

KATZ KONNECTION

Public Affairs | Community Relations | Issues Management

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*Katz & Associates is fortunate to work with many local, state and federal agencies communicating about wide-ranging projects and issues. Typically the Katz Konnection touches on projects from all of these agencies. However, in this fall 2010 edition we have chosen to focus on our federal projects, specifically those with the Department of Defense. But we couldn't get away from sharing "News you can use" about social media. **We hope you enjoy!***

Katz & Associates creates sustainable risk communication program overseas

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, located in Portsmouth, Virginia, is in the final stages of completing a public health evaluation that assesses environmental health risks for U.S. Navy personnel and their families stationed in Naples, Italy.

For decades, Naples has been plagued with the problem of inadequate trash collection, open burning of trash and illicit dumping of chemical and hazardous waste. The trash crisis has

resulted in many concerns about the health and safety of people living in the region. This comprehensive and complex evaluation, which has included sensitive communication challenges, is an analysis of potential impacts of the trash crisis on human health.

A hallmark feature throughout this two-and-a-half-year project has been the Navy's proactive public affairs program to communicate health risks and Navy actions to the U.S. community in Naples, and to Italian officials. The communication program has received



Information sessions helped personnel understand how to reduce their health risks from environmental exposures.

project team in Virginia and frequent correspondence with the team in Naples, Italy, has provided the Navy with the resources needed to establish a robust risk communication program overseas. In addition, the Navy's commitment to ensuring that U.S. Navy personnel are informed about environmental health risks is the backbone principle that has guided the communication program throughout its implementation.

For nearly two years, Katz & Associates has helped the Navy create a sustainable risk communication program using existing public affairs assets in Naples. With the assistance of Katz & Associates, risk communication methods and tools are in place for continued communication beyond the life of the project as the public health evaluation comes to a close.

For more information please contact Lewis Michaelson, lmichaelson@katzandassociates.com.



U.S. Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy at Capodichino.

The communication program has received the prestigious U.S. Navy Thompson-Ravitz Award for Excellence in Navy Public Affairs for two consecutive years, 2008 and 2009.

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Since February 2009, Tania Fragomeno has provided on-site risk communication support at the offices of NMCPHC. The daily, in-person interactions with the

Sailing forward with the Navy's Pacific and Atlantic fleets

East met west this summer for the Katz & Associates environmental team as they prepared simultaneously for the scoping phases for two separate, multi-state U.S. Navy National Environmental Policy Act projects.



To enhance public understanding, the Navy used "Touch Smart" screens to display interactive maps and project information during scoping meetings.

This effort involved planning six scoping meetings in Hawaii and Southern California for the Pacific Fleet Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement and five scoping meetings in Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina and Florida for the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing EIS/OEIS. The expansive geographic reach of the two projects, as well as the interests of stakeholders outside the study areas, made designing outreach and involvement programs challenging.

A first for the Navy

Katz & Associates recommended developing and implementing a multifaceted approach for disseminating information to and obtaining comments from interested stakeholders using Web-based communication channels and resources. For the first time, the Navy used electronic media to disseminate project information to a focused group

of stakeholders, including scientists, researchers, acoustics specialists and marine resources specialists, and by sending project information to topic-appropriate blogs, e-newsletters, listservs and podcasts, and requesting they make the information available to their subscribers.

The Navy's Pacific Fleet team took advantage of using "Touch Smart" screens at the Hawaii and Southern California meetings to display interactive maps, information on environmental stewardship programs and marine life rescue missions, and a project video developed by Katz & Associates. The "Touch Smart" screens also allowed meeting attendees to submit electronic comments using a keyboard and touch screen at the meetings.

For more information please contact Lewis Michaelson, lmichaelson@katzandassociates.com.

Early community outreach proves successful for the SBX

The Pacific Northwest is known for being environmentally aware and active, and as such, demands transparency and dialogue on issues involving the region's natural resources.

As a result, the Missile Defense Agency, with input from the U.S. Navy, recognized the need to bring Katz & Associates on board when Naval Station Everett in Everett, Wash. was identified as a potential location for the temporary maintenance and repair of its Sea-Based X-Band Radar vessel, which tracks, discriminates and assesses the flight characteristics of ballistic missiles in flight so they can be targeted with interceptor missiles.

The sheer size of the vessel was a concern for many in the public – the SBX is 240 feet wide, 390 feet long and 280 feet tall from its keel to the top of the radar dome. Maintenance requirements were therefore limiting; only three locations on the west coast were identified as capable to facilitate the specific deep-water maintenance requirements, and Naval Station Everett is one of those locations.

