



# Joel Keaton Presents: Money Saving Ideas for Managers

By Gary Camp

If you've attended before, you know that SSA conventions are always chock-full of information covering all-things-self-storage. The upcoming September 10–12 convention won't be any different and is sure to deliver an abundance of useful information. One presentation worth putting on your 'must-attend' list will take place on Friday, September 11 from 8:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Joel Keaton, vice president of operations for United Stor-all Management, LLC, will present "Money Saving Ideas for Managers." At a time when the economy has caused everyone to tighten their belts, self storage owners must do the same.

Keaton has been with United Stor-all Management, based in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, since November 2006. He is responsible for the day-to-day property operations of all company-owned and third-party-owned facilities, which includes managing the operational performance of the properties, overseeing management personnel and capital improvements.

Prior to joining United Stor-all Management, Keaton was a senior director in operations with Extra Space Storage and Storage USA since 1993. One of his primary responsibilities was managing the transition team that coordinated the operational transfer of 450 properties when Extra Space Storage acquired Storage USA in 2005. His previous responsibilities included all operations reporting, operations policies and procedures, and he was intimately involved in the proprietary, Internet-based facility and nationwide call center operating system developed by Storage USA.

## You'll Get Helpful Tips

Owners, regional supervisors and on-site managers will take away helpful tips from Keaton's presentation. Being aware of lots of small items can add up to big overall savings. Keaton will discuss tips to help you find your "Energy Vampires"—by identifying and eliminating items that unnecessarily increase your energy costs. Other topics will include ways to reduce costs on preventive maintenance, service contracts and bundled services, and administrative and management costs.

"The key is knowing what the different types of items are that cost a lot of money to operate," says Keaton. "LCD and plasma TVs that people leave on 24 hours a day comprise

a big one. You're reducing the life of the products and driving up your expenses. You're also increasing your security risks," he says.

"Energy vampires" topics will include: *HVAC*—identify various HVAC systems and estimated usage; *lighting*—identify what types of lighting is in use, and be aware of the usage of the various items; *electronic equipment*—how much energy it takes to operate LCD and plasma TVs, gates, and elevators; *water*—identifying water leaks quickly, and tips to increase sewage savings.

Day-to-day activities at a self storage facility will be discussed, with a focus on reducing costs. Operations and preventive maintenance topics will include: *programmable thermostats*—lock boxes for thermostats, maintaining summer and winter temperatures consistently to create big savings, and regulating temperatures after business hours; *filters*—monthly maintenance is a do-it-yourself task for managers; *light bulbs*—compact fluorescent vs. incandescent; *sensors* and *timers*; *doors*—automatic and roll-up.

Service contracts are necessary, but how does what you are paying compare to the norm? These discussion topics will provide background on industry standards, and give attendees insight into what others are paying for standard services and maintenance of their facilities.

A discussion on a variety of *service contracts* will include: HVAC and elevator contracts—typical contracts and what services are provided; fire control, sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers—typical contracts and what services are provided; landscaping service agreements, including snow removal—recommended services and types of contracts; cable vs. phone company—pros and cons of both, and possible bundling options to reduce costs.

There is a cost of doing business associated with running any business, and that certainly is not lost on the self storage industry. *Administrative and management topics* will include: office supplies, computer equipment and service; self storage operating software—local and Internet-based options, and types of charges; postage savings; incentives that drive rental revenue and reduce expenses.

After his presentation, Keaton will take questions from the audience. Don't miss this chance to add more tools to your self storage arsenal, while learning some tips to help keep costs down in a difficult economy. ❖