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22nd Century Group Adds to Leadership Team

New Vice President of Acquisitions and New Director of Communications & Investor Relations Set to Drive Acquisition Efforts and Improve Investor Engagement

WILLIAMSVILLE, N.Y., March 10, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [22nd Century Group, Inc.](#) (NYSE American: XXII), a plant biotechnology company that is a leader in reduced nicotine tobacco and hemp/cannabis plant genetics research, today announced the appointment of Lisa Parks as its Vice President of Acquisitions and Mei Kuo as its new Director of Communications and Investor Relations.

In a newly created role, Lisa Parks will drive 22nd Century Group's strategic partnership activities focused on creating a synergistic portfolio of operating companies to commercialize the Company's proprietary hemp/cannabis plants and intellectual property in development. Parks will play a crucial role in identifying and screening potential targets in the hemp/cannabis space as well as leading the due diligence process, performing financial modeling, leading deal negotiations, and coordinating post-deal integrations. Parks will also play a key role in the formation of strategic partnerships to commercialize the Company's proprietary, very low nicotine content cigarettes. Prior to joining 22nd Century Group, Parks served as Managing Director at Envest Capital Partners, a private investment firm focused on acquiring equity positions in cash flow positive companies in basic industry sectors. Earlier in her career, Parks served as the Director of Corporate Finance at Landmark Media Enterprises. She holds an MBA from University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School and a Bachelor of Business Administration from William and Mary.

Mei Kuo will lead 22nd Century Group's communications and investor relations function and serve as the primary liaison between the Company, its external stakeholders and the investment community. She joins 22nd Century Group from Shake Shack, an American fast casual restaurant chain, where she established and led the investor relations function. During her career, Kuo has held various investor relations and corporate finance positions of increasing responsibilities at other public companies, including Integra LifeSciences and Assurant, Inc.. Kuo received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She also serves as President of the National Investor Relations Institute New York Chapter's (NIRI NY) NextGen Committee.

"We are thrilled to welcome Lisa and Mei as the newest members of our leadership team," said Mike Zercher, President and Chief Operating Officer of 22nd Century Group. "They join us at an exciting time as we poise our organization for new growth opportunities. Lisa and Mei bring incredible expertise and skill sets to our team, which will enhance our ability to execute on our growth strategies, generate growth and enhance shareholder value."

About 22nd Century Group, Inc.

22nd Century Group, Inc. (NYSE AMERICAN: XXII) is a plant biotechnology company focused on technologies that allow it to alter the level of nicotine in tobacco plants and the level of cannabinoids in hemp/cannabis plants through genetic engineering, gene-editing and modern plant breeding. The Company's primary mission in tobacco is to reduce the harm caused by smoking by bringing to market its proprietary, reduced nicotine content cigarettes with 95% less nicotine than conventional cigarettes. The Company's primary mission in hemp/cannabis is to develop proprietary hemp/cannabis plants with unique cannabinoid profiles and desirable agronomic traits and to commercialize those plants through a synergistic portfolio of strategic partnerships in the hemp/cannabis industry.

Learn more at xxiicentury.com, on Twitter [@_xxiicentury](https://twitter.com/xxiicentury) and on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/xxiicentury).

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