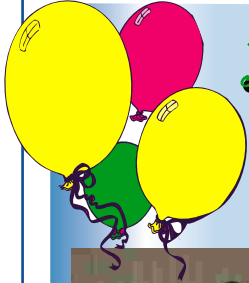




FRVTA news

MONTHLY NEWS CONCERNING FLORIDA'S RECREATION VEHICLE INDUSTRY



NO CLOWNING AROUND!

at FRVTA's 31st Annual Convention...

Florida Governor Rick Scott Makes Surprise Visit!



With high hopes for the coming selling season and anticipating a better economy, over 250 members gathered for the 31st Annual FRVTA Convention at the wonderful Harbor Beach Marriott in Fort Lauderdale Beach, September 8-11.

This year's annual confab continued FRVTA's nationally known emphasis on education, with attention placed on national industry trends and Florida's political climate. It was a weekend of learning that will provide attendees with the information needed to rise to the big top of the RV business.

"The last several years have been tough on the RV Industry and we recognize that," explained FRVTA Executive Director Lance Wilson. "That's why we stress the importance of education at our conventions so members are able to maneuver their businesses in response to changing market conditions and trends."

This national reputation for industry education and excellence was one of the reasons this year's convention received a surprise visit from Florida Gov. Rick Scott. More on this later.

Following up on last year's successful industry outlook panel, the FRVTA assembled representatives from all aspects of the RV Industry to enlighten members on what they see happening to their particular business segment. It demonstrated that our industry and it's success is truly dependent upon each segment performing at an optimum level.

Besides education, attendees had the chance to relax and enjoy themselves. And, as Lance said, FRVTA members are certainly known for enjoying themselves at conventions!

Evening with the "Come One, Come All" Welcome Reception, members made their way along the beach front that led to an ocean view ballroom featuring a

variety of hors d'oeuvres and cocktails all sponsored by Priority One Financial Services and Reed Brothers Insurance Group. It was a fun way to become reacquainted with old friends and meet new ones.

Of course, the "It's A Circus" Hospitality Room was open into the night for further fun and merriment!

FRIDAY MORNING SESSIONS

Beginning with the "Bee On Time," Executive Director Lance Wilson officially opened the 31st Annual FRVTA Convention. Congratulations to Simone Santangelo of RV World Nokomis and Charlotte LaPinta of Florida RV Locators, both of whom won \$50 each, and to Andrea Blackmon of Camping Connection who won \$100. Great way to start the weekend!

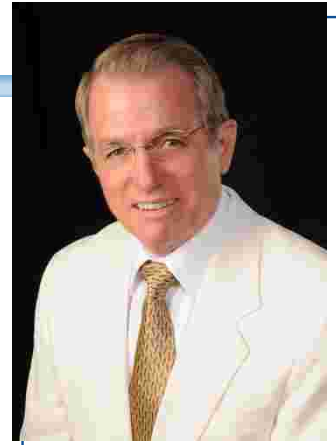
Lance started the meeting by thanking all convention sponsors for their support and faith in Florida's RV Industry. "It's their support that makes it possible for us to stay at outstanding facilities like this," he emphasized.



Florida Governor Scott, Senate President Haridopolos, FRVTA Executive Director Wilson and FRVTA Chairman Davis exchange views at the convention.

The FRVTA
Executive Officers
and State Staff
Thank You
for Attending
the
31st Annual
FRVTA Convention!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A helping hand.

A few weeks ago, my wife and I visited our son, Chris, in Ithaca NY where he teaches at Cornell University. He recently has been doing some long distance bike riding (for his health) and suggested I join him and his bike-riding friends for a short ride (8-10 miles) around scenic Ithaca. One of these friends, Mark, had a bike I could use. My wife reminded me that Chris, ever the teacher, would be pushing the distance. I agreed, but I really had more concern about the hilly terrain - not something I generally experience in Florida.

So, two days later, we met early in the morning for this ride. It was clear from the beginning that the real pro in this group was Mark. The bike he was lending me was not new, but it was very light, had more gears than spokes, and looked impressive and expensive. He made a few adjustments to the bike, gave me a few instructions, took me for a few turns around the parking lot and then we were off.

Five miles into the ride I felt I was doing quite well. I had listened to Mark and left the front sprocket alone using only the 30 or so gears on the rear sprocket. At this point I was keeping up - even ascending the hills. I was becoming a little suspicious of Chris' mileage estimate, but otherwise I was enjoying myself.

