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President's Message



My sincere thanks to the many members who attended S.T.E.P. Training in St. Pete. We had an excellent turnout of distributors, manufacturers and manufacturers rep firms, and in fact could have had more manufacturers if the training rooms had been available. Since this

was really the first time that we had Training without Purchasing, we asked the distributors and manufacturers to tailor the training to each company. For those that did that, the event was a huge success. For the companies that took "carte blanche" from the manufacturers, the consensus is that their salespeople learned, and one of the most important things they learned is, "next time we need to make the training session particular to OUR company's needs!"

We tried a few new things at this year's event that we will incorporate into the 2007 S.T.E.P. Training event. One thing that we did was we asked each salesperson to rate EACH and EVERY training session they participated in. We had more than 1975 surveys returned to the registration desk. Nancy and her staff made copies of them and sent one copy to the distributor firm and one copy to the manufacturer. We hope that these responses, with their comments, will be used by all to make the event even stronger. We feel that the responses, if used, will show the value of training to the distributors as well as show the manufacturers some of the strengths and weaknesses in their training program.

Another idea that was initially greeted with skepticism was the Beach Olympics held on Tuesday afternoon. We all saw it on the schedule and wondered what the heck it was going to be. As you can see from the pictures in this issue of the Journal, and on our website, the company that ran the Olympics got many involved and the games proved to be one of the highlights of the event!



Our sponsors for S.T.E.P. Training included Teleflex for the presentation by Dale Brown and Moeller, Sea-Dog and TaylorMade for the lunches. We were able to keep the costs reasonable thanks to the generous contributions of these firms.

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Registration information for the upcoming S.T.E.P. Purchasing at MAATS was recently mailed to NMDA members. Based on the early response, we anticipate one of the best attended S.T.E.P. Purchasing events ever! One of the true benefits of membership in NMDA, for all of our members, is the ability to participate in S.T.E.P. events. We encourage each of you to schedule your meetings, make your travel plans and join us for S.T.E.P. 2005 Purchasing at MAATS.



Most of the procedures put in place last year will remain the same. We ask each of you to make your appointments as soon as possible. *Your schedules must be sent to the NMDA office by April 20th. They can be sent via fax to 860.767.7932 or email to: executivedirector@nmdaonline.com.* We need your schedules to help NMMA not duplicate meetings during the MAATS portion of the event.

To register for S.T.E.P. you will have to go online to the NMMA/MAATS website, www.nmma.org/maats. Yes, this is an NMDA event, but the registration and payment is done through NMMA. You can register for either S.T.E.P. or MAATS or both. We have been assured that the website will be "pre-populated" with much of the information from previous years so you should not have to re-enter all of it. The website should be up and ready by the end of March.

The cost to attend S.T.E.P. is \$295 for each Distributor attendee (not company). If you are a manufacturer and will be attending S.T.E.P. Purchasing the cost is \$695 per company. You will be allowed up to four individuals for this registration fee. The \$695 also includes as many meetings as you can schedule during S.T.E.P. Manufacturer's Reps are \$175 each, with a separate registration fee if you will be attending MAATS. For everyone, the S.T.E.P. registration fee includes lunch on both days, the S.T.E.P. Supplier of the Year Awards reception on Monday and the opening MAATS reception on Tuesday.

You should have already received the manufacturer and distributor contact lists from the NMDA office, as well as the time sheets. Please remember it is *your* responsibility to schedule your S.T.E.P. appointments and you are *not* limited to the 30 minute blocks on the time sheets. If you did not receive them, or if you need additional copies, please contact Kathy or Nancy at 860.767.7898 or info@nmdaonline.com.

Just a few reminders:

1. S.T.E.P. schedules are due to Nancy at NMDA by April 20.
2. Registration for S.T.E.P. at MAATS should be available by the end of March.
3. Requests for MAATS buyer/supplier meetings will be accepted in early April, more information to follow.

