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You Can Come Out Now. Hopefully, the Worst is Over.

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



When Vince Lombardi took over as head coach of the Green Bay Packers in 1959, he noted that the previous season the team had won just one game, tied one and lost 10. At his first practice session he told the players: "You are going to have confidence in me and enthusiasm for my system. From here on, I want you to think of only three things, your home, your religion, and the Green Bay Packers. I want enthusiasm to take a hold of you."

I think now is the appropriate time for a self storage industry "pep talk."

We've all hunkered down for the last 14 bleak months since Wall Street hit the fan. We've all cut back in many ways. It's affected each of us. Here at the SSA we've had to let a few good employees go; we've moved to smaller offices. And, as Jefferson Shreve of Indiana likes to say, "we have managed to the cycle." I know from hundreds of conversations since September 2008 that owner/operators across the nation have done the same.

In recent weeks, however, I've noticed a slow emergence of more enthusiasm among CEOs for doing business—a desire to kick-start things in 2010—an impatience for things to get back to some sense of normalcy. I believe what is happening is exactly what we need: the re-emergence of "enthusiasm."

Immediately after that "pep talk" to his Packers team, Coach Lombardi called a quick on-the-field meeting of all his assistant coaches. The one thing that they all remember from that impromptu huddle was when Lombardi barked: "If each and every one of you is not fired with enthusiasm, you will be *fired with enthusiasm.*"

As we approach the New Year, and as you make your plans and budgets for 2010, it is time to think about getting re-involved. We face some serious issues, especially in the credit markets and legislative arena (sales taxes on self storage, lien law improvements, etc.). We need to look up from the dismal spreadsheets and cast one eye on the industry horizon.

Operators who attended the SSA Economic Summit in September benefited from a "real-time" briefing from the industry's experts. These professionals shared the creative strategies needed to help operators stick their heads out into the sunshine and re-emerge. If you missed it, consider getting back to attending industry meetings and trade shows, telling your key people that it's okay to go online or to attend SSA education and training sessions. Make your plans to attend SSA's Winter Executive Ski Workshop at Jackson Hole, Wyoming (January 25–28), or to attend SSA's all-new program at the Self Storage Industry Summit at The Broadmoor Resort at Colorado Springs, Colorado (April 18–20)—it's our 35th Anniversary meeting—a reminder that life does go on despite near-term setbacks.

SSA members: Get your enthusiasm back. It's contagious. You can start an epidemic.

See you soon at an SSA meeting. Put these important meetings on your new 2010 calendar right now. You can come out now. Hopefully, the worst is over. ❖