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Chairman: Jim Townsend

President: John Huber

Over the past two months, Jim Townsend, NORA's Chairman, Bob Hedden and I visited with associations and Oilheat retailers in the Midwest and the northwest. In many areas of the country the oilheating is struggling, fortunately many people are working to ensure we prevail in that struggle. With their commitment, and with the support of NORA they have an excellent chance of prevailing.

Since its inception NORA has worked to ensure that local dealers are empowered with information to work for the success of the industry. To that end, we have first quality training guides, training videos, consumer education pieces, and high technology and high efficiency equipment. These have been transformative to many in the industry.

However, not all of the materials and information make it all the way through. Training requires logistical support and planning, outreach to decision influencers such as real estate agents, home inspectors and homebuilders requires an active program of outreach. Additionally, in many of the areas there is not an effective liaison between heating contractors and the oil industry, even though the contractors may be the most visible face of the oilheating industry. We must tackle these issues everyday.

Our regional meetings renew the need for us to develop effective outreach campaigns in all markets. In many cases sharing strategies may be sufficient to get programs going. In other cases, there may be a need to engage professionals to assist in the efforts, while in other cases, it may be simply be rediscovering programs that we have on the shelf, but have not used for a couple of years.

I believe that it is critical for the future of the industry that we are successful in each of the states where Oilheat is sold. We have to preserve the future for the entire industry by working to ensure that we do not lose customers and that we gain more and more each year. As new technologies enter the market, Oilheat may have the opportunity to grow, Bioheat® fuels present an opportunity for us to be the greenest fuel. Similarly, unique opportunities for growth may be spurred by new technologies such as a heat pump combined with an oil burner. Additionally, a study we are completing on energy efficiency will demonstrate the efficiency of oilheating systems, and encourage us to put new and modern systems in new homes. Our success as an industry is dependent on each of us applying the resources available to us, and then contributing our own thoughts and initiatives.