

# A Collective “Win”

By Tracy Taylor – Chairman, SSA Board of Directors

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There is no question that the last few years have been the toughest for the Self Storage Association in more than a decade. Most observers would say that this has been the most difficult period for the country since World War II. However the Association, thanks to the forethought, planning and follow-through of our board and staff, was prepared to weather this difficult period and continue to work to improve the industry. It was not without some very tough choices, similar to those many of you have had to make in your businesses.

Association management, whatever the industry may be, is the careful orchestration of many business areas. The fact that we're nonprofit is irrelevant; we still face the same economic obstacles as everyone else out there. Our challenge as a board has been finding the right mix of these "association businesses" needed for our industry and assigning the right assets to meet these challenges. The assets I speak of take the form of SSA employees, volunteers and the tools at our disposal.

We recognize that the board is the custodian of your dollars and as such we have a great responsibility do our best with the support that you provide. Your Association should educate its members to help them become more successful; it should create opportunities for you to meet and network with like-minded professionals; it should represent the industry in the face of government threats; and it should do its best to put forth a positive image for self storage as a whole.

These are all obtainable goals; however, they are made more difficult when the surrounding dynamics are not in the hands of the Association itself. The economy, politics and crimes involving self storage tenants are just some examples of impediments that we face as an industry, but cannot always control. We may not always achieve the ideal objectives, but if we, as a collective, were not here to try, the industry would suffer.

It is during periods such as this that we need each other more than any other. Ironically, during a down cycle in the economy such as this you see some self storage operators cut back on things such as attending conferences or participating in the Association. But if you were at any of our recent economic summits, you probably got a leg up on your competitors who were not there. And a leg up is what everyone is looking for to survive and hopefully thrive. It is also a question of fairness in that we all should individually be supporting those goals that can only be accomplished together.

SSA President & CEO Mike Scanlon, along with his very able staff, have done a terrific job of focusing on the core areas of our industry's needs. They have been helped by a committed board of directors whose advice has been priceless during my tenure. I thank all of them, including your incoming chairman Mike Riva who will bring a fresh spirit and a lot of hard work to the organization.

Finally, I'd like to thank you all for your interest and continued support of the SSA. This Association is greater than the sum of its parts; and its parts are pretty impressive! ❖