

THE 30th ANNUAL SAGEBRUSH NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD ACT

Compiled By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Board Secretary

The RSVA 2011 30th Annual Sagebrush National Training Conference theme was: “Change Surrounds Us” with a focus on “Maximizing Your Potential”.

On Monday, February 7th, a “Welcome to Vegas!” reception started the Conference with great entertainment provided by Hawaiian vendor and Sagebrush Conference Chair, Filo Tu. We all enjoyed “Kimo and the Hawaiian”.

On Tuesday, February 8th, our moderator was Filo Tu (HI), our Convention Chair. RSVA President, Dan Sippl welcomed all of the participants. After his welcome, we received nice welcomes from Nevada: Kae Pohe, the President of Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of Nevada; Katherine Yonkers, the BEP Administrator; and Rick Kuhlmeier, President, Nevada Council of the Blind. After we all sang “God Bless America”, the participants introduced themselves. Lots of “first-timers” were present.

Mitch Pomerantz (CA), President of the American Council of the Blind, presented some ACB updates. He outlined three of the issues which would be discussed at the ACB Legislative Seminar, being held from February 27 to March 1, 2011. The three key blindness-related issues were the need for Congress to establish requirements for prescription drug labels to be accessible for people living with vision loss; the critical need for Medicare to cover low vision devices such as closed circuit televisions and other types of magnifiers; and the need to modify tax laws that have negatively impacted revenues for charitable organizations from car donation programs. He invited participants to attend both the seminar as well as the other ACB midyear meetings on February 25-26 in Washington, D.C.

Heidi Chico (IA), Board member, National Automatic Merchandising Association, reported on recent NAMA news including the upcoming trade show. Greg Smith (also from IA), Eastern Regional Sales Manager for USI, discussed their upcoming exhibit on Wednesday. Jim Kesteloot (IL), a recent Presidential Appointee to the Committee for Purchase revealed his thoughts on his participation on the Committee for Purchase. He thanked RSVA for inviting him and hoped communication lines are kept open so both organizations could work together for the best results in the future.

Ron Eller (NC), RSVA Legislative Chair, moderated a panel discussion on the BEA Vision "White Paper". Participants on the panel were Robert Humphreys Esq. (HI), RSVA Attorney; Terry Smith (TN), Tennessee Services for the Blind Administrator and NCSAB Randolph-Sheppard Chair; and Dan Sippl (WI), RSVA President. Each gave their perspective of the paper and agreed on the need for us to be proactive in making suggestions for positive regulations.

Tuesday afternoon's moderator was Randy Hauth (OR), RSVA Board Member. RSVA Updates were given first. Participants heard about the new RSVA FaceBook page and the new RSVA LinkedIn page, as well as a reminder about the RSVA-I email list. Members also learned that the Board had just approved "The Vendorscope" magazine going online. John Gordon, RSVA Membership Chair, also mentioned that any state that was interested in starting an affiliate should contact the national office or the RSVA Membership Committee.

"Learning about Cashless Systems" for vending was the next panel. Panel members were: Cindy Rea, VP Corporate Strategic Accounts Executive from Bank of America Merchant Services; Michael Merriam, Vending Product Manager at Apriva; Gary Massey (PA) Western region Manager for MEI Cashless Systems; and Terri Starnes-Bryant (NC), Microtronic Cashless Systems US representative. Members of this panel discussed the benefits of customers using debit cards on vending machines. Sales on vending machines increase fifteen percent or more when they accept debit cards. In cases where there was substantial vandalism, the use of debit cards could help in decreasing this damage, especially if debit cards only were used. Some sales might be lost without cash sales, but if the vandalism was extreme, this might keep these vending machines viable. We also learned that multiple sales could be made in one transaction on some cards (saving separate swipe fees), depending on how the machine was configured.

Ms. Lynnae Rutledge, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner, (Washington, DC), advised the participants about how she felt her first year had gone as RSA Commissioner, including her thoughts on the recent 2010 RSA sponsored National Training Conference in Washington, D.C. She stated all sessions had been well attended and that she appreciated all of the comments regarding the programs held.

At the end of the sessions on Tuesday, there were two break-out meetings; one for State BEP Administrators moderated by Ray Dennis (AL) and one for State Committee Chairpersons moderated by Terry Camardelle (LA) & Roy Harmon (CA).

On Wednesday, February 9th, the moderator was Ardis Bazyn (CA), RSVA Board Secretary. The 75th Randolph-Sheppard Anniversary video was shown. It had been compiled by Kathy Ungaro, with the assistance from many who had been willing to send their treasured photos to her. Next on the agenda was the "Vendor Report Card". Vendors from around the country shared some aspects of their respective state programs. Each year, this is one of the favorite panels for attendees. State Administrators were then encouraged to give an update on their states as well. We had some new administrators this year and it was good to hear about new endeavors, even from Guam!

