

NCSG Presidents Report, May 2008

With such a short time between convention and our last meeting, there isn't a tremendous amount to report on concerning activity. Other than some clerical changes to the dashboard and identifying committee chairs for the upcoming year, I will also expand on my thoughts concerning the topics to be discussed at the planning meeting.

As you know by now, the dashboard has been split out by association. No longer do directors from one organization have to receive e-mail concerning projects from the other. This change was not intended to offend anyone and I trust you will all understand the reasoning behind it.

We will collaborate with the CSIA BOD on the topic of "aftermarket parts," This is a CSIA matter but as chimney sweeps, I feel we have input that will prove valuable to the conversation. It should be no secret at this point where I stand on this issue. The current position under consideration from the November (CSIA) meeting, that was tabled until this May (CSIA) meeting is the statement, (if a statement is indeed needed) I would support. I feel that attempting to define the intent of the listing agencies, manufacture installation instructions, codes and standards or the AHJ, are not consistent with our mission and will only serve to confuse the issue further. On the CSIA web site under the section of "anatomy of your fireplace," subsection "prefabricated fireplaces," the position as many have asked for, is present. This position is not new and I would consider this position adequate to the argument of having no position. If the CSIA board collectively agrees to author a position on this question, were will it end. All of CSIA's education has supported the position that is on their web site for public viewing. To dilute the current position I feel will put CSIA techs in harms way and lessen the credibility of the Institute.

We must never become satisfied with the service we currently provide. We must, as we do in our own businesses continue to look for ways to diversify ourselves and the products and services we provide. We have an attractive package assembled of current benefits and I'm optimistic that we have the people in place to think outside the box on this very important topic. A few weeks ago I asked for everyone to participate in the conversation about this year's topics, we heard from a few and nothing from others. This is not going to help the chimney sweep trade if the people entrusted by the members to guide the future of this trade don't participate in this process.

We will not only have discussions about important topics at meetings, we will be thinking about the advancement of this trade and the members we represent constantly. I'm convinced that we have the people in place to make a tremendous impact on the future of this industry and the people that rely on its success to live, profit and prosper well into the future.

Promoting the chimney sweep trade as a career is going to be a place to start for this team. We have arguably the best opportunity in many years to market this industry to returning veterans, and those young people not attending colleges.

The communication tools available to us today through My Space, Face Book, You Tube, Blogs, ETC., is the new media that must be utilized to reach the younger demographic of this industry's future.

We must increase the value of membership to the point that only a fool sweep wouldn't want to be a member. If we already have this established and believe we do, we must market this effectively in the future. We may want to think about incentives to new members and special offers to regions that are lacking in membership.

I want to see us continue the association with our supportive supplier members in advancing our marketing of membership materials to their customer list. I want us to utilize every advantage to the fullest and get our message out.

Since the demise of August West, and the start up kit that they use to supply, we have a golden opportunity to mimic their marketing on the internet and offer packages to start up companies throughout the world. We can invest in a dedicated web site and market packages that include discounts on education and equipment supplied by our supplier members and education providers within the industry. We are to be in support of the sweep industry and we must make it grow to be successful.

NCSG committee chairs for 2008-2009:

- Bylaws: Bob Priesing
- Convention Site Selection: Jay Walker
- Ethics: Jeremy Biswell
- Government Affairs: Diane Pilger
- History: Jack Pixley
- International Relations: Victor Imgarten
- Internet: "Staff"
- Long Range Planning: Bob Priesing
- Membership: Russ Dimmitt
- NFPA 31: John Pilger
- Nomination: Jim Baynes
- White House Sweeping Team Selection: Jeff Schmittinger

I'm looking forward to a very productive meeting.

Randy Brooks
NCSG President