

July 2007
National Chimney Sweep Guild
Consent Agenda

Directors' Reports

- Region 1 *submitted by G. Stroup*
- Region 2 *submitted by J. Walker*
- Region 3 *submitted by J. Baynes*
- Region 4 *submitted by J. Wharton*
- Region 5 *submitted by H. Rowell*
- Region 6 *submitted by J. Biswell*
- Region 7 *submitted by S. Pietila*
- Region 8 *submitted by R. Brooks*
- Supplier Director *submitted by R. Huta*

Committee Reports

- Bylaws Committee *submitted by R Brooks*
- LRP Committee *submitted by R Brooks*
- Ethics Committee *submitted by G Stroup*
- NFPA 31 Committee: No meetings to report. *submitted by J Pilger*
- NFPA 211 Committee *submitted by R Edwards*

NCSG Region 1 Report

New and renewed National Chimney Sweep Guild membership remains steady in Region 1.

Since the NCSG Board of Director's May meeting, the Northeast has been experiencing a kaleidoscope of weather that is throwing sweep companies into varying degrees of highs and lows. I had been hearing that earlier in the spring that caps sales and chimney repairs peaked after windstorms swept through communities throughout our region and masonry work was plentiful as long as the weather cooperated. In preparation of this report, I'm disheartened to hear of companies currently overextending credit lines to keep their businesses afloat. If the slump in "new" real estate sales is indicative of anything, it appears the economy is slowing down in the northeast. In my travels, I have observed stove shops redesigning their floor plans to include household appliances, outdoor furniture, outdoor sporting equipment ... necessity remains a catalyst for innovation.

Regional Updates

The New York State Chimney Sweep Guild will be hosting its 16th Annual Summer Workshop **July 27 through July 29** in Mosherville, NY. For more information you may contact NYSCSG President, Ruthie Francisco at Windrf@aol.com. Fellow NY guild member, Gerry Egleston was a mainstay of the workshop – Ruthie Francisco, and 1st Vice President, Chris Prior, are putting together memorabilia of Gerry's life "among the sweeps" to present to his family.

The Pennsylvania Chimney Sweep Guild will be sponsoring a CSIA Diagnosis and Document (D&D) Course **July 30 through Aug 1** in Harrisburg, PA. For more information, please visit csia.org.

The New Hampshire Association of Chimney Sweep Professionals and the Maine Association of Chimney Sweep Professionals are sponsoring a CSIA Diagnosis and Document (D&D) Course in Manchester, NH **August 28 through August 30**. For more information, please visit csia.org.

The Chimney Sweep Professionals of the Northeast (CSPN) will be hosting a regional chimney sweep convention and trade show **January 23 -26, 2008** in Mystic, CT. More information can be found online at cspnconvention.com.

Membership Outlook

As NCSG continues to promote the success of its members by providing progressive services, encouraging professionalism, ethical accountability, and advancing the chimney and venting industry through public awareness of the trade ... I appreciate the opportunity to continue to highlight among the many benefits of NCSG membership, the Government Affairs Updates available online at ncsg.org. The Government Affairs Committee strives to inform NCSG members of new, pending and existing state house

and state senate bills pertaining to the chimney, venting and hearth industry – it's a valuable resource to help sweeps stay on top of changes that may affect the operation of daily business.

I also appreciate the opportunity to continue to encourage NCSG members to contact their respective state labor departments to find out if the OSHA 10 Hour Course Card is required for business operations yet or if one will be needed in the near future. MA and RI already have this requirement, NH has the OSHA 10Hr Course Card on the books for January 2008 compliance.

I have harped on the subject of NCSG members contacting their respective state highway enforcement agency for the better part of the past year. These are the folks (state troopers) who enforce the rules and regulations put forth by the US Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. We all have service vehicles; DOT fines can add up to hundreds of dollars in one traffic stop for merely not knowing what you are accountable for.

Respectfully submitted,
George Stroup
Region 1 NCSG Director

NCSG Region 2 Report

July 9, 2007

Hello fellow Directors,

Region 2 has been fairly quiet for the most part since May 2007.

I have talked to members in each state and most say there business is down or just holding steady (this includes both retail and service).

I did attend the tail end of the SE convention in Jekyll Island. Attendance was much lower than past SE conventions. The ones that did attend had a good time and gained much "hands on" experience by attending the seminars. I attended with all my employees and we took the CDET review and test at the Jekyll Island Hotel (thanks Gunny!).

Virginia Guild Association meeting will be in Thaxton, Virginia. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday June 16, 2007 in Bedford, Virginia and a CPR & First Aid Course will be offered which will be approximately 5 hours long.

South Carolina and North Carolina Guilds have joined up together to sponsor a Physics Seminar sponsored by the CSIA in Charlotte, N.C. on July 27th & 28th, 2007. I understand that Conemara (Lucky Dales) in September this year is still not confirmed.

