

## **NCSG President's Report**

July 2008

**It is the mission of the National Chimney Sweep Guild to promote the success of its members by providing progressive services, encouraging professionalism and ethical accountability, and advancing the chimney and venting industry through public awareness of the trade.**

I felt we had a very productive planning meeting in May, following our very successful convention in April. Many items were dash boarded and I look forward hearing from the board and staff about the progress made on all fronts.

Next week as the board gathers for our budget meeting, our convention and planning meeting will still be fresh on our minds. We need to look at what was successful and what ways we can improve our convention and benefits to meet and exceed the expectations of our members. An important component of this is our education and seminar lineup at convention. Last year the board had good input as to what seminars members would find beneficial and this year we will also help identify those areas to make next year's convention in Winston Salem, just as beneficial to our members.

We are all aware that the board's responsibilities involve much more than our convention. We all recognize that we must identify both short and long term goals to position NCSG for healthy growth moving into the future. Our membership has seen significant growth, then leveled off, since our convention three years ago in San Antonio. We need to be looking at both what we did and what we can do to sustain that growth moving into the future. Part of that area of growth we need to look at is identifying opportunities to promote the chimney sweep trade through creative advertizing using the internet, My Space, Face Book, web site, Google and others.

Our mission is to provide member benefits and we are doing a good job of lining up those benefits. Our member coupon offer from vendors has grown substantially over the past few years and we need to continue growth in this area. We need to identify other benefits that will help members in their businesses and how we can use the strength of our numbers to leverage those benefits.

I feel that many of our benefits go largely unnoticed. It would seem that as I speak with members either at our convention or regional events, many have not even taken a close look at the savings available to them. This benefit needs to be promoted more frequently to members by having articles written monthly in our Sweeping Trade Journal.

An important benefit that we continue to develop is our Government Affairs Committee. This committee has made much headway over the past few years by building relationships with HPBA, EPA, and some have taken a weeklong course to learn how to effectively work with government officials. This is a huge member benefit and one we

need to continue building upon moving into the future. Last week, I attended the BAAQCD, Bay Area Air Quality Control District; meeting in San Francisco, CA. I was amazed that this important meeting was not attended by any local sweeps. This district represents nine county air boards in the bay area and we have dozens of members in those nine counties. Myself, John Crouch, Steve Polone from HBBA Pacific and Amy Ryan, where the only speakers representing our trade. In speaking with John Crouch after the meeting, we will be working together in the very near future to develop talking points and SOP's for not only our members, but all chimney and venting professionals and the public, our customers to avail themselves of on our web site. The result of this latest meeting ended with even EPA certified wood and pellet stoves being restricted from use on non attainment days. It will be critical to our survival to develop action packets equipping members, non members and consumers for grass roots politics at the local level. These packets will help one and all, to address bad legislation at the local level and assist those seeking to get state regulation of their trade. Members need to be made aware of pending regulation in their area through the Leg Alert system and through developing a network of local watch advocates from across the country. This benefit also needs to take on a higher profile through our Sweeping Trade Journal so members are well informed of government issues, how we can help, and what they need to be prepared to do.

A decision has not yet been made on the format of the November meeting and progress made during this meeting will determine if we meet in Indy or via teleconference.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the end of the month as we get ready for our next board meeting. We will be only seven months from our next convention and have much to accomplish in only a couple of days.

I look forward to hearing of the progress that has been made on the dash boarded issues of two plus months ago. Let's get ready to direct the future of NCSG.

Randy Brooks  
President NCSG