

Message From the President

“Adapting”

Dan Sippl

As we adapt to the ever changing needs of society, the urgency for us to become involved and network with each other, special interest groups, organizations and society in general, is becoming more and more paramount to secure our program for future generations. As we travel, meet and make new friends it becomes apparent that the options we have before us are endless. Yes, the old battles may well be there, but we can find various ways and means to turn them into productive opportunities.

Micro Marts/Mini Marts are well above the radar as evidenced at the recent NAMA show in Las Vegas. A large number of product manufacturers, in addition to the traditional vending products, were displaying a variety of different size packaging to meet the needs of Micro Marts. This is exciting because of the costs of packaging small units, larger packages become more economical and our profit margin gets better and less overhead in service time is needed at the machine.

We are working very closely with Shop24 which is one and, perhaps, the only Micro Mart that is fully automated and vandal resistant. A number of these units have been placed around the country in blind vendor hands after approaching the saturation point in Europe with excellent success. Please see related article in this issue of the Vendorscope and join us for a tour of their warehouse in Columbus and an operational site.

We all can recall how we pulled together one and a half years ago to protect our program from the devastating implications of HR 7 and the Portman Amendment. I'm proud to say that we pulled together again in Wisconsin with the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired and several Trade Organizations in the restaurant and trucking industries. A provision in the Budget Bill was withdrawn that would have commercialized our Highway Rest Areas, thereby putting many blind vendors on the unemployment roles. Please see related article in this issue.

In an unprecedented move Wisconsin and Minnesota held a joint training conference for blind vendors with the exemplary assistance from Lieberman Companies, a major distributor of Vending and Amusement equipment in the Midwest states. The focus was on technology and customer service. It was very well attended by blind vendors along with a full complement of the non blind vending community.

Our legislative Committee maximized their visit with NCSAB in Washington DC by making a large number of office visits on the "Hill" before and after a fantastic NCSAB conference. Please see related articles in this issue. We appreciate it when participants write these updates for our membership to read.

As you can see, there is much going on and the bucket list keeps growing, creating many opportunities for you, personally, to get involved with RSVA and be a part of the solution. Why not join us in Columbus, Ohio to learn, but equally as important, share your experiences on how you have and are adapting to meet societies ever changing needs.

See you in Columbus!