

# **2012 ANNUAL SAGEBRUSH BEP TRAINING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS**

*By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Publications Chair*

The 2012 Annual Sagebrush Training Conference theme was: "Merging the Present and the Future - Moving Forward". The conference started on MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2012 with the "Welcome to Vegas!" reception in the Grand Ballroom in the Rush Tower of the Golden Nugget Hotel in Las Vegas. Great entertainment, The Ninth Island Serenaders, was provided by Blind Vendors Ohana of Hawaii. What a treat!

On Tuesday, after the delicious "Early Riser Breakfast Buffet", Filo Tu (HI), the RSVA Convention Chair, and Dan Sippl, RSVA President, welcomed the participants to the Sagebrush Conference. The moderator for Tuesday morning was David Hanlon (CA), an RSVA Board Member. He introduced Kae Pohe (NV), President of the Randolph- Sheppard Vendors of Nevada; Katherine Yonkers (NV), Director of the Nevada Business Enterprise Program; and Rick Kuhlmeier (NV), President of the Nevada Council of the Blind so they could also welcome those in attendance.

Melanie Brunson (D.C.), Executive Director, American Council of the Blind, presented some ACB Updates. She mentioned the initiatives that would be addressed at the ACB Legislative Seminar and gave the dates for the summer convention. She advised the attendees that Eric Bridges from the National Office was following closely the reauthorization of the transportation bill with its possible amendments, and would relay any movement as he received news. He would also send her a list of legislators so participants could connect with their respective state representatives on the relevant committees.

She mentioned that she appreciated RSVA's participation in the ACB Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C. each year. She also mentioned that one of the sponsors of that seminar had only committed half what they had in the past for ACB. Dan Sippl had asked the RSVA Executive Board if they would match donations of

vendors for this cause up to \$2500 and the Executive Board had agreed. As soon as Dan suggested this option, immediately, several blind vendors volunteered donations of \$100 and more to the effort. (See the list in this publication).

An RSA Update was then given by Daniel B. Frye, J.D., (D.C.), Management and Program Specialist, Randolph-Sheppard Programs, RSA. He thanked RSVA for their efforts with the President's Memorandum on the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Next, Dan Sippl and Clayton Hell (TX), Chairman ECM Texas talked about how RSVA collaborates on State Issues whenever it can.

Richard Rueda (CA), President, Council of Citizens with Low Vision International and Director of Transition Services with the Junior Blind of America in Northern and Central California, spoke on "Getting Youth Involved in the Randolph-Sheppard Program". He told vendors about some CA efforts in the past where students did internships with vendors. He asked states administrators/vendors which might be interested to contact him and advised that he would like to work with RSVA on a national basis to promote youth involvement in the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Mike Barclay, Senior Vice-President, Marketing/Administration, Southern Food Service, Inc. then told us about options with Southern Food Service. Southern Food Service, Inc. was a "Dealers Choice" sponsor for the Sagebrush Conference this year. We thank them for their participation and support.

The final topic of the morning was "How to Save Energy in Vending".

On an aside note, Bob Humphreys, RSVA Attorney, was available all Tuesday afternoon for one-on-one consultations on R-S program issues with vendors.

Charlie Glaser (GA), RSVA Immediate Past President, was the moderator for the afternoon. The first session topic was: "Vending Machine Repair and Maintenance". The panel speakers included: Tim Paul, Regional Manager/South for Automated Merchandising

Systems; Dave Severin, Regional Product Support Manager, Crane Vending Solutions; Tara Vina Roth, Vina Distributing and USI; and Lee Ivory, Betsen Enterprises.

RSVA thanks Automated Merchandising Systems for their “Casino Star” Sponsorship for this year’s conference.

U-Select-It with National Vending also provided a “Casino Star” sponsorship. We thank them for their support for this conference.

Following the afternoon panel discussion, two break-out sessions occurred. A state administrators’ meeting was lead by Co-moderators: Rajaunnda Gandy (GA), Director, GA Dept. of Labor BEP and Dr. J Michael Jones, Ph.D., Division Administrator, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and Chair of the Randolph-Sheppard Committee for the NCSAB. Secondly, the state committee chairpersons meeting was lead by Co-Moderators: Charles Carroll (AL) and Terry Camardelle (LA).

On WEDNESDAY morning, the moderator was Ardis Bazyn (CA), RSVA Secretary. Roy Harmon (CA) Roadside Rest/Oasis Committee Chair, along with fellow California vendor, Joe Murphy, informed the audience about the “California Focus Group Concept”. California vendors of similar typed locations have monthly focus calls to discuss concerns specific to that type of facility, such as prison facilities, cafeterias, roadside rest areas, etc.

Following that discussion, there were several panel sessions focusing on specific types of facilities. The first session dealt with a cafeteria, by cafeteria manager, Bob Matuszack (GA) who manages the Atlanta Federal Center Food Court. He stated the pros and cons of this type of facility and what had led him to this choice.

The next option was a Post Office manager, Richard Bird (OH), who manages the Cleveland Post Office Facility. He explained how the Post Office has downsized and his operation had changed.

A panel of other Vending Facility managers included Charles Glaser (GA), who manages the I-20 East Vending near Atlanta; David

Alstatt (OK), who manages a vending route in Oklahoma City; and Ron Eller (NC), who manages the I-77 Lake Norman Rest Area in North Carolina (along with a hospital vending site- not part of the R-S Program in NC). Both David and Ron stated vendors need to listen to people complaining about other government and private vending facility services, so these opportunities can be taken away from larger vending companies who aren't properly serving their patrons.

Allan Curry, a vendor from Arizona, gave a brief description of his prison vending facility and the differences from regular vending locations.

