



NGMA

National Greenhouse Manufacturers
Association

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State of the horticulture industry

By Scott Thompson

THIS YEAR the National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association celebrates 50 years of service to the greenhouse industry, and I am proud to be part of that history as well as its future. We should all be grateful to those founding members who had the vision to understand that the future of horticulture and agriculture can be dramatically impacted by greenhouse structures and components manufacturers.

Through a shared alliance with our customers and the educational community, the designers and engineers within our organization have been able to use advances in technology to meet the needs of the greater greenhouse industry. Together, we continue to foster the American ingenuity that promotes the utmost in quality products and services at a fair price. The common ground that we share is based on supporting each other through friendly competition and building on the successes that have made the NGMA and its membership the leading voice in the greenhouse industry.

Our members comprise a wide variety of both business and educational organizations starting with the greenhouse structure manufacturers and building up and out from there. We represent a wonderful range of framing, covering, screening, heating, ventilating, lighting, watering and environmental control

equipment companies as well as insurance products and services. All of the companies within our organization, promoted by various industry trade journals, are working toward the goal of a better agri-business environment.

Dealing with present, future challenges

The challenges we meet daily are ever-growing and complex. We compete in a global marketplace driven by the pace of the Internet and fueled by the desire of all those participating to share in those opportunities. Increasing demands from rising energy and health care costs require our membership and its customers to evolve or perish. Perspectives on market growth and potential opportunities change daily as business consolidation occurs at all levels of the supply and demand chain.

Recent events have shown the NGMA and its members to be an increasingly prominent association by partnering in alliances at the national level with Society of American Florists and American Nursery & Landscape Association to support their political efforts to battle ongoing bureaucracy. Water restrictions, code enforcement, increasing tax pressures and the like are just a few of the key issues that members debated while attending last year's NGMA fall meeting

in Washington, D.C. Although small in numbers, what was lacked in bodies was made up for in enthusiasm and effort as members met with their respective legislators. Those legislators were educated on the importance of our membership on the overall economy and about the nature of our business community. Each of us took away the fact that one person, one voter, can indeed make a difference.

Future growth in our sector and with our membership will be possible through increased communication with each other and our customers. This communication will be technology driven and so will our growth potential. As pressures increase through rising operations costs, new initiatives will have to be developed with a greater emphasis on research and design to provide more for less. By continuing to partner with university members, we can forge a course that will help create demand for the brightest minds in our industry. If we are remiss in our efforts, those students will look elsewhere for challenges that interest and intrigue them. We need to offer incentives through scholarships and internships for those future employees to share the spirit of our industry.

Potential opportunities

Controlled environment opportunities abound if properly pursued. As our

market matures, we need to work hand in hand with our customers and their customers to know and better understand these constant changes in our world.

We have to help drive the demand for better, longer-lasting varieties and colors with short-term and long-term life-cycle ornamentals. Food and energy markets can all be proactively addressed with appropriate designs and installations. The shape and scope of these facilities is an evolving process and has yet to be determined. The management of these operations and how successfully they prosper is really up to us and our ability to communicate.

The green revolution is in full swing. The move toward sustainability and all that it comprises is a potential growth opportunity as well. Properly viewed and managed, the changing greenhouse marketplace can be a wonderful opportunity for all those involved. With a positive attitude, we can help propel our society toward creating the proper balance in the use of our natural resources and to strive for a better life today and well into the future.

Please get involved!

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