Next, was the "Pepsico Update" by Dan Martin from PepsiCo Food Service. He told us about new trends in the industry and how vendors should capitalize on them. David Ward (LA), PepsiCo Food Service and Vending Market Development Manager, told us what is new with Frito-Lay, outlining their current promotions and rebates. He asked vendors to visit his booth at the Exhibit and to give their account numbers to RSVA for participation in the national rebate program.

From noon to 5 pm, the Sagebrush conference had its largest number of Exhibits ever! After eating appetizers and enjoying the free libations, participants could learn all about the exhibitor's products and services. Many exhibitors donated nice door prizes as well. RSVA appreciated all the participation from sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees.

On Thursday, February 10th, the moderator was David Hanlon (CA), RSVA Board Member. Ms. Suzanne Mitchell, VR Program Specialist, RSA, (Washington, DC) gave an RSA Update. She gave the 2009 statistics

regarding the program including the number of vendors, number of locations and types, as well as overall national earnings and sales.

Jim Brown, CA, explained the types of teaming partner contracts Blackstone Consulting, Inc. offers and how they work with R-S vendors. He requested vendors speak with him and the Blackstone, Inc. team during the Conference.

Next, Daniel B. Frye, J.D., Management and Program Specialist, Randolph-Sheppard Programs, RSA (Washington, D.C), described his new role at RSA, discussing present state participation reviews, as well as future RSA plans. He advised vendors to contact him with any questions they had concerning the R-S program.

Mike Barclay, Senior Vice-President of Marketing and Administration from Southern Food Service gave a presentation explaining their services and invited vendors to talk with him.

The “Roadside Rest Area Challenges” Panel was moderated by Roy Harmon (CA), RSVA Roadside/Oasis Chair and State Committee Chair. Other members of this panel were: Ron Eller (NC), RSVA Legislative Chair and State Committee Chair; Terry Camardelle (LA), RSVA Treasurer; Clayton Hell (TX), Texas Vendor and State Committee Chair. Each discussed some of the problems various states have had in keeping the Randolph-Sheppard priority.

The next panel focused on “The Ins and Outs of What is Happening in the Vending Industry Concerning Healthy Choices and Governmental Initiatives”. Randy Hauth (OR), RSVA Board Member, moderated this panel. Participants were Brian Morgan (OR), National Account Manager, NCV Refreshment Services; Carmen Gormiak (WI), Registered and Certified Dietician RD/CD; and John Gordon (IL), RSVA First Vice President. Randy discussed hearing of a possible law in Oregon that would have required 100 percent healthy choices in all vending machines on state properties and how vendors were able to convince legislators to make a much less stringent requirement. Other panel members told of options vendors had in choosing what products to sell and how to work with those who wanted healthier foods, including legislators and regulators.

Mike Sweeney, Project Manager, gave a presentation for Cantu Services. He introduced the other Cantu representatives in the room and asked participants to contact any of them with questions. He invited all to attend the Business

Education Annual Training (BEAT) to be held on Friday. He also expressed the fact that Rick Cantu regretted his inability to attend the conference this year and that he intends to be participating more in the future.

As RSVA President, Dan Sippl (WI) moderated the 75th Randolph-Sheppard Act Anniversary Luncheon. We all enjoyed the PepsiCo Sponsored motivational speaker, Joy Baldrige. Her thoughts on getting rid of our “wafs” (worries, anxieties, and fears) were inspiring.

John Gordon (IL), RSVA First Vice President, moderated the afternoon panel on “What is True Active participation?” Participants on the panel were Terry Smith (TN), Tennessee Services for the Blind Administrator and NCSAB Randolph-Sheppard Chair; Robert Humphreys, Esq., RSVA Attorney; Allan Curry (AZ), Past AZ Committee Chair; Randy Hauth (OR), Oregon Committee Chair; and Mike Hooks (TX), Texas BEP Administrator. The panel discussed how different states utilize levels of active participation with the Vendors’ Committees and in particular how the SLAs and State Committees handle participation in major decisions.

A short wrap-up finished the afternoon. Vendors were reminded to attend the summer RSVA conference and convention in Reno from July 9-12. Also, the 75TH ANNIVERSARY RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD ACT t-shirts, which didn’t arrive to the conference because of bad weather, will soon be available for purchase from the RSVA.biz website as well as at the summer convention.

On Friday, February 11, Cantu Services, Inc., provided a day long Business Education Annual Training (BEAT) session. Participants were given a certificate of completion at the end of the day. All who participated learned much from the Cantu staff and the teaming partners who were there.

SASSY CINDY’S SAGEBRUSH NOTES: “Randy Hauth was spotted ALONE at Starbucks. Didn’t think anyone was ever ALONE in Vegas!”

ATTENTION! 75TH ANNIVERSARY RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD ACT t-shirts will be on sale on the RSVA website (All sizes) and at the summer RSVA convention in Reno. Get one today and Support RSVA!