

REMEMBER

September

Hundreds of rent-to-own professionals gathered at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Conference Center in Orlando, Florida for APRO's 2006 Convention and Buying Show, September 21-23. Members enjoyed an exceptional keynote presentation by Steve Ford, the son of former President Gerald Ford, expanded educational seminars, golf, networking and one of the most successful buying shows in the organization's history. Sales of \$14.2 million set a new record for the most purchases made at an APRO show.

**A LOOK BACK at APRO'S 2006
CONVENTION and BUYING SHOW
in ORLANDO**

By DEE DEE YELVERTON



APRO 2006: *Highlights*



“It was a fantastic show,” says Doug Funk of RSSS. “Rent-to-own dealers really came to buy.” Brian Rosen with Florida State Games also was pleased with the buying show: “We would like to thank APRO for another great show. In the 10 years we have been associated with them, this has been our best show.” Florida State Games sold more than \$1.3 million at the show.

BUYING SHOW



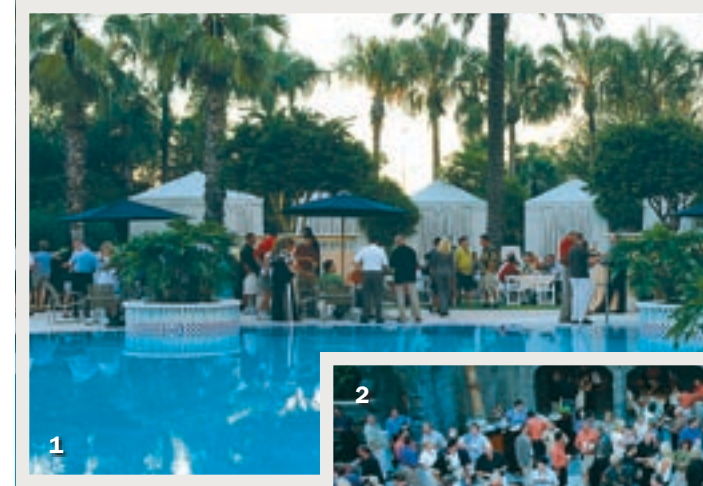
1. Florida State Games' Brian and Denis Rosen with APRO First Vice President Ernie Lewallen. 2. Exhibitor Joe O'Rourke with dealer John Spangle. 3. Angie Ramel with Gidget Mead of Gidget Mead and Associates. 4. Rimco's exhibitors. 5. Dennis Willich of BrandDirect SW talks with Robert and Lou Briley.

GENERAL SESSION



1. Keynote speaker Steve Ford recounted his life as an actor and as President Gerald Ford's son with an entertaining and thought-provoking slide presentation and keynote address. 2. Buddy's bloodhounds were on hand, along with representatives addressing the company's support for programs that help find missing children. 3. Larry Sutton gave an impassioned plea for APRO member participation in the RTO Employee Disaster Relief Fund.

PARTIES



1. Socializing poolside at the Gaylord Palms—the Gala Cocktail Reception. 2. The Welcome Reception, held on the opening night of the convention. 3. The Awards Banquet, capped with the talent and humor of musical encyclopedia John Charles (4).

Golf tournament winners

The team of James Kale, Lawrence Pividal, Paul Schaller and Sharon Tomaszewski won the Tom Kitchens/Joe Eason Golf Tournament at the 2006 APRO Convention and Buying Show. More than 90 golfers teed off in a shotgun start at the Falcon's Fire Golf Course. What started out as a soggy event ended on a sunny note as the weather cleared to accommodate the golfers. Former APRO President Darrell Tissot of Countryside Rentals organized the event for the 11th consecutive year. APRO thanks Tissot for his leadership and Whirlpool for its continued sponsorship of the golf tournament.

Employee of the Year: Murray Beck, Rent One

Murray Beck, vice president of Rent One operations, is APRO's 2006 Employee of the Year. Beck is honored among the 50,000 rent-to-own employees throughout the nation for his contributions to his community. Beck is respected and admired by his coworkers, peers and the many people with whom he interacts in his southern Illinois community of Mt. Vernon.



Whether refereeing a game or raising money and awareness for muscular dystrophy or multiple sclerosis, Beck puts 110 percent into his efforts. He recently won tickets to a St. Louis Cardinals game for his fundraising efforts on behalf of the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Instead of using the tickets himself, he donated these back to the charity so that a young man with MS could attend instead.

