

ESTA Directions August 2002

by Mike Wood

It's meant to be a sign of growing old (I'm 46 before you ask) but time seems to be moving quicker and quicker with each passing year. Well, it's either that or LDI really does come around every 6 months.

No, it is me getting old and it's really a year since the last LDI – this October we are back in Las Vegas but in a new hall – the Las Vegas Convention Center rather than the 'Sands'.

One of the highlights, I hope you'll agree, is the ESTA Dealers' Choice Customer Service Awards and the Manufacturers' Choice Dealers of the Year Awards. The winners in each category will be announced at ESTA's Annual Dinner to be held in conjunction with the LDI 2002 show on Thursday, October 17. The winners will also be acknowledged during the LDI 2002 awards ceremony on Saturday, October 19.

The Dealers' Choice Customer Service Awards offer ESTA's Dealer Members the opportunity to publicly recognize those vendors that provide consistently good customer service throughout the year and the Manufacturers' Choice Dealers of the Year Awards offer ESTA's Manufacturer Members the opportunity to publicly recognize those dealers that give superior performance in the areas of Staff, Sales and Marketing, Inventory and Financial Responsibility.

There is some important news concerning the ESTA Code of Conduct – previously only Members of the Association have been able to file complaints alleging violation of the Code of Conduct by another member. This system has been running successfully for a few years so the ESTA Board has concluded that it is time to take this the next step and open it to the general public. Accordingly, starting in January 2003, complaints may be submitted by anyone who feels they have cause. This change, which was planned from the beginning, shows the public that membership in ESTA is important and that an ESTA member company is a responsible company. In another related change, now that Paul Vincent has taken on the Chairmanship of the Technical Standards Committee he is standing down from his role of Chair of the Ethics Committee. Erik Magnuson will be taking over on Ethics and so will get to usher in this expansion. Look for more information on the Code of Conduct changes in Erik's article in this magazine and with your membership renewal.

The Certification Program has reached an important crossroads in its development. It has taken some time to establish the internal procedures and to assemble the key personnel who will lead and serve on the individual working groups. Time enough has gone by that we need to ensure that the goals and intentions of the industry remain in support of a personnel certification program. In order to both build and gauge this support we felt it important to reach out beyond the small group of committed volunteers with an industry wide survey and confirm the level of interest in a program. An on-line survey will be conducted from late November through early December. Please send your email address to certification@esta.org for advance notice of the survey. ESTA needs your opinions!

The time is here to vote for Board Members and Officers for 2003 – you should have received your ballot papers in early October so please respond promptly before the November deadline. Your votes and support are critical for the democratic process. At this point I'd like to thank John Booth for his support of the Board over many years – after being 'Mr. Proxy' at many Board meetings and standing in for members who were unable to attend, John was elected in his own right in 2000. Unfortunately circumstances meant that John had to stand down from this position earlier this year. This was so close to the end of the three year term that we didn't appoint a

replacement – his position is vacant and will be filled by the normal elections at the end of this year.

I leave for PLASA in a weeks time so, if I see you in Las Vegas and I'm looking tired, please gently reassure me that it isn't my age, that I, in fact, look younger than ever and that LDI genuinely does happen every 6 months...