

NARSA in 2008: A Year of Accomplishments

By Yarissa Reyes, Communications Manager

In 1964 a handful of companies formed an association to advance the interests, educational needs, and communication efforts of those in the business of radiator repair. Today, NARSA is comprised of more than 500 members in 29 countries worldwide. Although much has changed since the early days of radiator repair and cooling system maintenance, the association's core mission remains the same – to educate consumers, promote educational practices and improve procedures, to foster and promote business friendships, and to conduct research and provide solutions for the industry's issues. NARSA has continuously evolved, updating its focus and strategies to better serve your needs. NARSA was very active in 2008 and saw it as a year of great change and great progress.

According to Tom Bremble, NARSA's Director of Association Services, one of the best ideas that were implemented in 2008 was the formation of various task groups. These groups were formed to address specific needs or events and were able to focus on that one area, freeing up the board to focus on strategic initiatives. This streamlined approach was successful in recruiting members to get involved at the task group level and as a way to find future board members.

The HD Certified Task Group was extremely active and has produced many initiatives to take the program to the next level. Seven new shops have been HD Certified since last year and the task group would like to see that number continue to rise. The HD Certified program is a major focus and some of the things that will come to fruition in 2009 include having an HD Certified booth at the Mid America Trucking Show in Louisville. This will help increase the visibility to fleets as well as owner-operators. The group is also working on a marketing piece on DVD to show prospective clients or interested groups at their meetings. A separate Web site specifically for the HD Certified group is currently in the works and will help drive business to those shops that are certified. This will also facilitate the nationwide warranty that will soon be created.

Another positive outcome of 2008 was an expanded Ed/Tech calendar featuring four meetings that were spread across the country. Attendance at these meetings proved how popular they are with several members attending multiple meetings. NARSA conducted these Ed/Tech meetings in an effort to promote educational practices and improve procedures amongst the automotive cooling service industry. The workshops took place in Stoney Creek, Ontario; Baltimore, Md.; Dayton, Ky.; and Tacoma, Wash.

Each Ed/Tech meeting featured presentations by industry leaders; tabletop displays with the industry's top manufacturers and suppliers; hands-on demos; and tours of manufacturer's facilities. Ed/Techs are extremely popular because they provide an unparalleled opportunity for industry professionals to network and gain valuable industry insight.

Sessions of particular interest this year included:

- The Heavy Duty Outlook, presented by Marty Newell of Active Heavy Duty Cooling Products
- Town Hall Meeting, moderated by Joe McGovern of Tanks 'N Tabs

- The Future of Your Business, presented by Angelo Miozza of West Side Radiator Works

Another initiative that took place in 2008 was the increase use of communications vehicles to address the needs of members and to increase exposure to the general public. In addition to *The Cooling Journal*, NARSA has employed the following vehicles to communicate with the membership and the general public:

- eNews – Increased frequency and was used extensively to promote the spring Ed/Tech meetings, the Annual Convention, and to request information for *The Cooling Journal*
- Web site – Revamped the home page and added a new press room section which contains fact sheets about the association, the industry, the Heavy Duty program, and terminology. In addition, the press room also features the latest press releases and a media guidelines and policies page. Other changes to the Web site include the addition of an International section which offers pertinent membership information in Spanish including an application for membership. This has resulted in new members from Latin American countries
- Public Relations – Increased media exposure through press releases and articles. Effectively promoted NARSA and the heat transfer section at the 2008 AAPEX Show through press releases and three articles for AAPEX Show Daily

2008 also brought us the 56th Annual Convention and Trade Show. Held in conjunction with AAPEX, this year's convention was a bit different than in past years as the staff and board opted to lighten the seminar and workshop schedule, and focus on social events. More than 2,000 exhibitors showcased their state-of-the art equipment and technology at the AAPEX Show, providing opportunities for shop employees to gain more knowledge about the industry, and colleagues to network during educational sessions, on the convention floor, and during social events.

A new Board of Directors took helm during the Annual Convention. They are:

- Chuck Braswell, National Chairman
- Jim Holowka, National President
- Rick Fuller, National First Vice President
- Maarten Taal, Jr., National Second Vice President
- Angelo Miozza, National Treasurer
- Patrick O'Connor, National Secretary
- Vinay Mamidi, Associate Liaison
- Jeff Gibson, Southeast Chairman
- Riekie Roncinske, Southwest Chairman
- Bobby Duran, Northeast Chairman
- Mark Hicks, Central Chairman

The board established new strategic initiatives for 2009 including:

- Engage Associate Members in order to tap into the information and expertise to the advantage of the members
- Expand Heavy-Duty Certification program nationwide through re-branding and marketing efforts while increasing ROI

- Meetings and Events – Determine the best formats for addressing the needs of the members
- Maintain financial stability of the organization in order to be able to remain viable and meet the needs of its members and the industry it serves

Each of these strategic initiatives will be supported by a task group. Anyone interested in participating should contact Thomas Bremble (856) 642-4205 or email at tbremble@ahint.com.

Other activities for 2009 include the Heavy Duty Conference in conjunction with the Mid America Truck Show, March 19 – 21 in Louisville, Ky.; three Ed/Techs meetings to be held April 17 – 18 in Milwaukee, Wis., May 1 – 2 in Houma, La., and October 2 – 3 in Savannah, Ga.; and the 57th Annual Convention and Tradeshow, November 2 – 5 in Las Vegas, Nev.

NARSA will continue to support its longstanding programs while undertaking new initiatives to achieve the goals of its membership. NARSA's strength is enhanced by each member's input and there is a role for each of us to play which will yield great personal and professional rewards. For more information about the ongoing activities and to get involved, please contact headquarters at 856-439-1575 or via email at narsa@narsa.org.