Ten miles into the ride I knew Chris had done me in, but I was still keeping up. The great thing about hills is the downside. You can coast at 30 plus miles per hour, enjoy the scenery and get rested for the next one. Then Mark announced we were heading back to town. Great, I thought, I'm going to make it!

Now, as you know, there are different types of hills. Some are steep and short, and some are hardly steep at all, but long. As we headed back, it was on one of this latter kind that I began to feel less confident about finishing. Chris was ahead telling me the crest was just a little further, but I did not believe him.

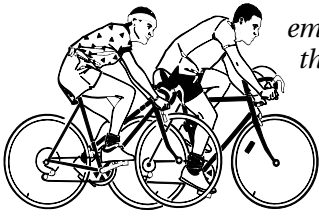
I was exhausted, and ready to dismount and finish this ascent on foot when suddenly Mark was riding right beside me, telling me he was going to give me a little push. He reached across and placed his hand on my back, and suddenly I could pedal with almost no effort. I could hardly even feel his hand on my back. Then he pushed me ahead of him and I pedaled by myself for a short time. Soon he was beside me again repeating the slight push and shove. With the crest just shortly ahead (Chris had been telling the truth!) I was able to make it.

After that hill there were others that followed, but they did not create any real issue for me. We finished our 23-mile-ride and I was feeling great. I would have felt great the next day as well were it not for the celebration at the beer garden - so much for the health benefits.

I have been thinking about this ride, the moment that I was going to stop and how it actually ended. I have been thinking about how lofty goals (Chris) and a little expert help (Mark) impacted the outcome. I have been thinking about how I might apply this lesson to my business and my life. We all know the benefit of formulating goals and writing them down. Do we know the part about giving them a little stretch? And how many times would just a small push help us get there? Do we stop? Or settle for less? Where might a small push come from?

In our businesses now, we need to stay focused on our goals. When we begin running out of steam or when reaching that destination looks impossible, we need to keep our eyes and ears open for that extra push. It could be right beside you - a colleague, a friend, an employee, a business contact, a training seminar - or it might require a little research to find it. In fact, my experience has been that this has been one of the most positive aspects of this Association - the willingness to share ideas, help each other and work together.

We should also stay aware of our ability to provide that "push - shove" from our own expertise and our own resources to those in our care. Some of our

PRESIDENT'S LETTER...
continued from page 2


employees, for example, may need a little help. Even with limited financial assistance, we can be sure they have the training needed to perform their jobs with excellence and ultimately reach their highest potential. You might consider the new Career Ladder launching in October that promises valuable training for many of our personnel.

I still wonder how Mark could push me and balance his bike. I have been riding a bike my whole life, yet I couldn't let go of those handle bars. But he is an expert long distance bike rider, a pro. He may not, however, be an expert in marketing an RV. Know who is pushing you, but be open to the unexpected. I am also always amazed at how much more you can accomplish when your leader encourages you, like Chris - ever the teacher. I am thinking the crest is not too far ahead now. . .

LARRY SCHAFFER
FRVTA President

CONVENTION...
continued from page 1

FRVTA President Larry Schaffer then took the podium. Welcoming the membership to the convention, Larry led all in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. While the audience was still standing, Pam Giordano of Circle G Family Benefits sang a moving rendition of our nation's national anthem.

Next, led by Fritzzy the Clown, the FRVTA Lady Staffers came running into the hall throwing popcorn and peanuts at the audience. Lance took this lighthearted moment to introduce each staff member to attendees, praising them for all their hard work, not only for the convention, but throughout the year on the many Association-sponsored shows and events, all of which makes the FRVTA the envy of other RV-related associations.

He then called FRVTA President Schaffer and FRVTA Chairman Donnie Davis to assist in presenting thank you plaques to the many convention sponsors.

Lance then invited "RV Industry Panel" participants to come to the dais. Each of the seven partakers represented a different aspect of the RV Industry and shared their views on what they see happening over the coming selling season.

Rick Compton, Senior Vice President and General Manager of BB&T's Recreational Lending Division in North Carolina and a longtime FRVTA convention attendee, thought this next year would be a bellwether for all businesses since it would be an election year. Additionally, Rick believes high fuel prices will make 2012 a challenging year, but he nevertheless is expecting slow and steady growth.

RVDA President Mike Molino was up next. He believes these past several years have been among the roughest he's ever seen due to the uncertainty of the economy. With some economic certainty, he thinks consumers would feel more comfortable spending money. "It was a credit problem earlier, now we're into a credibility problem," he exclaimed. Not to

be too downbeat, Mike did say that RVs are being used, just not being sold as readily as needed. Nationally, he said the industry is still losing dealers either through closure or consolidation. And, while retail sales aren't currently pretty, he does expect things to stabilize and improve following the 2012 presidential elections.

