

Dear Members:

We had a fantastic meeting down in St. Petersburg, Florida from February 12th through February 15th. Some of the comments we heard were: "This is the best meeting we have had in years." "...very informative" "Those who missed it, really missed a lot..." Well, we wanted to recap our annual meeting so you would be kept up to date with the happenings at OPEAA.



Bill Nelson Scholarship Fund



We started our general meeting Saturday evening with the cocktail reception and silent auction to benefit the Bill Nelson Scholarship Fund. This was a huge success as we set a record at the auction by raising \$3,451. We would like to thank all of the companies that so generously donated items to this event. We would also like to thank our "winners" at the auction.

Annual Meeting - Sunday



On Sunday, we got started right away with a word from our outgoing president, Sue Chaney. Her word was responsibility. She outlined the responsibilities that our members, our board, and our management group all have and how they are different. The members must be involved. The board must communicate OPEAA's goals and direction. The management group handles OPEAA's daily tasks. The membership, the board, and the management group are all an integral part of OPEAA's success. OPEAA is still important for the original reasons it was started, but now we are expanding into issues like standardized testing and government regulations that are starting to effect our industry. To continue to be successful in this industry we must have a strong association working on our behalf. As a team, it is our responsibility to support and grow OPEAA.

Sunday Speakers

Next, Kris Kiser, Executive Vice President for OPEI, spoke to us regarding the political issues that are effecting our industry. He updated us on E15, the WaterSense Criteria, and the Chesapeake Bay clean up. He explained how these issues directly effect our industry. He gave us an update on the TurfMutt program. It is expanding through Discovery Education. He told us the way to fight the attack on lawns is by talking about the positive effects of managed landscape.

Next, James McNew, Senior Vice-President of Technical and Marketing Services from OPEI, and Bill Guerry, OPEI's counsel, spoke to us regarding the regulatory issues that will be hitting our industry. They discussed the ANSI standards and showed us how we could take an active role in shaping these regulations through our association. We would not have this opportunity in the regulatory process as individuals, or as separate companies. They reviewed the California Green Chemistry Initiative. They discussed Canadian Consumer Protection Legislation and how it will effect our companies if we are selling products in Canada.



We then had a sponsored lunch so that our members could network and discuss all of the information they had just seen and heard.

On Monday

On Monday, our speaker was Mr. Paul Merski. Mr. Merski is the Senior VP and Chief Economist for the Independent Community Bankers of America. He discussed the state of the economy, economic growth and the future effects of America's long-term debt. Unfortunately, it was not all sun and roses and left us all thinking about any possible solutions.

Next, we had 2 dealers join us. This was an informal question and answer session mediated by Bill Harley, President and CEO of OPEI. It gave us the dealers' perspective on the issues they are facing in our industry.



After an afternoon of golfing, fishing, taking in the sites, or just relaxing, we had our memorial banquet. At the banquet we heard about the golf and fishing tournaments. We also thanked Sue

Chaney for her service as president and welcomed Mike Watts to that position.

Tuesday Morning

On Tuesday morning, Mike Watts opened the meeting up to the membership to get their perspectives. This was very informative. Members communicated their views on the meeting and OPEAA's future direction. Insight was given on the issues members are concerned about in our industry. This forum gave everyone the opportunity to weigh in on the subjects that were discussed throughout the meeting.



Next, Mike Watts talked about the task forces that were replacing the standing committees. A task force would be established based on an issue. It would have specific goals and deadlines. With email, internet forums, and conference calls, *any member can be on a task force.*

The Current List of Task Forces:

1) Testing Standards:

- OEM vs. Aftermarket - Barry Stiles
- ANSI Standards
- Chainsaw Bar/Chain - Dale Marcell
- Grass Trimmers/Brush Cutters - Mike Watts
- Mowers/Blades - Chris Roessler
- Snow Thrower Parts - Sue Chaney
- Gasoline Fuel Systems - Dave Errick

2) Distributor Membership Category - Jim Paugh

3) Industry Statistics Project - Jeff Jerousek

4) Dealer Survey 2011 - Brian Preheim

5) Credit Card Program - Mike Watts

6) Member/Industry Communications - Sue Chaney

Anyone interested in being on a certain task force should contact the leader of that task force directly. The more participation we get the lighter the load and the more we get accomplished. Ideas via email, phone, or an internet forum are always welcome.



As you can see, we had a great meeting. Please visit our website to see more pictures. We hope this newsletter filled you in on what was missed if you were unable to join us.

Sincerely,

Outdoor Power Equipment Aftermarket Association