The location was ideal, the weather less so. The sunshine was great but with a high of only 55 degrees for the whole week our idea of "warm and sunny"

was only partially met! The two hotels were truly within walking distance and offered different affordable housing for the event. We will be working with the hotel to see if we can get more training rooms for 2007 and perhaps better rooms than what was offered in Banyan Breezeway. They are more eager to work with us and have indicated they would love to have us back.

S.T.E.P. Purchasing at MAATS is right around the corner and information on setting up your S.T.E.P. appointments, and registering for S.T.E.P. is in the mail. If you have not received it please contact the NMDA office.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Las Vegas and wish you a warm, busy, dry Spring!

Robbie Vititow
V & V Marine Products

New Member Benefits!

At the recent Board meetings in St.Pete a couple of new benefits were discussed and approved for distribution with the membership. Our membership consists of companies of all sizes and in some cases (NMDA is a perfect example) there is not enough volume to generate any sizeable discounts. Using the "buying power" of NAW we can offer our members the following programs.

A credit card processing program that can potentially save you hundreds to thousands of dollars. We are aware of a couple of companies who have already switched and are realizing savings of more than \$2500/annually. One firm even anticipates saving more than \$10,000. A free analysis to help you compare the savings can be obtained by going to the NAW website www.naw.org and clicking on Cost Saving Programs on the left side of the screen. You can also call 800.297.3405 and identify yourself as a member of NMDA/NAW and they will fax you a form to fill out in order to get the comparison. A shipping program that includes discounts with DHL (air express and ground) of up to 25%, Yellow Transportation (LTL freight service) discounts of 52% or more, Menlo Worldwide (air freight delivery) discounts range from 20 to 45% and Roadway Express (LTL freight service) which has discounts of 52% or more. Information for these services can be obtained on the NAW website or by calling the Shipping Plus hotline at 1.800.MEMBERS.

Flex HSA (Health Savings Accounts) are also available through Flexible Benefit Service Corp. (FBSC) an insurance brokerage firm in IL. Contact them at 1.888.345.7990.

The last new benefit is not related to NAW but is one that has come about due to our members' asking for help with travel arrangements. We have been working with Travel Plus of NC and are pleased to announce a partnership with them for NMDA members. They can assist you with your professional and personal travel needs, as well as assist in meeting planning and more.

FOR SPECIFICS ON THE NMDA TRAVEL PLUS PROGRAM, PLEASE SEE THE INSERT IN THIS ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL.



The Supplier of the Year will once again be awarded during S.T.E.P. Purchasing at MAATS. During the recent Strategic Planning meeting in St. Pete Beach a group of both distributors and manufacturers, led by chairman Steve McKee, met to review the criteria and the weighting of each category.

They also had a few other suggestions that will be implemented this year including mailing out to each NMDA manufacturing member the ballot package that the distributors use to vote. In the past this was mailed out only to finalists. The manufacturers in the group suggested if it was mailed to all, some suppliers might find areas they are not as strong in and work towards improving these areas.

The schedule for the 2005 Supplier of the Year is as follows:

- March 28 First nomination ballot mailed to distributors asking them to nominate their "Top 10" in "Major" and "Other" categories
- April 15 Deadline for "Top 10" nomination ballots
- April 18 Follow up with distributors who have not sent in "Top 10" ballots
- May 4 2005 Supplier of the Year voting packages sent to distributor members
- May 20 Deadline for completed ballots to be returned to NMDA office
- July 18 Supplier of the Year Award presented at S.T.E.P. Purchasing
- July 27 Finalists will be mailed their voting results

FINALISTS WILL HAVE A SIGN TO POST IN THEIR BOOTH AT MAATS WHICH INDICATES THEY ARE A FINALIST IN THE NMDA SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR AWARD. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM PLEASE CONTACT STEVE MCKEE OF LORENZ & JONES OR NANCY IN THE NMDA OFFICE.

