

Convention Report – 2009 Annual Convention

I arrived in Phoenix just in time for the kick off dinner in Mexican style. There were mariachi singers and games for us to play to break the ice. The meal was wonderful and continued to be a pleasant thing to look forward to for each gathering.

Things got serious on Thursday morning when we had our Annual meeting that started promptly at 8:30 a.m. I was so proud to see that the Mayor of Phoenix, Phil Gordon, came out to kick us off. We covered some business issues and had some healthy debates over things like membership characteristics and requirements. It was a great feeling to have a voting voice there and to see the passion these other women feel about each other and this industry. After business was finished we had a keynote speaker, Edith Washington, talk to us about “Turning Points”. It was incredible as a woman and a mother to hear some powerful tips on being a change maker and dream catcher for others. She inspired us all. One of my favorite quotes from her is as follows; “Things turn out best for those who make the best of how things turn out.” We then moved into another great hall to share in the awards for other chapters and regions on some jobs well done. The awards ranged from membership recruiting efforts and longevity recognition to an award for best programs for participation in WIC week.

The first seminar that I chose to attend was for the newest credential offered through NAWIC’s Education Foundation (NEF). You can now add the CBB to your acumen if you pass the Construction Bookkeeping exam created by NAWIC in partnership with Clemson University. Many thanks and kudos to Linda Young, CIT for being one of the authors that created the bookkeeping manual and exam. I have a copy of the book if anyone is interested in learning more on how to get certified and when the first tests will be held.

I selected the seminars related to Green Building not only because it is the hottest thing in construction right now but because it was an area that I was quite uninformed on. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is the rating system most widely used as a green building certification program. It is a way to document success, compare results and increase the desire to achieve and excel social, environmental and economic benefits. The website that the presenter spoke of as the best resource for more information is as follows: www.greenawareness.org

The second session related to Green Building was related to LEED certification, specifically LEED v3. This new rating system and credential will now include CPE requirements along with some specific regionalization to the testing. For example, weighting marks higher for things that make the most sense in different regions, i.e. solar in Arizona, or Seattle with storm run off solutions. For further reading check out the US Green Building Council website for their newest reference guides. www.usgbc.org

The next day was very interactive and included some panel discussions on how to be a successful board member. Since I am a new Director this year, it was especially

important to me to learn the parliamentary rules of order and general protocol for handling a meeting. One of the great things that I learned was that Board Meetings are open to all members. Voting is only allowed by Directors and Officers but the entire meeting is open to members.

Saturday was made up of several breakout workshops specific to different NAWIC events in each chapter. Here are some of the tips I brought back regarding the two workshops I went to.

- WIC week ideas:
 - Partner with the local girl scouts to help them get their “construction” badge
 - Visit job sites with a red rose
 - Miniature women’s golf tournament
 - Call local radio stations, television stations
 - Get a proclamation from local, and regional leaders
 - Distribute magnets and buttons prior to week to start buzz. See me if you want a magnet because I bought about 40 of them to bring back to San Diego.

- Continuing Education and Professional Seminars:
 - Programs in a box which are found on the NAWIC website
 - Could do a member spotlight and have them talk about what they do....Director or new member spotlight would be interesting as well.
 - NEF presentation on courses and potential credentials
 - Meet and greet with each other and have legos as the centerpieces at the table.

The experience at this annual convention was one of fellowship and learning unlike any of the other construction events I have been to. The last night which was the celebration of the installation of the new National Board members and the awards were presented to the Crystal Vision award recipients. I was most impressed with Judith Ritter. Judith Ritter is the owner of Ritter Contracting, a commercial union subcontracting firm. In 1992, after seven years with an electrical subcontractor and supply house, Ritter became a partner in J.A.Woodworking, a small, residential construction company on the verge of bankruptcy. Within a year, she transformed it into a profitable commercial union contracting firm. She is considered a pioneer, mentor and advocate of advancing women in construction. She was the first women to solely own a union construction firm in the Philadelphia area. Her tenacity, high level of professionalism and ability to deliver high quality have made the last 16 years memorable, having contributed to many of the premier commercial buildings in Philadelphia. She accomplished all of this and still created a happy family environment for her children...some of whom now work with her. This and many other stories from the women of NAWIC is exactly what motivated and inspired me to join.

Valerie McGuire CBIZ, Mayer Hoffman McCann LLC