Florida is having a meeting and small workshop on August 18th, 2007 in the NE part of the state.

I have made some contacts in regards to keeping aware of legislation that may affect Florida's Chimney Sweeping Industry. I can only hope that we can be on the forefront of any legislation that may be proposed.

Sincerely,

Jay Walker
NCSG Region 2 Director
JRegion2@aol.com

NCSG Region 3 Report

July 8, 2007

I want thank everyone involved with launching the new NCSG website. I think it looks fabulous! I was pleased a page was dedicated to the Chimney Academy. I wasn't aware we were adding that and I think it's right on target. Good job.

I used the "Homeowners, Locate a NCSG Member" tab to review R3 membership and am pleased to say we have 160 R3 members. That's up 10 from when I sent my candidate campaign letter to the voting members. If we hold the attrition we show promise for a decent increase in R3 membership this year.

Looking over this list, I noticed something I'm really wondering about. Of the 160 members, 53 are not certified. That's a third of the membership. I'm perplexed. Why would you choose to be a member of NCSG and not be certified? Ohio in particular, nearly half (43%) of the members are not certified.

This is something we the BOD should discuss and try to ascertain the degree of this trend in the overall membership and consider what action it will take to improve the ratio.

I called the three new members in R3. I left a nice welcoming voice mail for two and spoke with one. It was an opportunity to pick a new member's brain a bit. I've actually been acquainted with John Cerrito Sr. for several years from my Copperfield days, so I was curious why after all these years he has now chosen to become a member. He said, "I want to get my guys certified."

That sounded real good but then I ask him if customers were requesting a Certified Sweep. His answer was, never. This tells me he is looking to market Certified Sweep to his customers and try to gain a professional edge or keep pace with his competition. My conclusion from just this one conversation is we have to keep upping our branding pressure and never relax.

By the time we meet for our July budget meeting, 07 Sweeps Week will be in the can. When I was writing my R3 letter I had the idea of members creating a 08 Sweeps Week spare change jar. I'd like to encourage us to promote this idea and campaign to see where it goes. Think about this. If 1100 members over the next year put just 10 cents a day in a spare change jar, it would generate \$40,000. I have a spare change jar in my office right next to where I put everything from my pockets each day. I pour a lot more than 10 cents a day in there.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Baynes
Director R3

NCSG Region 4 Report

July 2007

Very little change in the business outlook in this region. I will say however, that July 15th is usually the start of my busy season. Look ahead gentlemen. Check your equipment, vacs, brushes, rods (carefully here) and don't forget the truck. You want clean, dependable tools and equipment ready to use and start making you money. If you haven't yet calculated this coming seasons' pricing, do it today. And don't forget to put a few dollars aside for unforeseen expenses, repairs, replacement and a new truck, as well as Convention. Don't be like that poor, backward looking sweep in my area who complained that all he could charge was \$49.00 because that was all anyone in his area charged and no one could make a living at it, so everyone was quitting. I see no change in Certified sweep numbers in the region and no change in NCSG membership in the region this past month.

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NCSG Region 5 Report

July 10, 2007

Wisconsin

Work load has been down across most of the state in all categories. Cool spring with virtually no rain until very recently. Entire state is being hit hard economically and real estate transactions are way down.

Minnesota

Members looking for ways to diversify and improve their numbers. Numbers are about the same as last year this time with retail sales and installations much lower than last year.

North & South Dakota

Hoping the weather will help drive more business. Down from last year and a very cool spring.

Iowa

Sweeping activity is a little below last year at this time and retail sales are way down.

Nebraska

Nebraska state guild is small but stays active promoting CSIA certified sweeps. Experiencing the same struggles as the rest of the region.

GENERAL CONDITION

Overall the region is down compared to last year at this time. Cool spring, lack of rain to produce some work and local economies were the main reasons. New home start ups are way down along with existing real estate transactions. Hearth sales on the retail end are down considerably regardless of fuel type. Most are optimistic and looking forward to the fall season in a couple of months.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard Rowell
Region 5 Director NCSG

NCSG Region 6 Report

July 2007

Called over 20 member companies in various states of the region. All reported that business is excellent.

Membership issues –

Members that I contacted were in shock and awe that I was calling to talk to them about how their business is doing and get input. No negative comments. A cheerful office person ready to take my message answered most phone calls. I left messages to contact me if they need input about the NCSG or if they have input to give.

-Jeremy Biswell
Region 6 director

NCSG Region 7 Director's Report
July 2007
Submitted by Steve Pietila

Here are the current membership figures for Region 7:

Oregon – 7
Washington – 12
Wyoming – 4
Montana – 2
Idaho – 4
Alaska – 0

Total – 29 (same as last report)

There are 35 CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps in the region.