Cost Study

The NMDA Cost Study, done by Profit Planning Group of Colorado, is one of the true benefits of membership for our distributor members. The report, done by an outside, independent firm gives each participant an overview of the marine accessory industry as well as a company specific review. Other tools provided to the participants include an online "Toolkit" which allows them to plug in changes and see the impact on their profit.

The overview report is due to be sent to the NMDA office on or about April 1. The report will be duplicated and sent only to those distributors who initially sent in their company figures. Individual company reports will be sent on or about April 7 to each company who participated. If you have any questions Steve Pressman of Kellogg Marine, is the chair. A conference call will be scheduled for mid to late April to review the reports.



We have all been aware of the NMMA Grow Boating Initiative and have been following the activities associated with it. Like every other segment of the industry NMDA was asked to consider a donation above and beyond the special assessment paid as a part of our NMMA membership. The Board discussed the idea of the initiative and the value it would bring to each and every member of NMDA and voted to contribute \$50,000 to this campaign.

In a statement issued to the press it was noted that "distribution is a vital part of the recreational boating industry, and we believe all industry segments should play an active role in supporting the Grow Boating Initiative. ... the value of the Grow Boating campaign and the tremendous impact we feel it will have on the future success of boating encouraged our organization to throw as much financial support behind the program as possible."

NMMA President Thom Dammrich also stated "NMDA's contribution is very impressive and represents a significant portion of their annual budget. The association and its membership dug deep to demonstrate their commitment to Grow Boating, and it illustrates how all industry segments continue to cooperate to ensure that the Grow Boating campaign becomes a reality."

At the Miami Boat Show the Grow Boating campaign was launched. Each segment of the industry was invited to share their thoughts on the program as well as their ideas for ongoing funding. Robbie Vititow represented NMDA and did a great job sharing our thoughts about it, including the fact that unlike the engine manufacturers, there does not seem to be a logical source for ongoing funding.

One area of concern for that some non-manufacturers had about this program was the fact that up to now, all decisions have been made by the NMMA Board of Directors. As they were the ones initially funding this it was not inappropriate. Now with many other segments helping with the funding, questions on this continuing arose. NMMA was aware of these issues and they announced at the Miami Show the development of an outside board which will have representation from all segments of the industry and which will help direct the program into the future. *For more information on Grow Boating go to their website at www.growboating.org.*

Upcoming NMDA Events

2005

S.T.E.P. Purchasing at MAATS

July 18 & 19, 2005

Las Vegas Hilton

Las Vegas NV



2006

Strategic Planning

Mid/Late March Actual date & location to be determined. (To be held immediately preceding Executive Conference.)

Executive Conference

Mid/Late March Actual date & location to be determined.

S.T.E.P. Purchasing at MAATS

July 17 & 18, 2006

Las Vegas Hilton

Las Vegas NV

Fox Marine

Dealer Show

September 22, 2005

Location to be determined

Bell Industries Dealer Show

September 28 & 29, 2005

Kalahari Resort

Wisconsin Dells WI

C.C. Marine Distributors Dealer Show

October 2 & 3, 2005

International Centre

Mississauga ON Canada

Ellett Brothers

October 5 - 7, 2005

Ellett Facility

Chapin SC

Medart Marine Dealer Show

October 12 & 13, 2005

St. Charles Convention Center

St. Charles MO

Land 'N' Sea

October 23 - 26, 2005

Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza

Merrillville IN

Keller Marine Dealer Show

October 25 & 26, 2005

Radisson Valley Forge

Vita-Plate Dealer Show

November 2, 2005

Camp Perry ANG

Port Clinton OH

MESCO & Seacoast Dealer Show

42nd Annual Dealer Trade Show

November 2 & 3, 2005

Location to be determined

Marine 1One Dealer Show

November 7 & 8, 2005

Stardust Hotel

Las Vegas NV

Morgan Recreational Supply

November 9 & 10, 2005

Turning Stone Resort

Verona NY

Payne's Marine Supply Group

November 12 & 13, 2005

Victoria Conference Centre

Victoria, BC Canada

Kellogg Marine Supply Dealer Trade Show

November 16 - 18, 2005

Mohegan Sun Casino

Uncasville, CT

Coast Distribution Dealer Show

February 8 & 9, 2006

Rio Suites

Las Vegas NV

If your show is not listed here, please let us know when it is and we'll add it to the list.



