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# Progress for the Industry

By Michael Riva, SSA Chairman



2009 and 2010 can only be described as a free fall for just about every association in the country, and SSA was not left behind. We saw a big drop in membership in the New Member category as fewer and fewer people got involved in the industry. We also saw a big drop in vendor members as many left the business; and there was somewhat of a decline in our conference attendance as well. Budgets were tightened in our industry and in our related sectors.

With the end of 2011 just around the corner it seems as though there is no greater certainty about our economy than there was 12 months ago when I was preparing to take over as chairman. The debt and financial issues around the world still seem very fragile, and I don't think any of us could have foreseen the major drop in employment. That being said, today I can honestly say that the future of the SSA is very encouraging. With the hard work of Mike Scanlon and his staff, along with the determination and direction of the board, your association is once again positioned for growth and prepared to strengthen, educate and protect the self storage industry.

While the SSA has many initiatives and goals, there are three main areas that have helped to put us on the track for growth.

First, we have seen and will continue to see a greater commitment from the SSA, its larger members and the state associations in the area of legislation and regulation. What this program is doing for our industry cannot be overstated. Not only have these initiatives saved the industry over \$10,000,000 a year in expenses, it has strengthened and protected those of us who have made an investment in self storage far beyond any quantifiable dollar amount.

Second, there have been some transitions in our education and conference departments that we feel will bring us to the next level of professional development within our industry. The SSA is on a path to utilize new technology to create new formats of learning within our industry and new ways to deliver that education to owners, investors and managers. Over the next couple of years SSA members will see a much greater value in the education being offered.

The last area in which the SSA is growing is in state association management and the creation of charter associations where no state association exists. An association's strength is based not only on the number of members, but on the diversity and representation of those members. The success of the state associations is vital to the overall strength of the SSA—and ultimately our industry. Without strong, active state partners, our legislative initiatives would be much more difficult to achieve. Our goal is to help all states that have an association succeed, and that those associations are full of active participants in our industry.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow board members for their time and dedication to the SSA and self storage industry. I would especially like to thank Tracy Taylor who will be leaving the board at the end of the year. Tracy's service and leadership to the SSA and industry truly went above and beyond.

I would finally like to thank the SSA membership for caring enough about your industry to participate and for helping us, collectively, make a positive difference. ❖