His efforts not only raise awareness and funds for these important causes, they also serve to showcase Rent One's commitment to community involvement.

Perhaps one of the highest honors a parent can receive is when a child aspires to be just like him. Those who know Beck and his family say that Beck's son, Brian, is his biggest fan, and wants nothing more than to become more like his father. In addition to being named APRO's 2006 Employee of the Year, Beck was recently honored as Rent One's regional manager of the year.

APRO 2006: *Highlights*

Mike Tissot, Countryside Rental, especially liked Ford's presentation. "It was one of the best keynotes in years," he says. Larry Sutton, Rent-n-Roll, agrees. "My membership in APRO has been one of the main reasons for my success," he says. The convention concluded with an awards banquet where guests were treated to the entertainment of John Charles. Join APRO next year at the 2007 Convention and Buying Show, which will be September 24-27 at the Silver Legacy Resort and Casino in Reno, Nevada.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS



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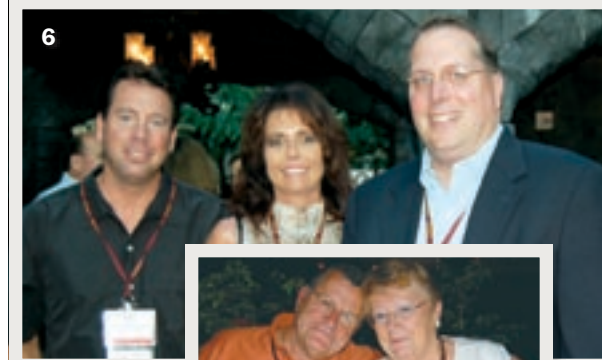
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1. At the President's Reception, honoring state presidents, congressional leadership and Team APRO contributors, all those who've attended an APRO Legislative Conference were called forward to be recognized. 2. Geron and Lisa Vail. 3. Susan Matthews, Howard Hambleton, Alan Hunt, Dan Matthews, Craig Kruetzer and Lindsey Semon. 4. APRO staffers Jim Harmon and Cindy Ferguson. 5. Jim Butler and APRO's Ed Winn III. 6. Lyn and Natalie Leach with Brad Denison. 7. Richard and Miriam Eichlin. 8. Newly elected APRO President Larry Carrico, right, with wife, Sharon, and daughter, Kelly.

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APRO 2006: *Honoring the finest*

APRO Buddy Awards are presented at the convention every year to outstanding individuals who have raised the level of what can be done to better the industry for everyone. Shannon Strunk, APRO outgoing president, presented this year's Buddy Awards during the banquet. In addition to the Buddy awards, APRO also presented awards to state associations: State Association of the Year: Florida; Most-Improved State Association: Tennessee; State Association Legislative Achievement: California; State Association Continued Excellence: Alabama/Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio and Texas.

Ernie Talley Lifetime Achievement Award: Larry Sutton, Rent-n-Roll

The 2006 Ernie Talley Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to those individuals in rent-to-own businesses who have dedicated a lifetime to the industry and have served as a role model for others. This year's recipient is a man who has been in the retail and rent-to-own industry since the age of 15. Larry Sutton is one of the most well known names in



the rent-to-own industry and a long-time member and supporter of APRO. Shannon Strunk, APRO immediate past president, describes Sutton as a "heavy lifter." "His entire career has been 'heavy lifting' in one way or another," says Strunk, "first with refrigerators, washers, dryers and console TVs, to, in more recent years, the 'heavy lifting' of fundraising for APRO causes."

Often affectionately known as "The Reverend of Rent-to-Own," Sutton puts his well-known energy and enthusiasm behind everything he does. Sutton has served on the APRO board of directors, mentored fellow RTO professionals, conducted seminars for APRO and has been a tireless champion and driving force behind the RTO Employees Disaster Relief Fund, established in 2005 in response to the hurricanes that devastated much of the Gulf Coast. In 1998,

Sutton received the APRO President's Award of Excellence and in October 2006, appeared in a four-page spread in the popular automotive lifestyle magazine, *Dub*.

President's Award of Excellence: Terry Beville, Buddy's Home Furnishings

One of the highest honors an APRO member can receive is the President's Award of Excellence, which is presented to the person who exemplifies the best in the industry through involvement and support of industry goals. Terry Beville, chief financial officer of Buddy's Home Furnishings in Tampa, Florida, has been selected as the recipient of the 2006 APRO President's Award of Excellence.

