



NCHPBA

U P D A T E

BURNING NEWS & ISSUES



Affiliated with the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

March/April 2005

A Note from the President



The attendance at the February HPBA EXPO in Atlanta, Georgia was a record! The outdoor burn area was huge and the exhibits were exceptional. The indoor area was also huge and included many new products on display. But, what was most impressive was the effort put into education. The educational opportunities were limitless.

Dave Pomeroy's HHOT classes were a hit. Dave had test tables set up so that groups of three could work together to solve problems presented to them. The groups could work on gas mock ups or pellet mock ups. Dave even had several venting mock ups to work with. Everyone who attended agreed that the Hearth Hands On Training was worth every penny, and would attend again.

I am electing to not be on the Board of Directors this coming year, therefore, not being President for another term. I believe that for an association such as ours, there needs to be a turnover of leadership in order for growth and prosperity to continue. Time for fresh blood so to speak. When I came on the Board, our Executive Director, Karen, told me that everyone brings something different to the table. She was right. Four

years being a Board member and two being its President is an experience that I will always cherish.

I'm asking every one of you to consider being on the Board or a Committee. It's an experience you will never forget. The people that you will meet in our seven state region is beyond monetary value. Not to mention nationwide and worldwide contacts. I've have meetings, round table discussions and lunches with people from all over North America and the world. All of them in the same business that I'm in...the hearth industry. At EXPO this year, my daughter and I had dinner with a father and son from Holland. They were exploring the American hearth products market for some products they manufacture. Their perspectives of the American market and home ownership were interesting and educational to say the least.

The benefits of being on the Board of Directors far outweigh any costs. Ask and get involved...you will not regret it, I promise. The people that have been, and are, on the NCHPBA Board of Directors are, without question, the finest group of people that I've had the pleasure to work with. I will miss working with them very much.

The prospects for the coming year are looking great. Let's "git-r-done!"

EXPO—Why February?

A record attendance was at this year's EXPO in Atlanta this past February but many questioned why it was held in February instead of March. February is still a very busy season for the northern tiered folks and getting away for a week is tough.

The answer to that question is that EXPO was supposed to be in March this 2005, but the facility to host us could not provide for us—we had grown too big for them. EXPO sites are tentatively selected years in advance. Plans are already made for 2012. HPBA could have kept the 2005 site for March but that would have been limiting the size of both indoor and outdoor booths. That is NOT what EXPO is all about—it is to show-

case as many products as possible and to always encourage more, not less.

HPBA staff and the Trade Show Committee work very hard to get the best venue possible, but sometimes changes must occur. The size of EXPO, the need for an outdoor burn area close to the convention center with ready access to gas, and now the ability to burn product indoors all make for an intense challenge to get a site that meets all these needs.

Another such change may occur again in the future—but now you will know why.

Hearth Statistics Available

HPBA through staffer, Don Johnson, has prepared and published the latest data on hearth appliance statistics as well as the results of the consumer attitude and usage survey.

Included is that half or 55 million households in the U.S. have at least one fireplace or freestanding stove. Six out of ten new homes built in the U.S. today have at least one fireplace and that 2.6 million hearth appliances were shipped in 2003

with 1.8 million of those gas fueled models. There is much more—too much to cover in a newsletter. So to be well informed and be able to respond to industry questions and know what consumers want, get a copy of this and read it. It is worth your time.

Contact Don Johnson at johnson@hpba.org for more information.

Chairman change at HPBA

John Adams (The Adams Company in Dubuque, Iowa) stepped down as HPBA Chairman after his year of service in that role. The new Chairman is Paul Birnstihl of Birnstihl Sales, Candia, New Hampshire.

NCHPBA made its impact on John Adams last May for his first affiliate visit as Chairman. Paired with Denny Hildebrand for the golf outing, he escaped with his life while Denny conducted "wheelies" down a rain-slicked fairway toward a large pond. At least that is the way the story goes. The Board has since revoked Denny's driving privileges due to liability concerns and hopes this will encourage the safe return of John Adams at this year's event.