The Katz & Associates environmental team was tasked with developing an outreach strategy and appropriate tactics to adequately and effectively communicate with the public, elected officials, regulatory agencies, the media and Native American Tribes and Nations about the limited scope of the project. Targeted notifications and information to elected officials and the media were imperative for proactively heading off anticipated misinformation. Katz & Associates coordinated and staffed two early public outreach meetings in Everett and South Whidbey Island and designed and produced four fact sheets and seven posters. Katz & Associates also developed a platform of key messages and provided risk communication training for project team members.

Although some stakeholders still were opposed to the SBX coming to Everett or the overall Ballistic Missile Defense System program, they expressed appreciation that the Missile Defense Agency engaged the community early in the process and provided more information about the maintenance proposal.

For more information please contact Allison Turner, aturner@katzandassociates.com.



The SBX radar is mobile and ocean-going on a semisubmersible platform that provides the Ballistic Missile Defense System with a powerful and capable radar that can be positioned to cover any region of the globe.

Look before you tweet: Is social media working for public agencies?

Public agencies are keenly interested in social media as a new channel for direct communication with stakeholders and are eager to “jump into” social media. However, cost-benefits of social media investments are not clear.

Earlier this spring, Katz & Associates and San Diego State University conducted a study to determine if it is worthwhile for agencies to use social media. The study aimed to answer these questions:

- Do stakeholders get information about public officials and agencies through social media?
- Does the way public agencies communicate through social media resonate with the public?
- Is it effective to communicate through social media in a crisis situation?
- How should we respond to social media campaigns from the opposing side?

Here's what we learned:

About news sources – We learned that people most often get their news from television (64 percent) and the Internet (38 percent), with a smaller percentage of groups getting information from newspapers (29 percent) and the radio (26 percent).

About Internet access and use – Nearly 90 percent of people reported some Internet activity, with 55 percent accessing it at work and 86 percent accessing it at home. Those who do access the Internet spend an average of 2.4 hours daily on it.

About social media use – 40 percent of Internet users use some form of social media:

- 18 percent of sample use Facebook “often”
- 3 percent of sample use MySpace “often”
- 2 percent of sample use Twitter “often”
- 2 percent of sample post own opinions about public issues on social media sites “often”

And it isn't a surprise that younger generations – “Millennials” (born between 1981 and 2000) and “Gen Xers” (born between 1965 and 1980) – are more likely to use social media.

There are trust issues associated with social media

The general population does not trust social media as much as traditional media when learning about public agencies. A majority of people use social media to share information with family and friends, rather than debating public issues. Many prefer getting information through an organization's website.

Since people do not trust social media outlets as much as traditional media, during a time of crisis or when waging a campaign, focus on more traditional outlets and use social media more sparingly. Broadcast media is still considered the most effective way to reach a broader audience.

How about responding to social media campaigns from the opposing side of an issue (especially if the information presented is not accurate)?

Avoid aggressively pursuing critics on their own social media sites. Most people think public agencies should respond to public criticism on the agency's own social media site; a minority favors public agencies taking their responses directly to the social media sites of critics.

Research conclusions

Although this study is just a snapshot in time, as social media is an ever changing form of communication, it reveals public agencies should:

- Use social media selectively and consider your organization's credibility when using it
- Use broadcast media in times of crises; use social media only as a supplement
- Avoid aggressively pursuing critics on their own social media sites
- Not use social media to debate public issues as that may generate unintended consequences and backlash

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Katz & Associates happenings

Awards

Katz & Associates was honored by the Public Relations Society of America San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter with two awards at the annual Edward L. Bernays Awards Ceremony. In the Creative Tactics category, the Katz & Associates and Orange County Transportation Authority team won the Award of Excellence for the rail safety outreach event with Orange County Boy Scouts at Knott's Berry Farm. In the Special Events category, Katz & Associates and the San Diego County Water Authority won the Award of Merit for the San Vicente Dam Raise groundbreaking event.



Photograph © Melissa Jacobs

Conferences

In June **Sara Katz** attended the ACE 10-AWWA Annual Conference in Chicago Illinois to present "Public Outreach: Your Reservoir of Good Will." She traveled to San Antonio, Texas in October to present "You Want Me to Drink What?" at the Texas Innovative Water conference. **Patricia Tennyson** also presented "You Want Me to Drink What?" at the Watereuse National Symposium in Washington, DC in September. Also out giving presentations on social media and community advisory groups was **Jessica Berlin**, who presented "Look Before You Tweet: Making Sure Social Media Hits the Mark" and "Community Advisory Groups, Not Always as Easy as 1-2-3," at the California-Nevada section of American Water Works Association conference in Sacramento, California in October.

Katz & Associates employees and Sarah Swensson from OCTA celebrated two award wins at the PRSA San Diego/Imperial Counties Bernays Awards Ceremony.

Katz & Associates is a woman-owned small business enterprise certified by the state of California and the federal government. Katz & Associates also holds a Multiple Awards Schedule contract with the state of California.



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