Teaching us skills including how not to get popped!

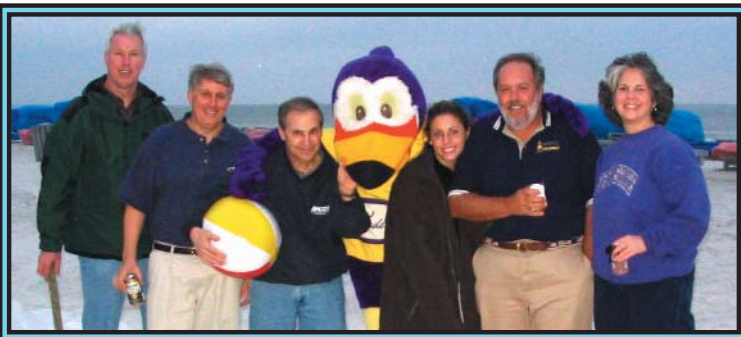
Strategic Planning

At the Strategic Planning Conference a lot of time was spent trying to determine the future of the Association and how we were going to meet the goals that we were setting. Unbeknownst to those who had registered, an event had been planned for Saturday night that was going to require teamwork and thinking out of the box. In keeping with the "water" theme and knowing who the attendees were, a boat building contest was held. Each group, which was set by the company that ran the program, was given a couple of sheets of cardboard, duct tape, a small square of plastic, a lifejacket, a paddle, blow up "swimmies", colored markers and a few other things.

What was learned was sometimes it doesn't matter what your background is, if you work together amazing results can occur!



The Winners or the "Wieners" as they were called.



Would you buy a boat designed by this crew?

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STEP 2005

Focus On
• Sales • Training
• Education • Purchasing

July 18 - 19, 2005
Las Vegas Hilton
Las Vegas, NV

Tentative Agenda for S.T.E.P. Purchasing & MAATS

This schedule is subject to change, updates can be found on the NMDA website.

MONDAY, JULY 18, 2005

- 8:00 AM to 11:55 AM S.T.E.P. Meetings in Distributor Suites
- Noon to 12:55 PM Lunch, provided as part of registration fee
- 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM S.T.E.P. Meetings continue
- 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM S.T.E.P. Reception with Supplier of the Year Award Presentation *(note change of time and venue)*

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2005

- 8:00 AM to 11:55 AM S.T.E.P. Meetings in Distributor Suites
- Noon to 12:55 PM Lunch, provided as part of registration fee
- 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM S.T.E.P. Meetings continue
- 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Opening MAATS Reception with Show Floor Preview (new this year)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2005

- 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM New Product Previews
- 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM Buyer-Supplier Meetings in Buyers' Suites
- 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM Lunch/Break
- 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM Show Floor Opens with on floor hospitality in the evening

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 2005

- 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM New Product Previews
- 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM Buyer-Supplier Meetings in Buyers' Suites
- 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Lunch/Break
- 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM Show Floor Open
- 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM MAATS Awards Reception

FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2005

- 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM New Product Previews
- 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM Buyer-Supplier Meetings in Buyers' Suites
- 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM Show Floor Open (Lunch/concession available on show floor)

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING S.T.E.P. PURCHASING PLEASE CONTACT NANCY CUERONI AT 860.767.7898. FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING MAATS BUYER MEETINGS CONTACT MELISSA SKOMEDAL AT 312.946.6281 OR KATHLEEN CLICKETT AT 312.946.6252. FOR INFORMATION ON EXHIBITING AT MAATS CONTACT JOANNE MILLER AT 312.946.6245.

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