John Adams was presented with a golf club and a photo in acknowledgment of his year of service. Carter Keithley (HPBA President) is pictured with John Adams and the photo gift.



Taxes: Changes may reduce filings for small businesses

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced in December, 2004 that it will increase the minimum threshold for Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) deposits to \$500. The threshold increase is expected to reduce the paperwork burden for over 4 million small businesses. The new rules, which go into effect in December will require employers to make quarterly deposits for unemployment taxes if the accumulated tax exceeds \$500. Currently, employers are required to make quarterly deposits if the tax exceeds \$100. The most the IRS collects per employee

from employers is \$56 per year, if the employer has paid their state unemployment taxes in a timely manner. The current \$100 threshold, established in 1970, requires businesses with two or more employees to make at least one federal tax deposit each year. Increasing the threshold to \$500 reduces the burden for employers with eight employees or less by eliminating making FUTA tax deposits up to four times a year. For more information see www.inc.com/criticalnews/articles/2004/futa.html

Taxes: Are you operating in a business-friendly tax state?

A new Tax Foundation study ranks the 50 states on how "business friendly" their tax systems are, providing a roadmap for state lawmakers concerned with keeping their states tax-competitive. This study is also useful for business wishing to expand into other states. Generally the index rewards tax codes that are neutral, have low and flat rates, are simple and transparent, avoid double taxation, and have statutory or constitutional restraints that keep tax burdens low over time. The ten

states that began 2004 with the most business-friendly tax systems are: South Dakota, Florida, Alaska, Texas, New Hampshire, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon. The ten states with the least hospitable business tax climates are: Hawaii, New York, Minnesota, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Vermont, Kentucky, Arkansas, Maine, and Wisconsin. For more information see www.taxfoundation.org/sbtci.html

That Store Stunk!

"I'll never step foot in that store again!" "They didn't even ask me if I needed help!" There was litter all over the place.

Would you like those things said about your store? How do you know they are not? Are your employees going to tell you, your family, your friends? Most likely not. People close to you wouldn't want to hurt your feelings. But a stranger can. That is why the small amount for Mystery Shopping is such an investment. If you catch a problem early—it is relatively easy to correct. Bad habits and behaviors are VERY hard to change.

Got a good review? Are you sure they were right? Maybe



yes, maybe no—but you took the time to review the survey report. That means you conducted a self evaluation that you probably would not have done if you hadn't been mystery shopped.

Last year NCHPBA offered Mystery Shopping to all our members for a one time visit in fall of the year to be included in national results and then however many other times of the year through August of 2005. A number of you took advantage of this and were shopped multiple times. Some use the results in staff training. All of this is being offered to improve your store operations. The better each store operates, the better the profits and the better image to the industry as a whole. Be part of the program. The investment in this program should be a regular part of your marketing budget. Whether you do Mystery Shopping just once a year—make sure it is every year—or for a few more bucks, get information on your operations more often—during your peak season and off. You need to always be on top of your game.

Watch for the Mystery Shopping flyers—coming your way later this spring / early summer.

30 Seconds to Significant Sales: How to up-sell without turning off your customer

by Jeff Mowatt, *BusinessReport* (excerpted & reprinted with permission)

If you and your employees aren't trained on effective ways to upsell, chances are you either offend customers by being too pushy, or leave money on the table that customers would have willingly spent with you. Either option is costly.

Upselling refers to when you help a customer decide to buy a little extra or "up-grade" slightly the final purchase. A car dealer, for example, might inform customers at the time of ordering about upholstery protection and undercoating. A shoe salesperson might suggest that when you buy a pair of shoes that you also use some weather protect ant spray. These are usually small purchases that the buyer doesn't have to put a lot of thought into. The bonus is they can be extremely profitable for you as the sales person and for your organization.

Why upselling is so profitable

Consider this example. A customer buys a car with monthly payments of \$395. With that size of investment, there's very little resistance to adding two dollars to the monthly payments for upholstery protection. For you, however, that additional sale is signification as over 48 months it adds up to a \$98 sale, with a huge profit margin.