Martin Street, Stag-Parkway's Chief Operating Officer and next presenter, joined his company in May 2008 just as the Great Recession was firmly taking hold of the nation. Unlike many retailers, his business was going great through the first quarter, but slowed dramatically once April hit. He attributes much of this to the weather extremes the nation suffered this past spring that reduced customer traffic. Sales picked up however, once

July and vacation season started. Saying it's hard to predict future sales activity, Martin believes 2012 will be flat due to the uncertain presidential elections and the European economic problems that affect the stock market. Citing a book on the rise and fall of the Atlantic & Pacific (A&P) grocery chain, Martin likened the RV Industry to this formerly major retail success story that initially

revolutionized how groceries were bought, but ultimately failed to change as buyers' habits changed. "Consumers are using the internet to price compare," he said so we must offer items to distinguish ourselves from competitors. Citing personal service as a winning strategy, Martin believes the RV Industry should stress the positives the industry offers consumers in order to drive

sales changes.

FLARVC President Bobby Cornwell was the next panel participant. Saying that "flat is the new up," Bobby said most of his RV Park and Campground members are stable. However, a big change in his industry is the increased presence of corporate park ownership versus the traditional "mom & pop" ownership. "I'm also seeing increased demand for tent and park model camping, probably as a result of the economy," he said. Saying "buddy sites" are increasing in popularity within campgrounds, Bobby believes parks are seeing more



RV Industry Panel



campers in their 40s, which is down from previous years when campers in their 60s dominated. Additionally, long weekend trips with reservations made at the last minute are more likely. Campgrounds have responded to all this by upgrading their sites with 50 amp service and a variety of high-end amenities.

Mark Schroeder, Senior Executive/Credit Products Manager of the Bank of America Merrill Lynch, spoke next. Giving members a comprehensive overview on commercial RV lending, the loan process and what's needed/required to obtain a commercial loan, Mark said credit consideration is based on three years of business and personal tax returns, audited business statements and inventory aging reports, among other items needed. Good capitalization is a must, he stressed. "Avoid high leverage in your business to remain flexible," he said. "High liquidity and good cash flow are important to making sure the dealership is strong and able to pay bills adequately," he explained.

Up next was Winnebago Industries' Bob Olson. As Co-Chairman of the Go RVing Coalition, Bob praised the national Go RVing marketing campaign as a way to increase physical activity, which in turn promotes a healthy lifestyle. He said that thus far the campaign, targeting 30 to 64 year-old-adults, had achieved 2.4 billion impressions nationally. Bob also informed members about the new "Away" marketing campaign that will stress the affordable travel aspects of RVing for families. Three new TV spots will be unveiled at this year's National RV Show in Louisville and are scheduled to begin airing in 2012. "This new campaign will keep the RV Lifestyle in front of American consumers," he detailed.

RVIA President Richard Coon spoke on the state of RV Manufacturing. Saying the number of RVs built dropped 60 percent from 2006 at 386,000 to 166,000 in 2009, the RV Industry saw the largest increase ever in 2010, rising to 242,000 units. Richard estimated that 2011 would see 247,000 units built. Likewise, he said RVIA's membership has changed as well, dropping 45 percent from 124 in 2006 to 68 now. Richard also discussed the problems concerning economic and political uncertainty and how it has affected consumer sentiment. But, he remains positive saying that due to pent-up demand for our products and election year efforts to "juice" up the economy that 2012 may not be all that bad. He also exhorted dealers to push their technicians toward certification via the new "RV Career Ladder." One major issue Richard said RVIA is carefully monitoring is government efforts to increase the CAFE standards for trucks up to an average of 35 miles per gallon. "Since medium and heavy duty trucks are used as RV tow vehicles, this has the potential to have a major impact on the RV Industry," he explained. Richard also announced that the 2nd Annual RV World Conference would take place in Tampa January 17-20, 2013 at which he expects speakers from throughout the world to present their views and opinions on RVing. He ended by saying he hoped the conference would produce "world standards" for RV Manufacturing as the lifestyle's appeal grows globally.

