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Friends and More

By Tracy Taylor – SSA Board Chairman



I have many friends in this industry and each year I look forward to the SSA Fall Conference & Trade Show because often it's the only time I see these folks. If this is one of your first events with us, make a note of who you meet. You will be surprised, a number of years later, how many of these "competitors" have become both business associates and friends.

For me, realizing true conference benefits did not come easily and, at first, those benefits didn't come much at all.

First instincts in business are generally very competitive—and this is healthy. But the atmosphere of cooperation and the sharing of ideas through this Association and my state nonprofit has been a very important to me over the years and I am thankful for having been exposed to these great experiences.

This year I am particularly excited to see two wonderful inductees to the Self Storage Hall of Fame. Both Bill Kenney and Steve Wilson are fixtures at our conferences, together having dedicated more than 50 combined years to this organization's development.

This year is the sixth that we have inducted the industry's pioneers into our Hall of Fame, and these two very generous individuals surely fit into this select group of men and women. I hope if you see Bill and Steve at Caesars Palace during our conference you will join me in congratulating them.

The friendships that I've made here are priceless personally; the education I have received has been priceless professionally. Some might call it "information overload," but I don't think there can be too much information.

Pay attention to the new products or services being offered from the vendor members of the SSA. Chances are, one or two of them will have a product or service that will help you operate your business more effectively. I have been around a long time, but I can tell you that I have not seen or thought of everything. Nowhere will you see gathered more industry experts who are working daily to find better ways to operate self storage.

I've often found that the most important part of attending a convention is what happens when you get home. SSA conferences are an investment in your professional growth and in your businesses. As with any business investment, it's important to not only initiate the venture, but to follow up and make the most out of it. When the conference is over, review your business needs and match them up to all of the data you've collected.

Don't just stuff the business cards that you've collected into some drawer. Organize them, review them and think about what those contacts can do for you. Often during a trade show or reception, there is so much happening that you don't have time right then to explore what can be gained by working with these talented professionals.

Finally, on a personal note, I hope if you see me at the conference, you will stop to say hello. As the chairman of the Association, I am here to represent all of you. Sharing your ideas will help us grow as an organization; and meeting *you* will add to the many friends I've come to know through the SSA. ❖