

NCSG Presidents Report May 2009

This report will include many of the same topics that my last report contained for the simple reason that we have had zero time with which to discuss any of these issues. With that said, we will be spending a significant amount of time during our planning session devoted to the logistics of our formal split with CSIA. We have many things to discuss with the larger group including the combination of both this board and that of the CSIA.

We will no doubt look deep into our financial position this week as well, identifying any areas that require immediate attention, as well as areas we can be proactive in heading off crisis before they appear.

It has now been over a year since the official split between the NCSG and the CSIA with regard to the bylaws of CSIA referencing NCSG control over their board and other issues. With that said, I feel that the NCSG is in some what of an identity crises. For many years, the NCSG had played the role of stability in the former marriage. Financial support provided by NCSG sweep members as well as supplier members is arguably the reason for the overall growth of the CSIA as we know it today. Defining the role the NCSG will play into the future is our currant undertaking. Certainly we will continue to provide access for our members to innovative new tools of the trade and education provided by the CSIA and others through our annual convention and tradeshow. This is and will remain our number one member benefit. Additionally though, we have an obligation to make this industry grow in overall numbers. We also have a responsibility to promote our members services through public awareness of our trade. There is no question that we provide progressive services to our members, our code of ethics demonstrates our encouragement of professionalism and ethical accountability. But it is that requirement to promote our members and the service we provide to the public that we must work harder on.

Member numbers continue to decline. The economy and all of its subsidiaries play a significant role in this decline. It's time for the membership committee to ramp up a game plan to reach new and former members. 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.

We must continue to 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 I 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, like my own, that are lacking in membership.

I would like to hear some input from all Directors concerning membership and what can be done to grow our numbers. We are not going to help the chimney sweep industry if the people entrusted by the members to guide the future of this trade don't participate in this process.

I expect all Directors to participate in the BOD list discussion concerning the consent agenda after it is received next week. 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. The economy is much like it was in the late seventies that drove so many of our founders into this trade. We have arguably the best opportunity in many years to market this industry to returning veterans, and those young people not attending colleges.

We have made a splash with a small presence using the new communication tools of the internet. 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. As we attend the regional events of this trade around the country, we must promote and advance this new media to that younger generation.

Progress has been made on the "August West" type start up kit project. But we have slowed down in communication and discussion about making this happen. I want this to happen and happen soon. Since the demise of August West, and the start up kit that they used 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.

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.

I'm looking forward to a very productive meeting.

Randy Brooks
NCSG President