After this enlightening session and a short break, FRVTA's

Training Director Jim Carr explained the new RV Technician Certification Career Ladder mentioned by Richard Coon. "This will change the way techs receive their training that leads to master certification," he said. The new system flows from Technician Certification Candidate to Registered Technician to Certified Technician to Master Certified Technician. Upon achieving Master status, the technician will have been trained in bodywork, chassis work, electrical systems, appliances and plumbing. Jim also stressed that any tech enrolled in the program BEFORE October 1, 2011 would be eligible for the old certified/master technician test. Afterwards, the new testing rules will apply. Saying the new system has been designed as a tech recruitment tool to overcome an aging tech population, Jim stressed that "by increasing professionalism we hope to increase tech retention rates and overall profitability."

FRVTA General Council Marc Dunbar took the stage and introduced this year's Legislative Roundtable: Sen. Elynn Bogdanoff, District 25; Florida Senate President Sen. Mike Haridopolos, District 26; Rep. Rich Glorioso, District 62; and newly elected Rep. George Moraitis, District 91.

Praising the assembled panel for outstanding service and leadership to Florida, Marc asked each member to give a brief update/outlook as to what they see happening in the coming months:

Sen. Haridopolos, a great friend of Florida's RV Industry, spoke first saying that Florida was one of only a few U.S. states to retain it's AAA bonding rate this past year based on a balanced budget and no fee or tax increases, all of which enabled Florida to be seen as stable and financially secure. He also praised newly elected Florida Gov. Rick Scott for running government like a business.

Rep. Glorioso, a longtime key supporter of Florida's RV Industry, described balancing Florida's budget this year as "not fun" due to

the hard choices necessary, but he worked hard to consolidate government functions and regulations thereby reducing costs. Unfortunately, Rep. Glorioso's work on our behalf is ending since he is being "term-limited out" and retiring after this year.

As a newbie, Rep. Moraitis reviewed his experiences working in the Florida House and how House leaders operated during this past Session.

Sen. Bogdanoff, who's also attended previous FRVTA conventions, said that as a former House member she now views Florida as neither a "blue" or "red" state but more "purple" as compromises are needed to get the people's work done. Calling this year's constitutionally-mandated redistricting one of the biggest challenges ever, Sen. Bogdanoff believed the two recently passed Florida constitutional amendments dealing with redistricting would toss the whole process to the courts.

After these in-depth and detailed presentations, the membership adjourned to play in the "Clownin' Around" Golf Tournament or the "High Wire" Fishing Boat Trip, or just relax in the resort's pool and/or oceanfront beach.



FRIDAY EVENING COSTUME PARTY

Of course, one thing everyone looked forward to was the Friday evening costume/dinner party. The "Under The Big Top" extravaganza encouraged attendees to come dressed in their favorite circus-themed outfit. Clowns, ringmasters, strong men and bearded ladies pranced throughout the evening while feasting on a variety of circus dinner fare.

Congratulations to Dan Wylie, Larry Peter, John Weatherford and Mark Beecher who won this year's annual golf tournament. Also to Larry Peter of General RV for the longest drive and to Dan Wylie of Dream RV for the closest to the pin shot.

Cheers also go to those who won this year's costume contest: Ring Master Paul Carey of BB&T Bank, Clown Karen Clark of Great Times RVs and to Jane and Christopher Copley of Copley's RV Center.

Dancing, great food, drinks, deejay and a variety of carnival midway games of skill all made for a tremendous time.

Afterwards, convention-goers left for the "It's A Circus" Hospitality Room where the merrymaking continued.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

This is where the real educational core of the convention began bright and early at 8:30 following a continental breakfast sponsored by RVM Promotions. The "Bee On Time" winners were Stephen Dross of Orlando RV Mobile Repairs and Dan Wylie of Dream RV who each won \$50, and Lori Lara of Florida Outdoors who won \$100. Congratulations!

After Lance again thanked all sponsors for their much-appreciated contributions during this tough economy, he reviewed the various seminars arranged for the morning and dismissed the membership.

This year's Breakout Sessions featured a variety of topics of interest to all in the RV Industry: IRS Updates by Chris Merrill of the Internal Revenue Service; an overview of the Florida Dealer Manufacturer Agreement by FRVTA General Counsel Marc Dunbar; Dealer Compliance issues by Allen Monello from AICE; Making Parts Departments More Profitable by Val Byrd of Stag-Parkway; Trends in Florida by Tom Walworth of Statistical Surveys; and RV Sales and Consumer Decisions by John Mancinelli of Mancinelli Consulting & Training.

SATURDAY LUNCHEON

Lunch was up next as the "Three Ring Circus" Game Show Luncheon and Region Awards began. However, before things progressed further, Florida Gov. Rick Scott made a surprise visit to the convention. Greeting members at each and every table, Gov. Scott chatted amiably to the delight of attendees.

