have needed to happen—have happened.

We've focused on what are the most important aspects for any organization. Programming has been boosted, not only by continuing the ARC tradition of having an outstanding annual meeting, but cooperative efforts have been put in place with allied groups, such as AAEE and NAMA, that recognize the ARC brand for what it is: the organization with a sole focus on agricultural public relations.

The Golden ARC Awards, the ARCLight newsletter, the APR accreditation program with PRSA, the ARC Website, an ARC Facebook page—all these efforts have been revamped or kicked off. We hit and surpassed our membership goal, which just two years ago seemed far out of reach.

I mention all this because it has taken a great amount of coordination and leadership. When those two words come into play in regard to ARC, one must think about our president, Deron Johnson. Now, typically, after a year of serving as president of any volunteer

organization or professional group, one is really ready to move on. Not Deron. For the sake of having a stable and consistent hand on the reigns in a very crucial rebuilding time, Deron accepted the challenge presented him by our management professional, Den Gardner, to serve for a second year.

Acceptance of that responsibility really did rise above and beyond the call of duty, and ARC is all the better for it. Thank you, Deron, for your dedicated service.

But, service to ARC comes in many forms. I would like to tell you about the personal efforts of Warren Clark. Warren decided to give young ag communicators a head start in the world of ag PR by offering them free student memberships in the organization. It was a generous offer from Warren and it will pay dividends for ARC well into the future.

This kind of personal investment has been a shared trait of numerous ARC members over the past several years. And I am convinced the organization has taken the final step to relevance. ARC is back. My pledge as vice president and membership chairman of this organization in my final few months of service in those capacities is that never again will I hype ARC as an organization on a comeback. ARC has arrived and it's time to turn the page.

As always, keep ARC in mind the next time you are attending a meeting with industry colleagues. Drop a few e-mails to the contacts you make and attach our membership form. Talk about the benefits you receive from ARC—professional networking, recognition, improvement. Even if the main reason you belong is to share war stories with proven veterans in our field, there is value in driving home the message that when it comes to ag PR, ARC members get it. Share the story.



Mace Thornton

## COUNTDOWN TO THE 2011 GOLDEN ARC AWARDS

The 2011 Golden ARC Awards contest drew 50 percent more entries in this second year of the competition since its re-introduction in 2010. Winners will be announced at the ARC annual meeting February 23 – 26 in Fort Myers, Florida. The awards presentation is set for the evening of Friday, Feb. 25. Members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) North Florida Chapter are judging this year's entries.

The Golden ARC Awards recognize the best in agricultural public relations campaigns and individual tactics. Awards are given to the best corporate, nonprofit or organizational teams, in recognition of exceptional skill, creativity and resourcefulness used to achieve PR objectives. Work conducted in full or in part in 2010 is eligible for a 2011 Award.

### Campaigns Division

- Organization or Corporate Reputation
- Public Affairs
- Cause Marketing
- Crisis Communications
- Marketing Communication for Ag Audiences
- Marketing Communication for Non-Ag Audiences
- Agricultural Image
- Issues Management
- Internal
- Global Communications
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability
- Open
- Student Campaign

### Tactics Division

- Media Relations
- Video Programs
- Print Publications
- Collateral/Literature
- Research and Evaluation
- Speeches
- Feature Writing
- Digital and Social Media
- Annual Reports
- Unique Tactics and Execution – Open Category

To learn more, including how to submit entries for the 2012 Golden ARC Awards, visit [www.GoldenARCawards.com](http://www.GoldenARCawards.com).



Amy McDonald, Deron Johnson and Chuck Zimmerman at the 2010 Golden ARC Awards Ceremony.



Mike Opperman accepts a Golden ARC Award on behalf of Charleston|Orwig.



**AGRICULTURAL  
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**2011  
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**February 23 – 26, 2011**

ARC Annual Meeting  
Crowne Plaza  
At the Bell Tower Shops  
13051 Bell Tower Drive  
Fort Myers, Fla. 33907

**MEMBER NEWS**

**ARC Welcomes the Following New Members**

**Bryan Bjerke**, Paulsen Marketing

**Elizabeth Burns-Thompson**,  
Iowa State University Student

**Frank Chambers**,  
University of Illinois Student

**Meghan Cline**,  
Oklahoma State University Student

**Megan Crudup**,  
University of Arkansas Student

**Elizabeth DeBoer**,  
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo Student

**Kelsey Fletcher**,  
Texas Tech University Student

**Meghan Fullington**, Osborn & Barr

**Keri Geffert English**, Osborn & Barr

**Carrie Gilliam**,  
Kansas State University Student

**Sarah Hubbard**,  
Animal Agriculture Alliance

**Erin Mohler**,  
University of Missouri Student

**Kelly Rivard**,  
North Central College of Naperville  
Student

**Karen Simon**,  
Iowa Soybean Association

**Brooklyn Slabaugh**,  
Purdue University Student

**Sara Steever**, Paulsen Marketing

Welcome!

**2011 ARC Board of Directors**

**Deron Johnson**  
Rhea + Kaiser, board president

**Mace Thornton**  
American Farm Bureau Federation,  
first vice president

**Bob Giblin**  
Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal  
Health, immediate past president

**Mark Ingbritson**  
Communications consultant

**Amy Keith McDonald**  
McDonald Marketing  
Communications

**Carroll E. Merry**  
Countryside Marketing

**Janice Person**  
Monsanto

**Mike Opperman**  
Charleston|Orwig

**Get Involved Today!**

For more information about becoming a member or serving on an ARC committee, contact:

**Deron Johnson**, president, at 630-955-6656 or [djohnson@rkconnect.com](mailto:djohnson@rkconnect.com)

**Den Gardner**, executive director, or **Barb Ulschmid**, associate director, at 952-758-5811 or [arc@gardnerandgardnercommunications.com](mailto:arc@gardnerandgardnercommunications.com)