Some would say that a \$98 sale on a \$25,000 vehicle is only a minimal increase in the overall sale. Why waste your time? My argument is that if it only takes 30 seconds to make that extra \$98 sale, then you're making more money for the company than with any other activity you do. If your salary is \$20 per hour then doing the math, the 30 seconds you take to upsell costs the company about 17 cents. If it only cost the company 17 cents to make \$98, that's a huge return on investment. The fact that it's attached to a \$25,000 sale is completely irrelevant. So, upselling is one of the highest and best uses of your time.

Effective upselling strategies

Assumptive is the key. You've got to assume that the customer will naturally want this. Begin the upsell with a brief benefit, then if possible, add something unique about what you're selling. To avoid sounding pushy, particularly if the upsell requires some elaboration, ask for the customer's permission to describe it.

Here's an example of the wrong way to upsell. Imagine

dining at a restaurant where you've just finished a big meal. The server asks, "Would you care for dessert?" If you say "Yes", you might give the impression of overindulging. So many customers refuse out of politeness. Result—no sale.

So the savvy server doesn't ask if the customer wants dessert. The professional just assumes that when people go out for a meal they are treating themselves. So of course they'll want to treat themselves to dessert. In this case, the server pulls up the dessert tray and says, "To finish off your meal with a little something sweet (that's the benefit), I brought the dessert tray over for you. Would you like to hear about the most popular ones?" (Asks permission to proceed).

When the customer agrees to hear about the desserts the server doesn't just list them by name; he describes their benefits. So rather than saying, "This is chocolate mousse," he'd say something like, "If you like chocolate you'll love this. We've got a chocolate mousse that melts in your mouth and makes you wonder what the ordinary people are doing today."

Focus on customer needs—not yours. Don't try to sell the customer something you wouldn't buy if you were in their shoes. It is totally irrelevant whether or not this purchase suits your needs; what is relevant is whether it suits the customer's. That perspective empowers you to upsell effectively and with integrity.

Hands on demonstration. One of the most effective upselling techniques is getting the customer to use the product in your location. A hairdresser, for example, might put hair gel in the customer's hand and show her how to apply it herself. By showing the client how to get the salon look at home, they create a value-added upsell.

Group related products. It's a good idea to group similar add-ons and offer them as an upsell at a package price. If someone is getting a haircut and you talk to him about shampoo, it only makes sense to show him a package deal that groups conditioner and shampoo at a package price.

Bottom line

Every business owner should realistically look at whether or not employees could improve the way they up-sell. For most businesses, training can make a world of difference.

EPA at EXPO

There were more EPA officials and state regulators attending meetings at EXPO than ever before. John Crouch outdid himself in organizing this effort and the time was well spent. They want to work with us, not against us. This is a huge plus for our industry. They believe the Stove Changeout program is a great benefit and want more of these in the future. They also want to try to implement the very successful Canadian "Burn it Smart" program in the U.S.

The result is a win-win for all of us. Consumers will be educated about clean burning and we have the products to help them achieve clean burning. We will keep you informed as plans progress for any joint ventures for Stove Changeouts or other government assisted programs. Pictured here at the Chairman's reception is Gil Wood (EPA), John Crouch (HPBA) and Mike Derosier (Quadra-Fire).



Legislative Issues

Each state is entertaining hundreds (some thousands) of proposed pieces of legislation this year. Most of our states conduct this during the first four to five months of the year so your government coordinators are now busy watching for any legislation that could negatively impact your business or find an opportunity to interject verbiage to help our industry with Codes or Rules. One area of major interest is whether NFI can get official recognition by states or municipalities.

NFI represents a base of knowledge unique to our industry—how to install our hearth products, not a furnace or simply a gas pipe. As building officials and other governmental agencies look toward licensure or certification as a minimum standard for performing various services to consumers we want to be prepared. NFI is our industry standard—not an HVAC or plumbing license.

