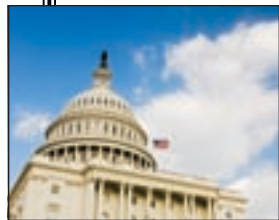


Be heard!

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ent-to-own dealers from around the country will meet April 16-18 at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. for the APRO 2007 Dave Egan Legislative Conference. Mark your calendar and plan to be there. The current federal legislative climate makes this conference one of the most important you will ever attend. ≠ For almost two decades, APRO's federal legislative efforts have been successful because the rent-to-own industry has been united in direction

APRO'S 2007 DAVE EGAN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE OFFERS RTO DEALERS AND VENDORS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THE INDUSTRY'S ISSUES BEFORE THE NEW CONGRESS



and strong in numbers. With control of the House and Senate, the Democrats will be setting the legislative agenda this year and deciding which issues and bills to move through Congress.

“Now is the time for all rental dealers to do their part in protecting their businesses and their industry,” says Bill Keese, APRO executive director. ≠ Take this time to meet with your legislators and tell them about your business. It is vital to the survival of your industry. This conference will give you the opportunity to meet with your legislators, build rapport, develop positive working relationships and dispel the myths and misperceptions many have about the rent-to-own business.

BY DEE DEE YELVERTON



CHERYL GRAHAM

“I am attending this year’s conference because, as a business owner, it is important to me to protect my business and our industry,” says Sandi Whited, president Whited Enterprises, dba Premier Rental-Purchase. “I believe being proactive and on top of situations as they come up allows us to handle the situation more appropriately and efficiently,” she says. “I feel by attending the conference, we will be able to help the aides understand our industry and give them the knowledge to make good judgment calls when they see legislation regarding RTO.”

Lyn Leach, president Ace Rent-To-Own and veteran conference attendee encourages all rental dealers to attend this year’s conference. “This year is such an important year,” says Leach. “We are facing an attack on our industry unlike we have seen in some time. It has never been more important for us to arrive in Washington, as a unified group of dealers, with a message that can have the positive impact on our representatives and senators that is necessary,” he says. “It has been several years since we descended on the nation’s Capitol with dealers from nearly every state and we must revitalize that effort. Now is the time for a call for all hands on deck.”

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

First-time attendees will have the support of APRO staff members and rental dealers who have attended previous conferences. “Last year was the first time I had attended the APRO Legislative Conference,” says Larry Goad, president, Zion’s Rental-Purchase and APRO board member.

“And, let me assure you that there is nothing to be nervous or apprehensive about. APRO has taken care of everything! You will have a concise plan and message to present and you don’t have to go it alone,” says Goad. “You can team up with a ‘veteran’ who’s been before.”

This conference is a great opportunity for rental dealers who have never lobbied Congress before to experience the legislative process firsthand. “Don’t let the fact that you’ve never been before stop you from being a part of the APRO Legislative Conference,” says Goad. “Last year was my first year and it was one of the most enjoyable things I’ve ever done.” First-time attendees need only to bring their passion for the industry. “I am new at this,” says Whited. “But, I am going with an open mind to learn and I am going with the passion I have for RTO to express how important our industry is for our customers.”

In addition to providing lasting memories, this year’s conference is particularly important to the continuation of the industry. “In light of recent election results, I think we have our work cut out for us,” says Ron DeMoss, assistant general counsel, Rent-A-Center. “I recently located to Plano where I am the assistant general counsel at Rent-A-Center,” says DeMoss. “I am extremely pleased and excited to have renewed my association with APRO. Now, more than ever, we need to continue our long standing commitment to work together for the best interest of the industry in the legislative arena.”

APRO will provide the message and all supporting materials to attending rental dealers. In addition, APRO will hold an orientation prior to the congressional meetings where rental dealers can review materials and discuss techniques of conducting a successful congressional meeting. Where needed, APRO also will provide experienced assistance to rental dealers for any congressional meeting, including help with scheduling to ensure the most efficient use of time for you and those in the Congressional offices.

RECEIVE A U.S. FLAG

The individual(s) who schedules the most meetings with his or her members of Congress will receive a U.S. flag that has been flown over the nation’s capital. The flag will come from a senator’s office from the winner’s home state and will be presented to the winner(s) at the 2007 APRO Convention and Buying Show in September in Reno, Nevada. The 2006 flag recipients were Larry, Brenda and Darren Tinney from North Carolina. Their flag came from Senator Elizabeth Dole’s office. ■

Register for the 2007 Legislative Conference online at www.rtohq.org or contact Jeannie Hutchison at 800/204-2776, ext. 108. Hotel reservations at the L’Enfant Hotel can be made by calling 202/484-1000.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, APRIL 17

8–9 a.m. : REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST

Pick up your registration packets, which will provide you with information for your congressional meetings later in the day, then join APRO staff members and fellow rent-to-own dealers for breakfast.

