

## View From HQ: Conference Upgrades Continue

In 2006, the conference was changed to late October to late August. The RVAA Strategic Plan of April 2004 called for this movement to align the conference more efficiently with catalog insertions of new products, but has received mixed reviews since the timing was initially changed. The association has continued to modify and enhance the conference in the hopes of adding features and benefits that could address existing concerns, both with the conference timing and with its format. Here are a few enacted over the past three years:



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- In 2006, RVAA created a registration fees format that encourages Distributors to bring additional staff to the conference. The Distributor fee was held at a \$400 rate – the lowest of all member attendance fees – and additional distributor attendee fees were dropped to \$200 for the second attendee and \$100 for all additional attendees. In all cases, whether priced at \$400 or \$100, the distributor fees do not meet the actual cost through the hotel for attendee meals and functions. The price has remained at this level nonetheless to encourage distributor attendance.
- In 2006, RVAA re-introduced the roundtable meeting format during the first full-day's lunch to encourage segment discussion about issues of particular importance to their specific needs. In 2008, this segment format will be further enhanced by holding these roundtable lunches in separate rooms based on the particular segment.
- In 2007, the conference date was moved from a LATE August timeframe to an EARLY August timeframe.
- In 2007, the association added a 5-minute travel time between meetings to create a more relaxed atmosphere for appointment sessions and to ease the hurried rush of getting from one meeting to the next. The 5-minute travel time also allows distributors to discuss upcoming appointment sessions in between those sessions.
- In 2007, RVAA introduced a completely re-formatted awards program to focus on individual achievements in both the association and throughout



**Join Us at the Famous Chase Park Plaza for RVAA Executive Conference 2008 August 5-8, 2008**



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the industry. Awards ceremonies are now streamlined and meaningful, providing an appropriate close to each Executive Conference.

- In 2008, RVAA has moved the conference to the middle of the United States in an effort to provide the most convenient location possible to all RVAA members.
- In 2008, RVAA followed through on a commitment to hold conferences only in facilities that have the proper facilities for hosting appointment sessions – an all-suite property.
- In 2008, RVAA has contracted with an engaging conference kickoff speaker who has pledged to provide members with information that they can use immediately upon returning home from the conference to improve their business during this economic downturn.
- In 2008, RVAA chose a conference facility based on its merits for hosting a business-to-business meeting over and above the desire to hold conferences at luxury resorts. The RVAA Conference is a “business-first” event and will continue to be so.
- In 2008, RVAA cemented its commitment to keeping all supplier rooms on two floors to allow for the most efficient access by RVAA distributor members by working daily with the Chase Park Plaza staff to maintain that all supplier members are placed in the appropriate areas.
- In 2008, the association further enhanced the efficiency of individual appointment sessions with the introduction of the “supplier/distributor appointment session agenda.”

The commitment from the Association through the recent years has remained the same, though we have become more focused on the expected outcome of our Executive Conference. In 2008:

- our membership will be greeted at the outset with an educational presentation that, if the materials presented by our speaker are utilized by those in attendance, will provide benefits almost immediately following the conference that far exceed the costs of attending the conference;
- Our membership will have the opportunity to express their opinions on a segment-by-segment in private roundtable luncheon discussions;
- Our membership will be treated to efficient and relaxed meeting schedules with the continuation of the five-minute travel time feature, with rooms located in proximity to one another, with suites that allow or members to comfortably hold meetings, and with the use of a detailed appointment session agenda;
- Our membership will enjoy a facility that remains a five-star property that is perfectly suited for the association’s specific needs;
- Our membership will learn at our Business Lunch about the efforts of our association committees through the year and will be introduced to programs that can and will have a positive impact on their businesses throughout the year – not merely at the RVAA Executive Conference.

The Executive Conference as with any meeting of its kind, remains an equation for every participant – is your business better off for having participating? Our goal in 2008 is to assure that the response to this question will be answered “yes” without hesitation. Looking into 2009, further enhancements to the conference will bring this program – steeped with nearly forty years of history – into a new age of providing membership value to our supplier, distributor and agent members.