

JOHN TOWLE INTERVIEW *continued from page 5*

with their sponsorship of this program. I arrived late due to some "issues" at check-in, but I understand Andy McJannett was able to get everyone's attention so Anne Graves (PWA President) and Chris Kersting (SEMA President) could address the folks. Thanks Andy.

DVC: Speaking of room check-in, do you have many issues?

JT: One problem we have every year is when someone arrives before 4:00PM and they want their room before 4:00pm. With any large hotel, many rooms are being cleaned but you just can't clean 300+ rooms in two hours so some rooms run a bit late. The pre-assigned meeting rooms are the toughest challenge because we can't put someone in another room because of the printed schedules. Another problem comes when someone shows up on Sunday and their room reservations say they were to arrive on Saturday and then they want PWA to pay for the day they didn't show up. And the biggest problem is coming in a day early when the hotel is sold out. Now we are talking some fun conversations. We have a room change deadline for all the right reasons and our members need to follow all of the deadline dates.

DVC: With the check-in problem out of the way, then the check-out must be smoother, right?

JT: Like they say "not exactly". We send printed meeting schedules to all of our Conference participants with a reminder to change their room requirements NOW. But some folks don't take the time to review their room reservation dates. Then when they are in Phoenix, they want to check-out a day or two earlier and this causes much grief. This is always the biggest problem and we hope our members will review all of the DEADLINE dates for 2010.

DVC: I attended the Monday night pool party and everything seemed to work well. But do you have any comments?

JT: I agree, most everything did run smoothly. The LEDFOOT band rocked all night. One area that needs to be addressed is the security, dinner and drink tickets. Most everyone remembered to wear their name badge for security reasons and we thank them. We issue dinner tickets to everyone who registers for the Conference and we pay for dinners out of registration fees. If we have 50 or 60 "guest" coming for dinner, we needed a way to keep your registration fee low so we made available a guest meal ticket for a small fee. Maybe next year we will see everyone wearing their name badge.

DVC: I did not eat but I heard good reports about the breakfast and lunch meals. Do you have anything to add?

JT: Each company has a "survey" in their packet and I would ask all to complete it and send it to us for this answer. I heard two sides on this issue. Side one "the

meals are great" side two "the meals could be better" so I guess we just need to review the surveys before I can answer this question. Personally I think the omelets at breakfast are wonderful and I found the lunches to be very good. We have a "Menu Review Committee" and they selected our meals this year and I think they did a great job. They will review the survey and make adjustments where needed.

DVC: Any other interesting issues?

JT: I was able to visit the Rep Lounge from time to time and they were all talking about how they have been dealing with the economy and sales trends. They were very upbeat about the direction the industry is heading and have addressed the needs of both their distributors and manufacturers. These folks are in the trenches everyday and their efforts are seeing results.

DVC: Can you tell me about the Tuesday night PWA Sports Bar Party?

JT: The old sports bar is closed and the new one in the registration area may be too small for our group, so Painless Performance stepped up and sponsored some food and drinks in the old sports bar area. The LED-FOOT band played and everyone had a great time. So we would like to send a big thank you to Adrian Murray for getting involved and sponsoring this event.

DVC: Do you plan to move the Conference to another hotel anytime soon.

JT: The short answer is NO. PWA is contracted through 2015 at the Arizona Grand. For the most part, we hear very good reports and most seem to like going to the same place each year. SEMA has the SEMA Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center, the Indianapolis 500 is held in Indianapolis, the Rose Bowl is held in the Rose Bowl and PWA has the Conference at the Arizona Grand.

DVC: Why did PWA decide to hold the Conference at the same place?

JT: Dick, it takes about 3 - 4 years to work out most of the issues with any property and moving the Conference around just for the sake of seeing other parts of the country is not manageable. Some hotels can't give you 500 rooms per night. Some can't feed 500 people for breakfast and lunch in the hour time slot. Some hotels don't have a golf course right out their back door. Some are not located 5 minutes from a major airport. Some hotels do not have suites for every room. (We don't want to go backwards and sit on the edge of a bed for meetings.) I could go on and on, but I won't. The next time someone says "we need to move the Conference around just for the sake of being someplace new" I will refer them to this article.

DVC: Any problems the members should be aware of?

JT: Yes, we had four or five non-registered people walking around the meeting area and some were seen coming out of the meeting rooms. We have rules in place that state nobody is allowed to hold meetings

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