

The President's Message

This is the End My Friends

There have been countless discussions about the outside forces on dealer profitability—whether it's the margin squeeze we all feel, the continuous push-pull between manufacturers and dealers, as to how to sell to end users and what that means for rebates, or the changing forces that are being accelerated by the online world. No, I do not believe Amazon is about to start delivering refrigerators or even tongs via drones anytime soon. These are things that are not completely in our control, and while we need to be aware of them, the solutions are less clear.

However, I wanted to take a moment to write about one of the most important opportunities FEDA dealers have in front of them to improve the profitability of their businesses. The fact is that the majority of our members are not using the many educational offerings available on our website, via webinar and in person at the convention or at the University of Industrial Distribution (UID). I know my own company doesn't use everything available to us but we have used quite a bit and are better for doing so. Our associates consistently rave about the webinars and FEDA's Boxed Lunch Sales Training Seminar at NAFEM as well as the UID program they attend. They come away from these programs energized and with a better understanding of what drives dealer profitability.

This is exactly why the FEDA Education Foundation exists. The FEDA website states, "The purpose of the Foundation is to provide training, education and expand industry knowledge of persons in the foodservice equipment and supply industry."

Since its' formation in 2001, the Foundation has existed exclusively from the donations of FEDA members and industry manufacturers that have placed a high value on industry education. This year we took the opportunity to revamp how the Foundation recognizes manufacturers that have supported dealer education through the Foundation. In the fall, we created a Diamond level of sponsorship and limited the number of companies that we would recognize, at this level, to 20. By purposefully keeping this group small, we

felt the exclusivity would shine more light on those that did give to the Foundation, particularly when we recognize them both in print and at the convention. In fact, the first group of Foundation Diamond supporters is printed in this issue of *News & Views* (see page 12). I give a special thank you to this group of manufacturers for their support of dealer education.

I am proud of the strides FEDA has made during my presidency and the Diamond Foundation Sponsorship level is just one of the items we accomplished. While some FEDA items could not be completed, I leave them in the very capable hands of the next Executive Committee, which will be led by Brad Pierce. He has gone many years now with Ray calling him "the other Brad." (He calls me that also for the record.) But it will now be Brad P's time, and I know from the many years I've known him and worked with him, he will do an outstanding job. I hope Ray is ready to have 25,000-foot conference calls and calculate multinational time differences.

I know this will sound cliché but I feel I must say it anyway; it's hard to believe that it's been two years. My term has gone by incredibly fast and a big part of that is due to the work of Ray Herrick and the FEDA staff. They all do a terrific job and I cannot begin to thank them enough. Our Association is blessed to have such a dedicated and tenured staff to keep everything moving seamlessly.

That is all for me, it has been a real pleasure to serve as your FEDA President.

Thank you.



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