

Executive Director Report

As the 2011 fiscal year draws to a close we are pleased to report that NCSG has once again ended their year financially very sound. Doing so has allowed us to head into the 2012 budgeting process with a conservative operational perspective relative to anticipated revenues and expenses – which we believe to be the prudent approach given the continued state of the economy – while strategically using accumulated savings to invest in the organization’s infrastructure and knowledge base for the long term benefit of our members and the industry in accordance with our strategic plan. In addition we will still be contributing as expected to our established reserve as the current fiscal year concludes.

While adequate reserves have previously been established to ensure proper funding of the Guild’s potential liability for the former Return of Dues program, per board directive we need reach out to all eligible participants in the program to seek clarification on their intended beneficiaries. To date, more than 30% of our eligible members have directed that upon their death those funds be redirected back to NCSG itself. Like any death benefit program, the insured is able to change their beneficiary at any time, meaning that while NCSG may be the stated beneficiary currently, the insured does have the option to change that (in writing) at any time. None-the-less, we do appreciate the generosity of our members who have directed their future proceeds back to the Guild which does lower our “likely” liability while we do need to continue to maintain funding for the actual liability until such time as those funds are individually released.

Since our last meeting, much of our event planning attention has been on the impending European Federation of Chimney Sweeps (ESCHFOE) Technical Meeting and Presidents’ Conference. However, progress is also being made toward NCSG’s annual convention and trade show in Orlando next February. It had been requested that we change things up a bit on Saturday, our final day of programming at the convention, to allow some additional time for attendees prior to the start of our closing banquet. I’m pleased to report that we have made that change for this year and look forward to seeing how it goes over.

We have a number of business and technical seminars we are in various stages of wrapping up as of the writing of this report. Here’s is a sampling of the topics we are working on, but please understand that this list is longer than the actual agenda the final program will represent:

Business topics (the program will reflect 2 General Sessions and 8 Breakout Sessions):

- Report Writing (M. Padgitt)
- Do You Run Your Business or Does It Run You? (R. Dimmitt)
- Dryer Venting Service “Lint for Dollars” (A. LeSeur)
- Selling Your Company to Employees (J. Spoden)
- Fixing Leaky Chimneys – Business During the Quiet Season (M. Stoner/J. Meredith)
- **General Session Keynote & Breakout – Al Levi**
- **General Session Keynote & Breakout – Mike Rutz, VP Advertising, Angie’s List**
- Marketing Strategies “Roundtable” - internet/web,, social media), customer appreciation, branding & print ads, how to use NCSG’s PSAs
- OSHA compliance in your business
- How Angie’s List Really Work – panel discussion
- FEMA Disaster Preparedness

Technical (the program will reflect 8 Breakout Sessions)

- Consumer Safety and the Chimney Sweep (P. Cullen)
- Rotary Cleaning (J. Sauter)
- Sheet Metal Fabrication
- Fireplace Restoration (C. Prior)
- Scaffolding
- OSHA Fall Protection
- Relining and Physics Online
- Solving Problems at the Work Site
- Health & Safety issues (Dr. Mike)
- First Aid in the Workplace (H. Stevenson)
- Building a cricket
- Investigating Gas Hearth Appliances Service Procedures (D. Dobbs)

As I referenced above, much of our event planning attention since our last board meeting has been on the recently hosted ESCHFOE meeting. I am pleased to report that the conference was a resounding success. Candice and I are still reconciling the financials from the event, but preliminarily it appears as though we did break even as predicted. Hosting this event represented a culmination of international relationship building on behalf of the sweeping industry that spanned multiple decades. I have heard the perception over the years that because the sweeping trade in Europe is so much older and more developed by comparison to the trade in the US, that we here have far more to learn from them than the other way around. However, the response from the 11 different European countries that participated in our recent conference suggests that we are actually on a very level playing field technologically and we all continue to have a lot that we can learn equally from one another. In fact, the president of Sweden's association remarked at our closing session that in a relatively short period of time the American sweeping industry has managed to accomplish what it has taken many of them over 150 years to do. None-the-less, every time we meet with our European colleagues we are reminded how truly global this industry is, and in a world that is getting smaller and smaller through media and technology the benefit of maintaining these international relationships is invaluable be it from a technological, an environmental, a political or a business perspective. Having had the opportunity to host this event is an impressive feather in the cap of sweeps throughout the United States. I want to thank the many volunteers and staff that helped pull this off without a hitch!

Respectfully submitted,



Mark T. McSweeney, CAE
Executive Director