Minnesota is entertaining legislation to mandate ergonomics practices. While good employers already conduct operations to minimize risk to their employees (when you're hurt you can't work and that means no billing for services and therefore a drop in revenue) certain mandates tend to be misused. We fear that ergonomics mandates in particular could result in unreasonable demands and lawsuits that could cripple and even destroy small businesses. Minnesota members have been asked to write to their respective state senators and house members to voice their concerns.

Iowa has a proposal for statewide licensure of mechanical contractors and plumbers. Russ Dimmitt is monitoring this one for impact to members. We do not want to end up being required to have an HVAC license to install hearth products so attention is being paid to this one, too.

Fundamentals of Hearth Installation

NCHPBA continues its work with the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation (HPBEF—formerly HEARTH) and Hibbing Community College in Hibbing Minnesota to create and implement a fundamentals of gas hearth installation program. The intent is to have an online course of didactic essentials which would culminate with a two week intensive practical course held in summer.

The HPBEF Board of Directors has prioritized this project as #3 on their list for 2005/2006. They also supported bringing the Hibbing Instructors (Pete Stoddard and Keith Erickson) to EXPO for additional experience with our industry and products. They are pictured here participating in Dave Pomeroy's HHOT program. NCHPBA will be working closely with them as the needs evolve. A Task Force (already in place) will assist with technical feedback and the Board will help with obtaining equipment needed for the practical side of the program. Another major task for NCHPBA will be to find individuals who will be willing to participate in the first offering (the online program) slated for January of 2006. These students then will be expected to attend the summer two week practicum.

Total time, costs and other details are still being developed. This is the first time for such a program but we hope it will be the model for others around the country. Obviously, if this does succeed, a wood and pellet fundamentals program would also be developed. We will keep you informed.



Go—NCHPBA!

If you are proud to be a member, then show it! NCHPBA now offers maroon windbreakers with the NCHPBA logo or just logo patches to put on your own company apparel. You can use these patches on hats, shirts or jackets. They are not appropriate for formal wear—would clash with all those diamonds and are impossible to sew on spaghetti straps of gowns. They are great for the office and the field however. NCHPBA has provided you with static cling decals for your windows. You now can personally wear the logo of the association that is work-



ing hard for you. An order form has been provided. These will also be available for sale at the May annual conference.

Government Service Awards

Mike Nordby, Chairman of the NCHPBA Government Committee and staff, Karen Teske-Osborne were recognized at the February HPBA Board of Directors meeting with a Government Affairs Excellence Award for superior service to affiliate members for state and local government issues.

NCHPBA has set up a color coded alert system for members; developed a state by state email contact system and established conference calls to get members involved with government affairs, discuss legislative initiatives and make calls to action. Pictured is HPBA Government Affairs Chairman, Tom Pugh (middle) with award recipients Karen and Mike.



Director Activity

Bob Marcell, current Board member and past President, has written the following three articles to inform you of activities he has done that show involvement...that helps the affiliate, the industry as a whole, and his own business. You can do these types of things, too.

UW Extension: Heating with Wood

I received a letter in the mail about an evening class that was being put on by the UW Extension in Wausau and Wisconsin Rapids. It said the class would be about wood; making it, burning it and outdoor wood furnaces. At the bottom of the flyer it asked for wood burning hearth dealers to come, with a name and phone number to call if interested. When I read this I thought this would be really good, considering the types of questions customers were asking when they come into my store. By the questions you could tell some of these people haven't burned wood since the 70's or not at all. This year there were a lot of questions because of the colder summer and fall and all the talk about high gas bills this winter. Everyone wants to save a buck.

I was interested in what the class was going to be all about, so I called the person listed on the flyer and asked about the class and if I could help in any way. He said he had invited all hearth shops in the area to display products and to answer any questions anyone might have. I told him to sign me up for both the Wausau and Wisconsin Rapids programs. He said I was the first hearth dealer to call and sign up. He was hoping for more.

Well, I went the first night to the class, got signed in and set up a table with literature. Gary Waterstradt from The Energy Shop was there as he talked about the changes in woodstoves from yesterday to today. Someone from Central Boiler discussed the do's and don'ts of using outdoor wood boilers. Someone from the DNR talked about the do's and don'ts of cutting wood and how you can get permits to cut wood off county land. The last speaker was a professor from UW talking about indoor air quality and wood burning. At the end of the class the professor explained how they invited all the hearth dealers in the area to answer questions and to show new wood stove technology. He indicated I was the only one to show up both nights to do that.