As the governor finished making his introductions, Marc

Dunbar took the podium. Again praising the work of Rep. Glorioso, Marc called upon Florida Senate President Sen. Haridopolos to introduce Gov. Scott. Saying the governor did what he promised he would do, unlike many politicians, Sen. Haridopolos praised Gov. Scott for empowering Florida businesses.

Taking the microphone to a standing ovation, Gov. Scott praised both Sen. Haridopolos and Rep. Glorioso for their legislative leadership. Speaking without a teleprompter or notes, Gov. Scott detailed his humble beginnings, saying he once owned a chassis factory in Elkhart, Indiana, as well as having taken many family RV trips in his younger days.

His goal is to make Florida the model for the nation, Gov. Scott said he's been able to keep taxes, both personal and business, down as well as eliminate many fees and regulations.

"The best thing that government can do to help small businesses like yours thrive and grow is to get out of your way," said Scott. "As a business owner myself, I can relate to the struggles you have to face, I am committed to creating a favorable environment for business in our state."

He also exhorted members to get involved in the political process, especially with 2012 being a presidential election year. Gov. Scott also predicted that whoever wins Florida will win the presidency.

As Gov. Scott left thanking members for their support, Lance praised Marc for all his hard work and efforts that resulted in the governor's surprise visit.

"This is one of the ways in which our PAC Fund helps our businesses," he said.

The luncheon then continued with Lance calling President Schaffer, Chairman Davis and Vice President Sam Abdo to the front to assist with the recognition of regional officers with lovely engraved plaques for their service to their region and the state. Thank you!

Breakout session drawings were then held. Congratulations to Tom Tibbitts of Ocean Grove RV Resort and Jeff Crum of Dusty's RV, both of whom won \$25 gas cards.

Dave "Minute to Win It" Kelly then took center stage with a variety of crazy gag games such as eating a cookie placed on your forehead, balancing cups and spinning marbles in bottles. Fritzzy was a winner in each game! Throughout the games, Dave asked a variety of circus trivia questions. Who knew the circus is older than Major League Baseball? Gifts included AFLAC golf club covers, knife sharpeners, DVD & MP3 players. Game winners received \$50 restaurant gift cards. It was a crazy and fun time for all!

Following the festivities, Lance adjourned the luncheon and reviewed the slate of nominees for the State Executive Officers. With no additional nominations received from the floor, all were elected via membership acclamation. Congratulations to our reelected executive officers-President Larry Schaffer, Vice President Sam Abdo, Treasurer Rob Rothenhausler and Secretary Ryan Hollan. Donnie Davis remains FRVTA Chairman of the Board.

Following the elections, the membership was dismissed



CONVENTION...

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to spend the afternoon relaxing, swimming or just enjoying the resort.

SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET

At 6:30 p.m., the Silent Auction doors swung open to allow attendees a peek at the variety of items on which they could bid in an effort to raise needed funds for the FRVPC Fund. Many outstanding items were available this year, from GPS systems, digital cameras, computer accessories, special knives, concert tickets, a wine refrigerator, flag pole system and more.

Formal portraits were made as attendees enjoyed an opening cocktail party and great conversation. Lance opened the evening by thanking sponsors for their outstanding support. He then called for a moment of silence to honor those service men and women who protect us around the world. Afterwards, K.C. Crum of Eagle Ridge RV Center gave the invocation. An excellent steak filet dinner was served as guests enjoyed a jazz duo.

Following dinner, Marc Dunbar took the podium and thanked members for their support of the FRVPC Fund, while exhorting members to keep giving generously since the governor's visit and legislators' participation demonstrated the fund's effectiveness and success.

A final appeal for the 50/50 raffle tickets was then made with Joel Eggelston of Craig's RV Park winning a new iPad, Jeff Crum of Dusty's RV winning a new 42" television, Susan Squillace of Great Time RVs winning a Sony Playstation 3, Joe Ely of Lightning RV winning a \$50 gift card, and Marc Dunbar and Barbara Hollan of Harberson RV-Pasco both winning a special gift bag. Congratulations and thank you for your support!

Lance then again thanked all members who participated in this year's silent auction that benefits the FRVPC Fund. He also again praised all FRVTA staff members for all their hard work on this year's convention and throughout the year.

Lance then called all current board members to assist in selling \$5 50/50 tickets to benefit the FRVPC Fund. Congratulations to Maureen Prentiss of Leisure Time RV who won \$1000 and to our own Dave Kelly who won \$240 in the 50/50 drawing. Attendee generosity raised \$2,480. Thank you!

