

# Teamwork

Michael T. Scanlon, Jr. – SSA President & CEO



“What have you done for me lately?” That is a question that is hard-wired into the brain of each and every trade association executive. If you cannot answer that question during the average elevator ride with a member, I promise you that both your organization and your executive are in trouble.

I look forward to that question. My problem lately is that I can't get all the accomplishments into the typical 30-second elevator ride. So much is happening and so much is getting done. And, it's getting done with a great deal of teamwork.

I take my advice on teamwork from a fellow named Red Auerbach of the Boston Celtics. When asked why he benched his number one star player, he said: “They say you have to use your first-best player, but I found out you win with the five that fit together best.” Maybe that's why LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers didn't go all the way this year?

When I speak of getting things done, I am referring to the great results we are getting through working closely with our affiliated state associations. Five years ago, the SSA Board decided to revitalize the relationships with the self storage state associations. To that end, the SSA created the Affiliated Associations Council (AAC) which meets at least twice each year to share ideas, best practices, legislative tactics and funds to support lobbying activities. The results have been nothing short of phenomenal.

Since we organized the AAC team we have won 17 of 20 legislative battles at the state level to improve and streamline state lien laws, to fight sales taxes on self storage, to win and clarify the right of owner-operators to offer tenant insurance, and to codify reasonable late fees for self storage. Our victory margins have been overwhelming in most instances.

The Self Storage Association (SSA) has worked with the largest companies in our industry to raise funding for these important state legislative efforts. I want to thank Public Storage, Extra Space Storage, U-Haul International, U-Store-It, and Sovran Self Storage for their participation in raising funds to help the national SSA get the ball rolling. The SSA provides leadership in the form of developing model laws and appropriate legislative language, testimony, lobbying support and whatever else is asked of us. The state associations provide the local lobbying activities—the shoe leather of walking door-to-door at the state capitals to get bills passed that improve the lot of all self storage owner-operators, small and large. Now that I what I call excellent teamwork.

It's not all about lobbying. We are working to improve industry data, networking, communications, educational programming, research, technology, membership development and legal resources—in addition to the excellent lobbying.

Our industry can be quite proud that we are all working together for the betterment of all—small and large. Some are providing funds, some are providing expertise, some are calling directly on legislators. When we streamline an outdated lien law to do away with registered mail notifications and other onerous provisions in law written 25–30–35 years ago, we are saving dollars at each and every facility—no matter the size.

Teamwork. Come to Las Vegas this September 1–2–3 and learn all about the teamwork that's taking place and all about “what we've done for you lately.” ❖

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