Around 50-60 people attended these classes. It was a great opportunity to help out the UW System and to let them know that classes as such were needed. It was also an opportunity to let them know about the hearth industry, NFI certification and all the education being provided including building official manuals, etc.

Home Building Inspectors

Having worked with some inspectors in the past, they called me one day last fall to request that I come to talk with them

at one of their monthly dinner meetings. He provided an outline of what they wanted and indicated the time frame to be about 15-20 minutes. They mostly had questions on fireplace and stove installation.

The night of their meeting I went with flyers, the Gas and Solid Fuel Building Official Manuals and information on the NFI certification program. They reiterated that they only had about 20 minutes because they had their regular meeting agenda to attend to. They introduced me and I started saying a little about myself and my company and quickly got going on talking about the Building Official Manuals and the information contained within. I told them how they could be purchased. I talked about NFI certification and why we support this program.

Then the questions started. It was nearly 3 hours later when they said they "had" to stop to they could get to their meeting agenda. They were so happy that someone would take the time to answer some of their questions and help with their concerns they wanted to have me back for more questions about hearth products. I will be doing that this March or April. They also want a presentation at their annual meeting and want the Building Official seminars.

That night was something else. It goes to show you that inspectors do want to learn more about what to look for and want to be educated in the hearth industry. There were approximately 30-35 inspectors from around central Wisconsin. I sold all the copies of the Building Official manuals I had with me including my own personal copy.

NSSF Shot Show

I recently returned from Las Vegas where I attended the Gun and Ammo National Trade Show. I was asked to be one of their speakers for a seminar that they wanted to put on. It was called "How to Compete With Mass Merchants". The request had come through the Hearth Education Foundation. A large number of their members felt they have a problem dealing with the big box stores. Three of us from different trade associations were on a panel that discussed how we deal with them. One of the panelists was from the Atlanta, Georgia area and has four independent Ace Hardware stores. He used to work for a big box store in management. He got tired of that system and opened up his own hardware store. The other panelist owned a nursery from the Seattle, Washington area. He grows around \$5million in plants and sells them out of his store. He now makes his own fertilizer and plant food. The third panelist was me from the hearth industry. I discussed mass merchants and the higher ticket items.

The result is that mass merchants have an affect on many industries. We are not alone.

Renewable Energy Fair June 17–19, 2005, Custer, Wisconsin

Your affiliate will again be representing your interests by taking a booth at the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair this coming June 17-19, 2005 in Custer, Wisconsin. The event last year drew over 17,000 consumers—most extremely savvy of energy needs and costs. Members get an opportunity to staff the booth as well as attend the many education programs on all types of renewable energy initiatives.

We hope to display a very old parlor stove this year and contrast that with new modern EPA certified product. A working model of a pellet auger last year drew much attention as well as many questions.

We are also going to sponsor several speakers again this year. We will be taking the opportunity to talk about wood, pellets and corn as a heating supply for primary, backup or zone heating.

MREA Committee members Gary Stanley, Bob Marcell and Lynn Meyer will once again spearhead this project and are looking for assistance with staffing the booth on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Contact them and get involved. It is not only fun but very rewarding as well. Contact information for Gary, Bob and Lynn is found in the Board list in this newsletter. You may also contact the NCHPBA office.



May in Red Wing Yup—we're doing it again! 5/22/05-5/24/05

Program registration materials have already been sent to entice your attendance at this year's event. Time is allotted for lots of education as well as lots of fun. Rodger Holland chaired the committee of Jan Hildebrand, Patty Fryk and Alison Van Lanen. They have developed a new format and hope this will be better for all.

Plans are that all of the programs will be accredited by the National Fireplace Institute so you will receive one hour of credit for every hour of attendance toward your NFI recertification process. Concurrent programs of service or business are being provided and although it may make it difficult for you to choose, you will have a choice. Those that bring multiple staff make sure that folks attend both so the information can be shared later at the store.