Lance then gave a brief update on the FRVTA Scholarship Committee and their efforts in providing scholarship money to deserving students as part of the membership benefits package. Saying the Association has contributed more than \$370,000 over the 20+ years the scholarship program has been available, Lance recognized two new scholarship winners present in the audience urging them to study, study, study!

Lance then called the FRVTA Executive Committee to the podium and introduced the newly elected members to convention attendees while presenting each with a recognition plaque for their service. He also recognized

two newly elected regional officers and presented them with their traditional white coat of office.

He also announced all the winners from this year's Silent Auction, which raised \$4,150 for the FRVPC Fund for an estimated total of \$7,000 raised over the weekend. What a great way to end the convention! Thank you!

attendees either remained dancing in the ballroom or adjourned to the "It's A Circus" Hospitality Room. As the 31st Annual FRVTA Convention officially wound down, each attendee was able to reflect on the fast-paced weekend's events. From the fun times to the learning opportunities, guests were

able to take with them the knowledge, contacts and experiences that will surely benefit them in the weeks and months ahead as we roll into 2012 with high expectations of success at the big top.

Mark your calendars now for next year's 32nd Annual FRVTA State Convention, which returns to the outstanding Hyatt Regency Coconut Point in Bonita Springs, September 6-9, 2012.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE... by Marc Dunbar, Legislative Consultant

A Testament to Your Political Involvement

For those who missed the convention, I can only say "Boy, did you miss a treat!"

The convention for me is always a great time to have a little fun and catch up with members of the industry that I don't get to see very often. I use it as an opportunity to do two things.

The first is to get my ear back on the ground and hear firsthand from each of you on what is going on in the industry and how best can I help in Tallahassee make life a little easier for you and your business. The second is to introduce you to some of the leaders who shape the policies in Tallahassee so you have a face with the name and can press upon them what you need to be successful.

Well this year we were honored to have Florida's Gov. Rick Scott come and spend time with the industry, not just to give a little speech and leave, but to visit with each member and listen to their views. Gov. Scott, as I have been telling each of you, is not anything like the governors we have had in the past. In the truest sense, he is the consummate outsider who challenges conventional governmental views and is now pushing our state to be more entrepreneurial in the way we approach our challenges. The time he spent with some of the state board members and the time he spent meeting each person who attended our Saturday lunch is testament to the fact that he is truly trying to find out what small business needs to be successful.

Along with great legislative leaders like Senate President Mike Haridopolos, Rep. Rich Glorioso, Sen. Ellyn



Governor Scott



Legislative roundtable



Bogdanoff and Rep. George Moraitis, Association membership heard firsthand from Gov. Scott the importance of getting involved and letting your elected leaders know what you need to be successful. The governor encouraged the Association to follow up and hold elected officials accountable for delivering on commitments made to reduce the size and scope of government and to ease the tax burdens on small business.

Being able to hear from the most powerful leaders in our state is a direct result of the grass roots involvement in the political process being made by our membership. Supporting the PAC and getting involved in campaigns have been the mantra of this column for more than a

decade and many of you have responded.

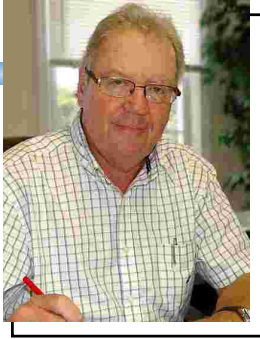
Your involvement is why we are able to have direct conversations at our convention with people like the Governor, the Senate President, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Now is not the time to rest on our laurels. The most important election in a decade will be upon us in a blink. November of 2012 requires all hands on deck. Our PAC Fund, which received a record level of support from the convention attendees, desperately needs further support. In addition, we need volunteers to help in the campaigns of good

friends seeking reelection to the Legislature.

Please contact the Association if you are interested in helping and spread the word about what a great convention we had and the Association's need to maintain its standing as one of the foremost industry trade associations in the country.





TRAINING NEWS... by Jim Carr, Training Director

Apprenticeships May Solve Skills Gap, Spark Economy

As I sat trying to think of how to make the new Technician Career Ladder relevant to today's RV Business environment, I came

across this powerful transcript of a program that recently aired on NPR and knew I had a connection.

For years we've been pitching a training program that is dealership centered, mentor managed and skill base designed to increase new hire skills as well as update current employee skills - wa-laa, looks like our time has finally come! Read on, think about it and know we can support it.

September 8, 2011, Morning Edition, NPR

Morning Edition has been asking business people for their one idea on how to help fix a part of the economy. Tim Brown, CEO of the design firm IDEO, talks to Steve Inskeep about his idea of reviving apprenticeships.