9 a.m.–12 p.m. : GENERAL BRIEFING SESSION

Meet to discuss strategy, review key messages and ask questions before adjourning for afternoon meetings on Capitol Hill.

1–4 p.m. : MEETINGS ON THE HILL

Attend your scheduled meetings with your elected officials to educate them on the benefits of RTO and to ensure the viability of the industry.

5:30 p.m. : INDUSTRY NETWORKING DINNER

Recap the day’s events over dinner with fellow conference attendees.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

9 a.m.–4 p.m. : MEETINGS ON THE HILL

12–1:30 p.m. : INFORMAL LUNCH ON THE HILL

LEGISLATIVE LINGO

Often, the first step in understanding a new process or situation is to become familiar with the terminology commonly used in that environment. The following definitions describe the political terms and processes for those who want to become more familiar with our industry’s federal legislative efforts. With a better understanding, we hope more of our readers will participate in APRO’s annual Dave Egan Legislative Conference, April 16–18 in Washington, D.C.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Each congressional member has a legislative staff to administer and support legislative initiatives. The legislative staff is crucial in the legislative decision making for each elected official. Typically, the staff deals with and makes recommendations on issues before the elected official.

CHIEF OF STAFF: The highest-ranking staff member in congressional offices.

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR: The second highest-ranking member and legislative director for congressional offices.

DISTRICT STAFF: Each congressional office has a budget to hire staff members in the congress member’s district. District staff usually concentrate on local issues but also are conduits for local member issues that are legislative as well.

THE CONGRESS: The Congress is comprised of elected members of the Senate and the House of Representatives. It is the “legislative branch” of our government and has the responsibility of making laws. The current Congress is the 110th and, like all terms of Congress, is two years in length. Every member of the House of Representatives serves a two-year term of office and represents a district within a state based on population. There are 435 members of the House of Representatives and they are called “congressmen or congresswomen.” Every member of the Senate serves a six-year term of office and each senator represents the entire state. There are

100 members of the Senate, two from each state, and the terms of office are staggered so that one-third of the Senate is up for election every two years.

SENATE BILL: A bill originating in the Senate is a Senate bill. Each bill is given a sequential number in order of the date of filing. For example, the 100th bill introduced in the Senate during a Congressional session will be designated as S. 100.

HOUSE BILL: A bill originating in the House of Representatives is called a House resolution. Each bill is given a sequential number in order of the date of filing. For example, the 100th bill introduced in the House of Representatives during a Congressional session will be designated as H.R. 100.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: A conference committee is established to work out differences between a House bill and a Senate bill when the two bills are similar in scope. A conference committee is made up of both House and Senate members. If the conference committee is able to reconcile the differences between the bills, then it issues a conference committee report and the amended bill is sent back to both the House and the Senate for approval. If both houses approve the conference committee report, then the bill goes to the president for approval or for veto.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP: The House of Representatives is organized by party affiliation. The two largest parties are the Republicans and the Democrats. Whichever party has the majority vote will be the party in power

or the majority party. The other party will organize as the minority party. Both parties elect its leadership. Every member of the House will elect the speaker of the house, who acts as the presiding officer in the House. The speaker is from the majority party. After the speaker, each party will elect its own leaders. In the majority party, the next in line in power and influence is the majority leader whose job is to develop the legislative agenda for the majority party. The minority party elects the minority leader who serves as the minority party’s top leader. The minority leader is responsible for developing that party’s legislative agenda. Each party will elect its own whip whose job is to garner support for his or her party’s legislative agenda.

SENATE LEADERSHIP: The Senate is also organized by party affiliation. The vice president of the United States serves as president of the Senate and is the presiding officer of the Senate. All other leadership positions are roughly equivalent to those in the House of Representatives.

SPONSOR: The original member who introduces a bill. Only one sponsor per bill is allowed even when there are multiple originators of the bill.

CO-SPONSORSHIPS: Once a bill has been introduced in either the House or the Senate by the author of the bill, other House or Senate members may add their name in support of the legislation. They are considered to be co-sponsors. House and Senate members who are in leadership positions usually shy away from becoming a co-sponsor. Some members have a blanket policy that they will never co-sponsor legislation. However, most of the members of the House and Senate will be open to co-sponsoring certain legislation that is important to them or their constituencies. Co-sponsorships are on any bill until that bill passes from a committee. ■

—Compiled by Bill Keese, Richard May and Dee Dee Yelverton