We set an affiliate record of attendance at last year's program. With the opportunities for NFI continuing education, certification, networking with colleagues and hearing how your affiliate leaders are working for you—you can't afford not to attend. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.



Please note that the first mailing of the program brochure incorrectly states the wrong dates on the front page. The inside pages and registration form are correct. May 22–24, 2005 (not 23–25).

NCHPBA Jamboree?

Well, we are thinking about having one in August of this year. Right now we are researching interest for such a program and welcome your input. The concept would be to have manufacturers have a small display area and then provide education rooms for them to also conduct product specific programs.

New rules established by HPBA limit the size of any such program to not interfere or compete with the HPBAexpo but this would afford some real product display and training.

Got ideas or feedback about this concept? Contact the NCHPBA office or Education Chairman, Rodger Holland.

CAN-SPAM—impact for you!

HPBA faxed members information on this issue but we know how faxes can develop legs and walk off without anyone reading them so we are repeating this critical information for you.

Federal Trade Commission Issues E-Mail “CAN-SPAM” Rules (from the Perspective of Businesses)

On December 16, 2004, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued final regulations that will affect how you use e-mails to communicate with your customers. The new requirements are very broad: they cover not only business-to-consumer e-mails, but also business-to-business e-mails. They also cover the full range of e-mails, from broadcast e-mails all the way down to individual e-mails. The new rules go into effect on March 28, 2005, and will require certain features in your e-mails, as well as giving recipients the opportunity to “opt-out” from receiving e-mails from you in the future. This short report will give you some information on the new requirements.

Congress passed the “CAN-SPAM” Act on December 16, 2003. The legislation was aimed at spamming e-mails, with a particular emphasis on pornography. The law gave the FTC one year to flesh out certain requirements; a few details still remain to be worked out.

There are four basic requirements:

- All e-mails must have clear and accurate “header” information and must not include deceptive or misleading subject headings;
- All *commercial* e-mails must clearly and conspicuously identify itself in the body of the e-mail as an advertisement or solicitation (the way to do that is up to the sender);
- All *commercial* e-mails must provide the recipient with a clear and conspicuous opportunity to “opt out” of receiving future commercial e-mails; and
- All *commercial* e-mails must provide a valid physical postal address of the sender (the FTC has not decided whether a post office box is acceptable).

The opt-out provision requires some further discussion. The opportunity for opting out must be available as an internet link or e-mail reply option, must be available for at least thirty days after receipt of the e-mail, and must be put into effect by the sender within ten business days of hearing from the recipient. If a recipient wants to opt out, the opt-out covers all commercial e-mails in the future for the e-mail address, not the company or person. The opt-out also covers e-mails sent out by your parent and affiliate companies. You also cannot include the e-mail address in any contact lists that you sell or rent, or in any directories that you publish. You can give the recipient the option of opting out of certain classes of commercial e-mails (e.g., only about one class of product, or just products but not services), but if you do so, you must also give the recipient the option of opting out of all commercial e-mails. As you can see, it will be important for you to develop a reliable system

for tracking recipients who have opted out. Finally, you may, on the other hand, get a waiver of the provisions of CAN-SPAM from the recipient and then not have to comply with any of the four requirements listed above.

As you can see from these requirements, a key issue is whether an e-mail is—and what is—a “commercial” e-mail. Simply put, it is any e-mail used to advertise or promote a commercial product or service. Other kinds of e-mails identified in the FTC rule are “transactional or relationship” e-mails (“transactional,” for short) and “other” e-mails. Obviously, these e-mails carry far fewer requirements—in fact, all they must have is clear header information and a header line that is not deceptive.

There are five kinds of “transactional” e-mails:

1. E-mails that deal with a commercial transaction already entered into, e.g., status of an order;
2. E-mails with information on product warranties, product recalls, or safety or security information already owned by the recipient;
3. E-mails with information on an account or subscription, e.g., change in terms, expiration;
4. E-mails on employment information; and
5. E-mails to deliver goods or services that the recipient is entitled to receive under the commercial transaction already entered into, e.g., product upgrade or maintenance.