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

Of course, what people buy is often dictated by how they're feeling about the economy, not to mention whether they have a job.

As President Obama and his challengers offer jobs plans this week, we are hearing from people outside the government with specific ideas to encourage growth. Their ideas may not solve everything, but they try to take on one specific problem at a time.

And today, our economic fix comes from Tim Brown. He is the CEO of the design firm IDEO. IDEO has designed everything from Apple's first mouse to ways of improving access to clean drinking water for some of the world's poorest people. And now Tim Brown says he thinks companies should take on more young workers as apprentices.

Mr. TIM BROWN (CEO, IDEO):

We've got a pretty big skills gap in this country, particular around technically focused jobs, things like software engineering and medical technicians. and we just don't have enough of those people, and we need to find a way of getting them into the workforce.

And traditionally, when we wanted to get people into jobs that have high skills, for the last several hundred years we've used this idea of apprenticeship. But it seems to have disappeared out of the conversation recently.

INSKEEP:

I'm trying to think of examples. You used to have an apprentice shoemaker, or Benjamin Franklin might have been an apprentice printer and just learned the details maybe from a very young age of a particular job, spent

years and years working for some senior person.

Mr. BROWN: Exactly. Stone masons, and then more recently in sort of industrial jobs, and engineering apprenticeship was used. And I think it's just as appropriate when we think of modern, technically focused jobs.

INSKEEP:

How is that different from internships, which are very common today?

Mr. BROWN: Well, I think internships are really about sort of proving that you've got skills. It's about going into an organization for a very short period of time, and it's sort of a relationship with the organization - whereas apprenticeship is about acquiring skills over a longer period of time, maybe over several years. And it's often with somebody who is already deeply skilled in that job.

INSKEEP:

And you might be hiring somebody who just seems like good raw material, but may have no skills at all.

Mr BROWN:

Exactly, which means you could hire younger. Maybe you're hiring before college, or maybe just after undergraduate college, rather than having to wait for somebody who's gone and got a masters or something. And it allows you to pick them earlier, work with them longer and really build those skills through tacit learning.

I mean, there's different kinds of ways that we learn, and tacit learning is about learning through doing, versus when we go to college, it's more like explicit learning when we learn through knowledge, through theory. And apprenticeship is great for this tacit learning.

INSKEEP:

You said that this might be useful in some of the most cutting-edge industries. I believe you mentioned software engineering, with which I'm sure you're quite familiar in your own business. You're saying you'd like to take on a bunch of apprentices.

Mr. BROWN:

I think it's a great idea, and it's something that we'd love to explore doing more of, because here in Silicon Valley right now, there are thousands of open software engineering jobs in startups just can't fill them, can't find the people. And if apprenticeship could start creating a stream of skilled software engineers in the future, I think it would be well worth business taking that investment.



TRAINING NEWS...
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INSKEEP:

What's stopping you?

Mr. BROWN:

I think we have to sort of come to a - sort of - it's like a new social contract. I mean, we have to have kids who are interested in this kind of learning. We maybe need a little bit of government support. I think tax credits perhaps would help just get something like this underway. And I think we have to make it an idea that we all share. I think it's not enough for one or two companies to do it. It needs something. We got a bit of a movement going around this.

INSKEEP:

But I want to understand this. Is there a barrier? If you're a CEO, and or if a CEO is listening and is very excited by this idea, is there some legal barrier or cultural barrier to just posting an ad for apprentices?

Mr. BROWN:

Not as far as I know. I mean, we don't have the same kind of strong systems around it like they do in Germany, for instance, which has a very strong apprenticeship program. You know, there are over 340 recognized trades and industries that run apprenticeship programs. More than 50 percent of under-22-year-olds go through apprenticeship programs in Germany. So they have a very, very sophisticated setup to support it. We don't have that here. Of course, something like that would help.

But we do already have interesting examples. You know, for instance, when you think about what medical internships are - we call them internships, but they're

really apprenticeships.

INSKEEP:

I wonder if there's even one more cultural challenge, here. And I'm sure that this dynamic could take effect at any number of companies. Say that I'm a worker. I've been there for a number of years. I've built up some skills. I built up a decent salary. And suddenly, you bring in this apprentice who is supposed to be trained more or less to do my job, and he's working for a lot less money. I might feel threatened by that person.