The bill to reinstate the requirement that a chimney sweep have a contractor license put together by OCSA members has been signed into law by the Governor. The OCSA believes licensing should be required to protect homeowners from companies without appropriate insurance and worker's compensation coverage. Thanks to the CSIA for your support in this effort.

This time of year finds all sweeps that do repairs very backed-up, and sweeping is down which is the seasonal norm. Most are weeks if not months booked out. The economy is strong in the larger metropolitan areas, and in the mid-size towns. This seems to be in contrast to what is happening in other areas of the county.

Membership numbers & certifications remain flat in this region. I'm hoping that we can strengthen this as we approach a convention location out west.

There is nothing more to report on since last month.

NCSG Region 8 Report

July 2007

Currently, member sweeps total 2 in the state of Hawaii, 4 in Arizona, 3 in Nevada, 5 in Utah and 79 in California. That's a total of 93 region eight members. That's a nine member decrease over the 102 members I reported on last May. California's "Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild" is currently advancing their "Certification" program. This program requires that sweeps pass a 50 question test based on the obsolete 1997 version of the "Uniform Building Code," and the parts of NFPA-211 that the guilds leadership believes applies to sweeps from California. NCSG membership in California alone, dropped by 10 since May.

The "Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild" remains the only state guild within region 8. The GSCSG is held its 27th annual convention and trade show in Buena Park, CA last week, July 11th – 13th. There was four days of education available to sweeps from all over the country. I will have more concerning this convention to add later, as at the time of this writing, it hasn't yet transpired.

Business was down across the board for region 8 this past year. Many say that the increased awareness of the need to have hearth products serviced and inspected has increased the inspection portion of their business throughout the region. Many more home inspectors are recommending NFPA-211, level II inspections as a way to limit there liability in real estate transactions. This is due in large part to many within the industry that frequent the monthly meetings of the home inspectors in many different areas of the region.

I will continue my efforts to increase membership within the region and make myself available to the members.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks
NCSG Region 8 Representative

NCSG Supplier Director Report

July 2007 BOD meeting

This summer has been relatively uneventful from the supplier side of the industry. The one major exception to that statement is the announcement by Flex-L of their shutting down operations.

These are very difficult times for the hearth and venting industry and I would not be surprised to see more consolidation or closures in the future. I do not want to share rumors in this forum, but they are out there and they are very negative.

The expectations for this coming selling season are for better conditions, but everyone I've talked to is holding their breath... The industry needs an early and cold fall followed by a bitter winter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Huta,
NCSG Supplier Director

Bylaws Committee Report

July 2007

There is no mandate by the BOD or recommendations for bylaw changes from the committee at this time.

Randy Brooks

2007 Long Range Planning Committee Report

July 2007

NCSG

- Develop a “Governance model” to address long term board recruitment and development
- Promote Membership: Identify opportunities to attract younger members to the Guild
- Promote Membership: Promote membership to non-members
- Trade Development: Provide business skill development opportunities for Sweeps, including self-study options
- Promote Membership: Continue to develop innovative member benefits
- Information Dissemination: Increase public awareness of NCSG and the trade
- Trade Development:* Develop a strategy for NCSG to address the issue of “chimney scammers” nationally

NCSG Ethics Committee Report

July 2007

Immediately following NCSG Innovation 2007, NCSG Ethics Committee transition included implementing the use of NCSG/CSIA Dashboard. The Dashboard is an electronic modal that enables NCSG/CSIA Administrative Coordinator, Kimberlie Shoemaker, to post ethics complaints, and supporting documentation, received by the office for committee review (eliminating the use of facsimile transmissions). Kimberlie also coordinates deadlines for timely responses to each step the complaint must travel towards resolution.

NCSG Code of Ethics complaints in committee prior to convention involved consumers seeking reimbursement for work performed by their contracted company that they subsequently were not satisfied with. The committee cannot affect or otherwise influence pricing issues. Two of the pending complaints have been resolved as the companies had documented a willingness to resolve the issue with the consumer; to date each retains their NCSG membership. A third complaint remains unresolved, pending reply from the company; documentation submitted to date by the consumer supports their claim of the company's total disregard of NCSG's Code of Ethics.

There is one position open on this committee; it would be beneficial to have some representation from the west coast. If anyone is interested, please contact me at stroupco@verizon.net.

Respectfully submitted,
George Stroup
Chairman, NCSG Ethics Committee

NFPA 211 Report
July 2007

REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NFPA 211 has begun a new change cycle and over the coming months will be considering proposals that were submitted for consideration.

Royal Edwards

New Business

- FY 2008 Budget Approval
- Application for Membership
- Potential Trademark Case
- Convention Rotation
- Next Board Meeting