“Other” e-mails include such items as newsletters, legislative alerts, and solicitations for charities.

An issue concerns the status of an e-mail when it contains both commercial and transactional content. The FTC uses a “primary purpose” test that is much like the famous Supreme Court pornography definition, which was that it cannot be defined, but they know it (in this case, commercial content) when they see it. Features that will help the FTC know it when they see it include whether the subject line and the beginning of the e-mail are transactional; in addition, the commercial part of the e-mail should not overwhelm the transactional part. The FTC will use a “reasonable person” approach: what a reasonable person would conclude when reading the subject line and the e-mail. Quite simply, it is a very subjective test.

Finally, the Act directed the FTC to determine whether it should establish a “Do Not E-Mail Registry,” much like the “Do Not Call Registry” that was set up two years ago for telephone solicitations. The FTC has decided against it, which is good news for businesses. As a result, businesses will only have to keep track of their own lists as recipients opt out, and not a national list in addition.

Of course, there are many more details and many more possible questions about the new rules. If you would like any more information, please contact Jack Goldman at goldman@hpba.org.

¹The original effective date of February 18, 2005, was recently extended by the FTC.

Email Changes?—let us know

NCHPBA recently tested its new communication tool of emailing by state to keep members informed of legislative alerts or obtain valuable survey feedback information. A number of emails bounced back to the office. Yes, some of the errors were made by incorrect data entry by staff but some is because you have changed your email address and forgot to notify us of that change.

Email is the fastest and cheapest way we can keep you informed of issues or get information from you. We don't do

blast faxes whereby you have to pay for the paper. Please take the time to check whether we have your correct email address, especially if you have had a recent change. These were put on every dues notice but we have discovered that most people did not make any changes.

Some of the information we will be sending could be extremely valuable to you—some could help save your business. Make sure we have the right email address. Simply email us with the right one. nchpba@chorus.net

NFI Certification Program Gains Momentum

Since the National Fireplace Institute unveiled its new national certification program in 2002 over 3,700 examinations have been taken and over 2,500 have received the status of NFI certified specialist. In adherence to the commitment for national standards for certifying agencies, new manuals and examinations must be produced every three years. 2005 marks the third year for the first specialists.

Recertification occurs either by retesting or through submission of continuing education credits earned in one of three categories: technical; health & safety; and business (electives). Continuing education credits can be earned through programs provided by HEARTH at HPBA EXPO, through local affiliate annual meetings or other programs scheduled throughout the year; or through manufacturer/distributor programs that have submitted their programs to obtain NFI continuing education credit. A number of manufacturers have gone through a

review process to obtain special recognition as an NFI Advocate. Those advocates to date are listed in this issue.

Each NFI Advocate meets specific requirements and adheres to the following guidelines:

- Include the NFI logo in all their instruction manuals along with a statement suggesting that NFI Certified Specialists install their products.
- Strongly recommend that their dealers become NFI Certified.
- Receive accreditation of their training programs with NFI continuing Education Units (CEUs) to help NFI Certified Specialists maintain their certification.

The number of examinations given, the number passed and the growth of the Advocate program demonstrate that this program is a true success and will be here to stay.

NFI Manufacturer Advocates

Fireplace Products International Ltd.
Travis Industries, Inc.
Lennox Hearth Products/
Security Chimneys Int'l
DESA Heating Products
Empire Comfort Systems, Inc.
Monessen Hearth Systems
Heatilator

Heat & Glo
Quadra-Fire
Blaze King
Country Stoves
ICC Industrial Chimney Company
Harman Stove Company
Hargrove Mfg Corp.
firegear LLC

Jøtul North America
Associated Energy Systems in
partnership with Enviro Products
Robert H. Peterson Company
CFM
Kozy Heat
HearthStone Quality Home Heating
Products, Inc.
Selkirk

Officers and Board 2004-2006

Officers – 1 year term, May 2004-2005

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