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Get Answers to the Big Questions in Las Vegas

By Michael Riva



2009 has certainly proven to be a year of transition, confusion and uncertainty. The economic, political and global landscapes have all been shaken up. For some, things have not been as bad as anticipated. For others, it has been much worse. For everyone, there are still many questions that need to be answered in the months and years ahead.

Is unemployment going to continue to rise? Are the banks and financial institutions going to continue to strengthen, or is there some unforeseen disaster that looms on the horizon? What effect will the Obama Administration's bold initiatives have on the economy and the world?

When the SSA conference committee sat down to put together this year's SSA Fall Conference and Trade Show in Las Vegas, these issues were at the forefront of our mind. We also understood that amongst all this confusion and uncertainty there lies some great opportunity.

So, the committee set out to put together a program that would accomplish three goals. First: Unravel this confusion and uncertainty and identify the pitfalls ahead. Second: Identify where the opportunities lie within the self storage industry. Third: Provide educational programs to help you run your business more efficiently.

To help us understand what is happening with the capital markets and how this is directly affecting the self storage industry, we added the Self Storage Economic Summit. This program will be on Wednesday, and will include panels of capital market experts, self storage brokers, and self storage operators. These three panels will discuss how the capital markets are doing and where they are headed, what effect this is having on current self storage deals, and what some of the industry's leaders are preparing for.

Thursday will start with our keynote speaker, David Meerman Scott, who discuss how to use the Internet and online media to reach your customers directly. This will be followed up by an interactive audience focus group using handheld voting devices—sure to be an eye-opening education for all who attend.

The second day includes the Foundation Forum, with journalist and author Bob Woodward focusing on “the outlook of the new administration.” Bob will give us his expert insight into what the Obama Administration has accomplished so far and how it will shape the political landscape in the years to come.

The program will close Saturday with a panel discussion on “solarizing your facility.” The panel will talk about how solar works, what systems are available, how to sell your electricity back, rebates and incentive programs, financing and the economic benefits. It is a true “how to” seminar.

Throughout the program we will have educational sessions in marketing, including Internet 101 and 102; how to effectively brand your facilities; and how to market to the rising Hispanic population. There will also be legal sessions on customer privacy regulations, as well as many other topics.

We all have a lot of big decisions to make this year. The SSA hopes that you will make the decision to join us this fall in Las Vegas to learn, to network, and hopefully to gain a better perspective that will help you with your future business decisions. ❖