

# No Ocean Woes

## Cruise-ship P.R. problems not weighing down Carnival

It seems no amount of bad press can impact cruise travel, reports Carnival. In fact, brand perception is pretty much recovered. Consideration among brand loyalists has previously recovered; first-timers are regularly booking trips; and Carnival is increasingly winning business from cruisers who usually book with other ships. Carnival will spend \$600 million on advertising in 2014, a 20 percent increase over 2012.

**Car Sales.** Listening to the radio? Chances are there will be an auto ad. Emmis Communications, owner of 18 FM stations, reports automotive is 11% of its radio ad sales, up 17 percent from last year. Wireless, entertainment, healthcare and grocery are the heaviest advertisers, while fast food chains, beverage, media and financial purchased fewer ad spots.

**Tastes Like Chicken?** Innovative Food Holdings is creating and testing its own exclusive brand of wild boar products for U.S. markets. These wild



**Larissa Faw**  
The Business Roundup

Everglades boars are specifically trapped in the sugar cane fields and orange groves in the Everglades to give the meat a specific and desirable sweet flavor. Although currently this program is in a testing phase, company executives hope to introduce these meat products at retail in the near future.

**Deep Digs.** Poor weather forces many car dealers to close up, yet there are perhaps even more hassles when they remain

open during snowy weather. Dealers have to constantly plow the snow, maintain walkable lots, and dig out cars. And there are times when they aren't able to get their inventory in front, say CarMax executives.

**No Excuses.** Horrible weather doesn't stop Texas construction, says Texas Industries' Ken Allen. There's too much work to do. "What's been interesting, particularly in other markets in Texas is that it's taken a while after the downturn for the infrastructure to get put in place so that housing starts could begin to accelerate. We actually have a shortage of new houses in Texas."

**Drug's Second Attempt.** Following the decision by the FDA to decline approval of the Probuphine NDA to treat opioid dependence in April 2013, Titan Pharmaceuticals' focus has been to address the concerns expressed by the FDA. If approved for the long-term maintenance treatment of opioid dependence in adults, Probuphine would be the first

and only commercialized treatment for opioid dependence to provide continuous around-the-clock levels of buprenorphine for six months.

**Danger on the Tracks.** A large issue facing the railcar industry concerns the major safety-related replacement and retrofit needs for the older version DOT-111 tank cars constructed prior to 2011, reports Greenbrier Companies. At the end of calendar 2013, there were about 350,000 such DOT-111 pre-prescription or pre-2011 constructed tank cars in North America in service of which 150,000 approximately were in hazardous service.

**Metal Hogs.** The U.S. is the largest, Europe is second and Japan is third when it comes to sources of scrap metal, reports Schnitzer Steel. Still, people come to the U.S. for not just quantity, but quality of scrap.

**Premium Desserts.** Sonic, which operates 3,500 drive-ins in 44 states, is celebrating its third year of Summer of Shakes by

introducing 25 different flavors using the promotion of real ice cream. This year, it isn't just chocolate and vanilla. Sonic is debuting unique flavors including chocolate jalapeno and salted caramel.

**Spring Jump.** Women's retailer New York & Company reports spring fashion trends have shifted towards softer silhouettes, including soft pants, jump suits and soft skirts. At the same time, a partnership with actress Eva Mendes also continues to drive sales, particularly in jewelry, say company executives. Plus, the retailer will explore the traction of a small Eva Mendes Pop Up store.

**Heavy Load.** Restoration Hardware is now mailing a 3,200-page source book with a much broader assortment once a year versus two 1,600-page mostly redundant books twice a year.

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at [larissafaw@gmail.com](mailto:larissafaw@gmail.com).

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