"Before Terry went to work for Buddy's, he served on APRO's Tax and Accounting Committee. His efforts resulted in the IRS ruling that the rent-to-own transaction is a lease and not a sale," says Shannon Strunk, APRO immediate past president. "For the past two years, Terry has worked tirelessly improving APRO's annual



statistical survey questionnaire to make it more relevant and easier to use. His efforts were pivotal last year in organizing APRO's RTO Employee Disaster Relief Fund in response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita and he has been a bulldog in convincing the APRO board to make this a permanent member service," Strunk continues.

"The time and effort Terry dedicates to so many aspects of APRO's activities is tremendous," says Bill Keese, APRO's executive director.

Rental Dealer of the Year: John Spangle, Partner's Rental Purchase

The APRO Rental Dealer of the Year award is presented to an individual who has contributed in a positive and outstanding manner to the rent-to-own industry and to APRO. This year, the award is presented to John Spangle, president of TRIB Group and Partner's Rental Purchase Inc. Spangle is a University of Texas graduate who remains active in his local community, his business and the industry.

Spangle has been a member of APRO for nine years. He is actively involved in the legislative efforts for the rent-to-own industry, both on the federal and state levels, even attend-



ing the last legislative conference with an exchange student who was staying with his family at the time.

He owns the exclusive franchise rights to the Texas territory for Rent-n-Roll. Spangle's support of APRO and to the industry is invaluable.

Heritage Award: Chuck Kuluva and Jeff Loeb

Chuck Kuluva of Rental City and Jeff Loeb of RTO Inc. were awarded APRO's 2006 Heritage Award in recognition of their contributions to APRO and the rent-to-own industry.

"Last year, APRO's Heritage Award was initiated to recognize the unsung heroes of our industry—those individuals who contribute greatly but avoid the spotlight," says Shannon Strunk, APRO immediate past president. "This year, two gentlemen who exemplify the finest of these characteristics—hard working, dedicated individuals who donate their time and talents to the association and our industry anytime the need arises—are receiving this award."

Chuck Kuluva, along with his brother Lynn, own Rental City, with three stores in Kansas and Missouri. "Chuck is a model rental dealer who helps to build an industry while building his company," says Strunk. Kuluva's family has been in the retail and, now RTO, business since 1912 in Kansas City. Kuluva is currently serving his second term as the president of the Missouri Rental Dealers Association. Prior to that, he served as MRDA's secretary/treasurer for four years. Additionally, at a recent Kansas Rental Dealers Association meeting, Kuluva volunteered to serve KRDA as their interim treasurer.

He has supported APRO's legislative conference and has been an APRO member since 1993.

Jeff Loeb, partner and chief financial officer of RTO Inc. has been an APRO member since 1984. After joining the association in May, he attended APRO's convention that summer and has not missed one since. He has been the president of the Virginia Rental Dealers Association since 1987 and is a regular participant in APRO's annual Legislative Conference.

"Jeff is an ideal partner," says APRO board member Richard Rose, who has worked with Loeb since 1984. "I've known Jeff for many years and his dedication to APRO and our

industry is unparalleled."

"Jeff is the quiet kind of guy who gets the job done for his company, his community, his association and his industry," says Strunk.

Norm Smith Vendor of the Year: Ellison Crider

This award is given to an outstanding associate member who has supported APRO and its activities. This year, APRO recognizes Ellison Crider as its 2006 Norm Smith Vendor of the Year. Crider has been involved in the rent-to-own industry for 25 years—nine years in rent-to-own stores and 16 years as an RTO vendor. Crider is currently general manager of RSSS in Corpus Christi, Texas. He has been a tireless advocate of APRO and the industry, regularly attending annual legislative conferences, conventions and other industry events.

Crider earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas A&M University and currently serves on the national board of directors of the Texas A&M University Alumni



Association. Crider also is the vice chairman of APRO's Vendor Advisory Committee and serves on the APRO board of directors.



Members of the Florida Rental Dealers Association receiving the 2006 State Association of the Year award: Larry Sutton, Michael Kent, Jim and Sharon Tomaszewski, Terry Beville, Chris Kale, Mike Rutledge and presenter Ed Winn III.