The final panel consisted of three snack bar managers: David Hanlon (CA), who manages David's Snack Bar in San Diego; Zach Snow (GA), who manages Zach's Snacks, 2 Peachtree Street; and Marie Keane (MA), who manages the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston snack bar. Each mentioned the pros and cons of each of their facilities.

Heidi Chico (IA), one of the NAMA Board of Directors, discussed some National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) news. She provided a list of services and information available to members. Online trainings and annual food shows are part of the mix. (After the conference, NAMA spoke against the roadside rest area commercialization amendment that had been introduced in the Senate.)

Jim Brown (CA), Blackstone Consulting, Inc. gave a short synopsis of his corporate offerings. Blackstone Consulting was a "Casino Star" sponsor at the Conference and we thank them for their sponsorship and support.

Vashaun Jones (GA) then gave a presentation on Apple Products and Applications. He explained the accessibility of the iPhone and described the many applications now available. Michael Sidenstick, Field National Account Sales Manager for Pepsico Food Service, then told what's happening with Pepsico. He outlined their current

programs which are being introduced in various regions in the country. PepsiCo was a “High Roller” sponsor for the Sagebrush Conference and we thank them for their important ongoing support benefiting all of the attendees.

There was an excellent combination of exhibits on Wednesday afternoon. As at last year’s Sagebrush, we had a large number of exhibits, with more vending companies present than ever. Participants were able to speak to the company representatives, inquire about equipment and taste products, as well as network with other vendors while enjoying the appetizers and cash bar. Numerous door prizes were given including an MEI bill validator.

All exhibitors and sponsors are listed on the RSVA website [www.rsva.biz](http://www.rsva.biz) or [www.randolph-sheppard.org](http://www.randolph-sheppard.org). Contact information for all exhibitors and links of sponsors are listed. We thank all of them for their participation in this year’s Exhibition.

Warren Toyama (HI), RSVA 2nd Vice-President, was the Thursday moderator.

Cantu Services, Inc. gave their corporate presentation. Their speakers were: Robert Welch (TX), Chief of Staff; Rick Cantu (TX), Chairman/CEO; Mrs. Jane Nelson, B.S., M.S., CRC; Denise Taylor, Retired Deputy and Director of Logistics. Three vendors who are their partners briefly spoke about their partnerships as well. We want to thank Cantu Services for their “Las Vegas Whale” sponsorship and their continued support for RSVA and the Sagebrush Conference.

Following the Cantu presentation, the State Administrators who attended the conference gave updates from their states, which was very informative for the vendor attendees as well.

Then, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, Randolph-Sheppard Committee Chair, Dr. Michael Jones (OK), Oklahoma State Administrator, gave his report. In addition to the

NCSAB issues presently for the Randolph-Sheppard Program, he spoke about his previous work overseas as well, which was very interesting.

We then learned more about “Cashless Vending” from panel members: Gary Massey, Western US Manager for MEI, and Pat Mattingly, Sales Director for Southwest U.S. for Coinco Royal Vendors. The panel members stated more vendors are taking debit and credit cards across the country. These electronic systems can be tied to a vendor’s computer so a vendor can get up-to-date information to aid his vending business in many aspects, such as inventory, sales, profit/loss, etc.

The next session was called “Legal 101” and speakers were: Susan Kern (HI), Hawaii Deputy Attorney General; Catriona Macdonald (D.C.), President, Linchpin Strategies, LLC; and Robert Humphreys (HI), RSVA Attorney. These speakers gave presentations about the challenges occurring on the Randolph-Sheppard front and how to keep advocating for Randolph-Sheppard vendors. The historical and present day issues were shared and very informative for the attendees. Vendors were able to network with the speakers following this session as well.

Dan Sippl (WI), RSVA President, moderated the RSVA Sagebrush Annual Luncheon. The Keynote Speaker was Vern Motor (NV). His “Get Motorvated!” presentation focused on “Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Behavior”. He told of his Navy Seal background and competition swimming, and how he remained positive in managing his business.

David Hanlon, RSVA Awards Chair, presented the “George Arsnow Award” to Mark Russell from Texas. This award is presented to a vendor who has been in the program for less than two years and was recommended by his state elected committee. Cantu Services gave a short presentation on legal information.

The first session topic after the luncheon was on “Social Security and Medicare”. Rachel Baidwan (NV), (AWIK) Temporary Area Work

Incentives Coordinator gave an excellent presentation which provided information vendors need when concerned about either receiving SSDI benefits or Medicare. She suggested that participants check the Social Security website for all this information and handed CDs to those requesting the information. The website is: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and the link to find an AWIC in your area is: [www.socialsecurity.gov/work/awiccontacts.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/awiccontacts.html).

“Military Dining Advocacy” was the final panel of the afternoon. Panel members were: Susan Kern (HI), Hawaii Assistant Attorney General; Robert Humphreys, Esq. (HI); Catriona Macdonald (DC), President, Linchpin Strategies, LLC ; Eddie Turner (MS), Naval Air Station Meridian ; Harvey Johnson (TX), Fort Bliss; Robert Ott (WA), Joint Base Ft. Lewis-McChord; and Roland Marshall (TX), Ft. Sam Houston.

The military vendors told how they were awarded their locations and the process. It was noted advocates need to watch for openings in contracts up to two years ahead of the contract coming due so that contract issues can be thoroughly addressed by the SLAs and vendors.

On Friday morning, after a continental breakfast, Cantu Services provided its Military Dining Training called BEAT. The speakers gave suggestions regarding finding facilities, ethics, money management, and other topics relating to dining contracts.

RSVA looks forward to next year’s Sagebrush National BEP Training Conference starting the week of February 18, 2013 at the Golden Nugget Hotel in Las Vegas. Please feel free to give any members of the convention committee feedback on this conference, and suggestions for next year’s programming are always welcome.

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