

CETA's PLANS & PROGRAMS for



Looking for a place that is emblematic of strong and resilient roots? It is difficult to beat historic and beautiful Charleston, SC, a community enriched and fortified by overcoming wars, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

Charleston is a perfect venue for the PowerClean 2010 conference (September 26–28). After all, this year's gathering of members of the Cleaning Equipment Trade Association marks the 20-year anniversary of CETA.

And CETA, like Charleston, just keeps getting stronger. Membership increased in 2009, says Sherry Helms, executive director of CETA. It will grow even more in 2010, she explains.

Moreover, the bright light of CETA certification is no longer being shaded. For example, buyers from industries and municipalities that depend

by Diane M. Calabrese

on the safety, energy-efficiency and performance of equipment will be invited to the Charleston meeting for one day. "We want to make them aware of what CETA-certified offers" in terms of reliability, says Helms.

"By industrial users, we are talking about colleges and universities, military bases, sporting facilities, airports, etc.," explains Aaron Auger, CETA vice president for 2010 and water treatment division manager at Mi-T-M Corporation, Peosta, IA. That etcetera includes golf courses and private parks, all logical outlets. And, of course, contract cleaners are at the top of the list.

Roy Chappell, senior vice president for CETA 2010 and CEO of Chappell Supply & Equipment, Oklahoma City, OK, has taken a lead in contacting industries. "We want to talk to end users about the importance of

using CETA-certified distributors," says Chappell.

"I've already spent considerable time contacting special industries, for example asphalt, concrete, and cement—and we will follow up with direct mail," says Chappell. "In early spring, I'm going to Charleston for a week at my own expense to promote the conference."

Goals for the conference include having all exhibitor booths sold out by April and making the event the largest CETA meeting ever. "We're talking to new exhibitors in Europe and Asia," says Chappell. "We just need everybody's support and ideas because in my opinion, without CETA, we wouldn't have as many distributors. And more distributors keep the industry competitive."

By December 2009, CETA had already booked the conference banquet

entertainer, James Gregory. "[Gregory] has done numerous corporate events for companies such as Coca Cola and HP over his 20 years in business," says Auger. Prospective attendees can sample what is in store by visiting Gregory's website, www.funniestman.com.

Although the conference will shine, programs sparkle at CETA 365 days a year. "CETA is a dynamic organization," says John Purswell Sr., the organization's president for 2010 and CEO of Alklean Industries, Pasadena, TX. As such, it will continue to change in ways that enhance its objectives.


A top priority for CETA in 2010 is the presentation of its flat-rate billing program at PowerClean. "Flat-rate billing has been the 'Holy Grail' of pressure washer service departments for at least 15 years, actively, and longer than that individually," says Purswell.

The flat-rate billing program has undergone extensive testing. Because most distributors do not bill out more than 3.5 hours service per individual per day, there is plenty of margin for improvement, or gains, in both hours billed and hourly rate, explains Purswell.

Twin goals define the billing system, says Purswell. One is to more than double the average hours billed per individual. The other is "to increase the hourly rate while enhancing customer satisfaction," he explains. The rollout of the flat-rate billing program will be accompanied by a CD that describes the benefits of the approach.

In 2010, CETA is committed to meeting and thriving in the world as it exists. "The most exciting thing to me is that we are talking about growing and doing business in the environment in which we find ourselves," says Purswell.

For instance, in the past, there has been concern about opening the conference to industry representatives that might use the opportunity to inspect equipment, learn and then buy from Internet consolidators. But Purswell explains that the opportunities for sales clearly outweigh any



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downside and he points to analogous situations. "Car shows, boat shows, camper shows, and even concrete shows invite their customers to [visit] their exhibits because it generates interest in their products and promotes the desire to own [the products]," he explains.

CETA members are meeting an ever-increasing number of expectations and regulations at the state, local, and federal levels. To help them do it all with ease, pre-conference and other courses will continue to be available on subjects such as adhering to hazardous materials handling requirements (HAZMAT).

The many familiar CETA programs will keep getting better. "We're going to continue benchmarking," says Helms. "We're bringing on benchmarking for manufacturers."

There will also be more settings in which members can interact. Helms recently launched a Facebook page for CETA. The electronic forum is a good way to "get to know other distributors in the United States," she says.

"My suggestion is to network, network, network," says Helms, doing so throughout the year. As for interactive settings, the annual conference will sustain the brisk pace of last year.

"We had two days of roundtables last year," she says. "Everyone was asking for more. We're trying to do more."

With the reach of CETA going beyond the United States, inquiries for affiliation come from afar. "We have been approached about licensing a branch of CETA in Asia," says Purswell. The bridge could happen "not to promote imports from Asia, but instead to promote awareness for Asian consumers of industrial cleaning equipment and promote Asian consumption."

Since PowerClean 2010 is a special anniversary, one that begins the third decade of the organization, expect the unexpected. "There are numerous 'surprises' that we have in the works," says Auger.

To be sure, CETA members can also expect existing programs, such as scholarships and courses to be integral parts of the organization's efforts. The CETA Education Foundation awards scholarships through competitive application to members in good standing, as well as their employees and families.

CETA also offers shipping programs, leasing programs, and professional coach access to its members. The value of CETA membership reveals

itself in multiple ways, which are sometimes a bit different depending on whether a member is a manufacturer, distributor, or supplier. But "value" is the operative word.

And spreading word of that worth is a meaningful endeavor. Members should talk to end users—institutional purchasers as well as contractors, about the importance of CETA-certified vendors whenever they have the chance, says Chappell. Commitment to excellence means something.

There is "a very ambitious agenda" for the year, says Purswell. It's there to be met, though.

Purswell speaks from experience. "I feel blessed and privileged to have been part of CETA and our industry for the entire lifespan of CETA to date," he explains.

Amid business-to-business interaction and learning, CETA members have a great chance in 2010 to relax and especially enjoy the environs of the annual conference. "Charleston is probably my favorite place in the South," says Helms. "There's something for everyone. It's a great destination for families that want to spend a week," a town with carriage tours, cobblestone, historic sites, sweet tea, shrimp and grits, great golf, and more. *CT*

