

Executive Director Report

Feedback from the Indianapolis convention has been positive. Beyond the customary good reviews about the program, tradeshow and camaraderie, the reception at the Tech Center was very well received, meeting or exceeding expectations for 90% of our survey respondents. With more than 500 attendees, we saw a 14% increase in attendance over our last Midwest convention (Louisville 2006).

Perhaps the more significant news since our meeting in February is the change in our convention and tradeshow dates for next year. Just prior to attending the HPBA Expo in March, we learned that HPBA had officially changed the dates for their 2011 Expo from mid-March in Reno (2 weeks after the conclusion of our 2011 convention) to March 3-6 in Salt Lake City. This change created a significant logistical challenge for our mutual exhibitors and attendees as it would have required our exhibitors to tear down their exhibits at our show in Hartford on Friday, February 25th and have them delivered to Salt Lake City by Monday, February 28th. Similarly, attendees would have had less than one week between events. Speaking to exhibitors and potential attendees made it clear that the tight timing of these two events would have created a significant hardship on many and ultimately had the potential of negatively impacting the performance of NCSG's convention.

After speaking with our host hotel and the convention center in Hartford, we were able to negotiate a change in our contract with minimal impact that has allowed us to reschedule our convention and trade show. The new dates for our event will be February 9-12, 2011.

While the professional telemarketing member recruitment efforts did not yield the direct numbers we had looked for, the process did generate a fair number of leads that we are continuing to develop. The process also helped us clean up our database significantly which is help us curb recruitment expenses moving forward. Despite the continued economic impact on many associations, our net membership numbers are remaining relatively steady year over year. As of our most recent reports, NCSG has 1,064 members vs. 1,055 members at this time last year (956 voting members vs. 954 at this time last year). The "progress edition" of Sweeping magazine has gone to press and is expected to be in the mail to all of our member prospects by the time the board meets in May.

Since January 1, we have opened 10 new NCSG member trademark cases and closed 6. Combined with 30 new CSIA trademark cases and a small handful that have carried over from the end of the previous year, we are administratively working 43 combined trademark cases at this time.

Staff in general continues to work hard and efficiently for the association. In a recent report generated at Jay's request, it was demonstrated that the staff cost/revenue ratio has been decreasing over the past 5 years. Since 2005, when that ratio was 33%, we have seen a steady decrease to this year's projected year-end ratio of 22%. As Randy has reported, the Guild in general should be proud of what it continues to accomplish with relatively limited resources.

Acknowledging the challenges that many in our industry continue to face, as leaders we determined to forgo any customary dues increase this past year. Despite not having that avenue of increased income, we are maintaining our focus on our mission and continuing to seek opportunities to increase value to our members.

I look forward to having an opportunity to focus on the NCSG board's annual planning process this year without having my time split with another organization. The need to do this has been a long time coming, and I anticipate having Randy and I be available without distraction will pay dividends for NCSG.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark McSweeney, CAE