

President's Report NCSG – November 2007

At our last board meeting at the end of July we put final objectives into place for this year as identified and assigned them to committee and task force projects. The dashboard continues to be a valuable work area between board meetings for directors to see where projects are at and if they are on track with the milestones for timely completion of the benchmarks.

This is the last board meeting before convention and we need to take a close look to make sure everything is in place for Reno next April. We had a lot of input from directors on the seminar lineup along with ideas to enhance next year's convention experience. Staff is on course with making final commitments for the seminars and if there is something missing now is the time to bring it up so everything is in place.

We have had discussion over the past few weeks on the board list on a number of subjects. One of the discussions is the need to clarify when a member is out of compliance what action should be taken concerning their membership. This is something that needs to be better defined given the different scenarios that come up so staff knows how to process lapses and NCSG logo violators. There are strong feelings by many that violators need to have stronger penalties in place than what currently exists. We have had some discussion on this and need to reach consensus by the end of this board meeting so staff can implement any changes.

At our last board meeting the board had to come to terms with the fact that our budget income can vary quite a bit depending on the convention rotation cycle for that year. The number of attendees significantly decreases the further west we go for our conventions. We also often find ourselves limited relative to the best business decisions when our current rotation schedule locks us into certain geographic regions each year. The Convention Site Selection Committee has been asked to present a rotation policy that is more flexible and better serves the membership as a whole.

With the growth of our trade show we have seen a need to develop a Standards of Practice for our supplier members. This is something that has been worked on for the past year with input from suppliers to fill a void that existed for the Supplier Member category of membership addressing Standards of Practice.

Our Government Affairs Committee continues to maintain a presence and work on providing legislative packets to our members. The establishment of grass roots volunteers in all of the regions will be key to the success this committee will have in helping members address local legislation issues. Over the past couple of months it was brought to our attention that New Jersey is facing a very poor piece of legislation that would put most if not all sweep companies out of business in the state. This was caught locally at the last minute after it had passed both state houses and was sitting on the Governor's desk for signing. It has a wide impact on not only sweeps, but hearth retail installations as well. Petitions have been made to the Governor to not sign this bill as it would severely

impact sweeps by not even allowing them to perform routine maintenance such as chimney sweeping. This is why our members need to be on the watch and proactively watching for state legislative issues that can come up very quickly and have a big impact on their business. We need to be continually bringing the issue of state legislation up to members through Sweeping, Newslink, members discussion list and should consider a seminar topic on this for conventions also. The membership is pretty divided on this issue depending on what part of the country they are located in. One thing we can count on is we will see more of this type of legislation happening in the future and is probably the biggest single threat to members that can change the way they conduct business very quickly. The biggest challenge we have is to make sweeps aware that fighting state or local legislation is something that needs to be addressed by local sweeps. We can assist by offering legislative action packets and letters of support, but local legislators will listen to their constituents, not national associations. This is a lesson we learned through the Legislative Academy, and HPBA has the same position on local legislation and the need for local business to mobilize and take action. We need to be making members aware of government affairs issues every chance we can. This is a responsibility of all directors and not just our Government Affairs Committee.

In closing, I hope all directors have been considering how they can best serve NCSG moving into the future. There are many opportunities to step up and chair or serve on a committee or task force. This is where leadership skills emerge and where a lot of the future leaders of NCSG will come from. It's a rewarding opportunity to serve NCSG helping to lead our trade into the future and it all starts by making the commitment and willingness to step forward and be a leader.

Howard Rowell
President NCSG