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# SSA Takes the Checkered Flag

The 2011 SSA Spring Conference & Trade Show was held at the Charlotte Convention Center April 5–7 with some 1,000 attendees making it one of the most successful spring conferences in recent years. The Self Storage Association has adjusted its spring conference model to reflect a more condensed program providing great networking opportunities, a busy tradeshow, and more select breakout sessions geared towards varied self storage interests. Highlights of the week included:

- **Affiliated Associations Counsel (AAC):** With 25 representatives of more than 15 states in attendance, the AAC meeting provided a forum for industry executives to consider the legislative advances in different state capitals around the country.
- **Economic Summit:** Economist Christopher Thornberg was joined by Wall Street analysts as they considered the continued economic recovery. Thornberg noted that the country has actually been out of the recession for seven quarters, but progress is flat-to-slow.
- **Joe Gibbs:** The NFL Hall of Famer and NASCAR team owner riveted audiences with stories from his days at the helm of the Washington Redskins when he took the team to four Super Bowls, winning three of them. Gibbs noted it was those players' dedication to winning that created their success, not just him. "You'd have thought Riggins was a slacker and a clown," he said. "But he was one of the most committed people I've ever come across. When I needed a yard, I sent in John... and you know what? He made me famous."

Gibbs said that the long hours he put in preparing his teams paid off, but he could never get back all those times he missed at home with this family. Today his son helps run his thriving NASCAR business, as he focuses on his family more than ever before, including his grandson Taylor who has been battling cancer for several years. "Never lose sight that your faith comes first, then your family, then your profession," he said.

- **NASCAR Hall of Fame:** Nothing says Charlotte like NASCAR. The leading teams are based in the region, as are its headquarters and the state-of-the-art NASCAR Hall of Fame. Hundreds of conference attendees packed the facility for an evening of networking and fun. Teams of self storage professionals joined pit crews and took turns racing in lifelike simulators, leaving with a new appreciation for the nation's fastest growing sport. ❖