Mr. BROWN:

Well, my experience is that skilled people like to pass on their training and their skills to others, and I think there's a tremendous opportunity to do more of that. And we're all smart enough to realize that we need a pipeline of skilled folks to come along. And, you know, and many of these jobs today that we're talking about, things like software engineering, people are having to work incredibly hard, because there isn't enough talent around. So, you know, I actually don't really see that as being a problem.

INSKEEP:

Tim Brown, thanks very much.

Mr. BROWN:

It's great to be with you. Thank you.

INSKEEP:

He's the CEO of IDEO, and the latest person with an idea to spur economic growth.

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2011-2012 FRVTA SHOW SCHEDULE

Please call the State Office for more information or to participate in any of these events.

HERITAGE PARK RV SHOW-NEW SHOW!

October 20-23 • Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee

DESTIN FALL RV SHOW

October 20-23 • Destin Commons, Destin

TREASURE COAST RV SHOW-NEW SHOW!

November 3-6 • Martin County Fairgrounds, Stuart

TAMPA BAY RV SHOW

November 10-13 • Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

FLORIDA RV SUPERSHOW

January 10-15 • Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

FORT MYERS RV SHOW

January 19-22 • Lee Civic Center, Fort Myers

OCALA RV SHOW

January 26-29 • Super Flea Market, Ocala

JACKSONVILLE RV SHOW

February 9-12 • Equestrian Center, Jacksonville

CENTRAL FLORIDA RV SHOW

February 16-19 • Volusia County Fairgrounds, DeLand

GERMAIN RV SHOW

February 24-26 • Germain Arena, Estero

DESTIN SPRING RV SHOW

March 1-4 • Destin Commons, Destin

WEST PALM BEACH RV SHOW

March 8-11 • South Florida Fairgrounds, W. Palm Bch.

TAMPA BAY SPRING RV SHOW

March 15-18 • Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

RV SUPERSAVER SHOW

April 20-22 • Lee County Sports Complex, Fort Myers

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

AAA RV • South 1515 N. Westshore Blvd. • Tampa, FL 33607 • Phone: 813-784-3543 • Fax: 813-289-5994
 Email: jpaliscak@aaasouth.com • Service, Region 3

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 Email: info@rvtripwizard.com • Website: www.rvtripwizard.com • Supplier, Region 7

2012 RV SUPERSHOW UPDATE

The 2012 RV SuperShow promises to be an outstanding selling event for Manufacturers and Vendors alike, and the FRVTA Staff is working hard to make it so!



Show Director Lesa Colvin reports that some Manufacturer space is still available with Manufacturers still allowed to have up to 20 percent of their product offerings as 2011 units.

For Vendors, she says there are only 80 booths left out of a total 450 available, so if you are seeking a space to sell your product you need to sign-up quickly!

Finally, Super Rally registrations are now starting to arrive. As at previous Rallies, she expects to have a sold out crowd. "This past year we staged about 850 rigs, so turnout was very strong," Lesa said. The Rally is open to any and all RV clubs and the general public with a number of special activities included.

ANNUAL RV DIRECTORY AND SUPERSHOW PROGRAM AD SALES

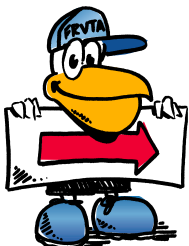


2012 RVer's Guide to Florida and Official SuperShow Program and Directory Advertising Sales are under way! These two publications are an excellent way to promote your business to the thousands of RVer's who travel to Florida each year as well as first time buyers!

Deanna Pearce with Elite Marketing is once again handling the advertising sales for both publications and will contact you shortly or you can secure your placement in the publications by contacting her directly at 863-318-0193 or email at dlpearce7@aol.com.

The complete media kit including rates, advertising guidelines and deadlines are available online at www.frvta.org. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Kelly in the FRVTA State Office at 1-800-330-7882. Your support of these two very important publications is appreciated!

MEETING DATES



REGION 1 • October 5 • SHOW DRAW • Torch Bistro (new location) • Cocktails: 6:30 PM • Dinner: 7:00 PM

REGION 2 • October 19 • Clarion Inn • Lake Worth • Cocktails: 6:30 PM • Dinner: 7:00 PM

REGION 3 • October 11 • Rusty Pelican • Tampa • Cocktails: 6:30 PM • Dinner: 7:00 PM

REGION 4 • October 12 • Location To Be Announced

REGION 5 • To Be Announced

REGION 6 • October 11 • Copeland's of New Orleans • Jacksonville • Cocktails: 6:30 PM • Dinner: 7:00 PM

REGION 7 • October 27 • Horse & Hounds • Ocala • Cocktails: 6:30 PM • Dinner: 7:00 PM