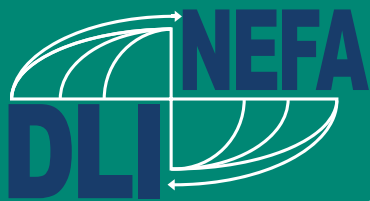


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Fall Fest '14 Report: The Future Holds Many Opportunities for Industry



NEFA HELD ITS 8TH ANNUAL FALL FEST PROGRAM ON NOVEMBER 15 & 16 AT THE WENTWORTH BY THE SEA RESORT & SPA.

The highlight of the conference was the "Future of Fabricare" Panel discussion held after lunch. The panel featured three of the most notable industry experts, Mary Scalco, DLI CEO, Chris White, CEO of America's Best Cleaners, and Charles Anton, President

of Anton's Cleaners based in Massachusetts. Dependable Cleaners' Don Fawcett, a former DLI President and current NEFA Board Member served as moderator for the panel. Each panelist was given a 10 -15 minutes to make an opening statement and then it was opened up for questions from the floor. The panel promised to look at the unique challenges and the opportunities facing the industry -- and it certainly delivered with some thought provoking statements and some controversial ideas.

"The panel was a great success," offered Jim Desjardins, NEFA Immediate Past President, "and while I didn't agree with some of the ideas, it certainly made people open their eyes and take a good luck at where we are headed as an industry. The true success of a panel like this is hard to judge, but when its still the topic of conversation the next morning -- you know it was a good program."

THE FUTURE OF FABRICARE

Mary Scalco went first as she leaned on her 32 years of experience with DLI to forecast where the industry is headed. She outlined the changes in behavior and attitudes in consumers today. She expressed her belief that people, especially the younger generations, are spending money. Their way of life is changing, and consumers are spending money on things that make their life easier. That is where our industry has the greatest opportunity-- we need to tap into that, We need to be as convenient as possible, and to capitalize on spending trends.

She referenced the Proctor and Gamble study that found twenty three cents of every dollar

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

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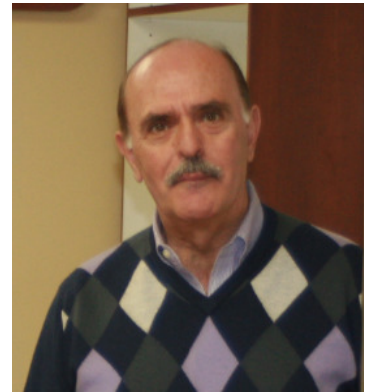
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Fall Fest '14 Another Great Success!

NEFA WAS PROMISING ONE OF THE BEST CONFERENCES EVER HELD IN THE NORTH-EAST -- AND WE DELIVERED.

I can't even begin to tell you how disappointed I was to have missed the event due to illness. After the program all I heard from my friends, peers and suppliers in the industry what a great event I missed. I was able to send some of my managers on Sunday -- and they came back raving about Chris White's presentation and came back rejuvenated about the industry after Chris Allsbrooks terrific Customer Service Program.



John Dallas, NEFA President

Now I know how the people who say they are going to attend the conference every year -- but for a variety of reasons -- can't seem to make it. The feeling of missing out, envious of the great times people had, and a little jealous of the information and training my competitors got that I was unable to share. If you are reading this, and you are one of the people who were unable to make the conference, make a promise to yourself now to attend next year. I have been to each of the first seven, and I can't tell you how much I missed not being there this year.

The NEFA Board should be commended for putting together such a terrific event, and the membership should all be thankful for the continued support of the allied trades who participated and supported the association and the conference. Please, look over the list and say thank you!

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Mass DEP looking to Raise TURA Fees



WITH A 4-2 VOTE, THE MA TURA ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL RECENTLY VOTED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH INCREASING THE STATE'S TURA FEES.

There are three different options on the table and the preferred method is option B. In both option B and C, the impact on drycleaners will be an increase of \$500 per year. Option A has a potential increase of almost \$1500/year.

In order to minimize the impact on small business, the council is heavily in favor of Option B. Since its inception, TURA has never undergone a fee increase, and in light of diminishing revenues, it feels the need to increase the fees to maintain the level of service that is mandated by the legislation.

NEFA has offered written testimony in opposition to increasing the fees on small businesses. It has stressed the burden these fees have placed on drycleaners that are regulated under the Act, and have expressed the further hardship this could inflict on an already troubled industry.

NEFA also made it clear that if a fee increase does indeed pass, that options B and C were the most reasonable and that any consideration of Option A (a \$1500/year increase) is unreasonable.

ARE YOU FILING?

During NEFA's discussions with DEP over the impending fee increases, we have learned that DEP is aware of several drycleaners who should be filing under TURA, but have failed to do so. They are beginning to send out Notices of Non-compliance (NON) immediately, and those non-filers could be facing severe fines and penalties.

Any drycleaner in Massachusetts who uses over 75 gallons of perc per year AND employs 10 or more FTE's is required to file annually. If you feel you may be in violation, or if you receive a NON from the state - contact Peter Blake at the NEFA Office immediately: 603-635-0322, peter@nefabricare.com.



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continued from page 1

is spent on personal care. That is a tremendous opportunity for people in our industry. We need to highlight the convenient services like wash-dry-fold and market to our customers the conveniences and services we offer.

People's fashion choices have evolved. People don't want to wear ties any more. Women don't want to wear high heels as much, and are looking to simplify their lives. As an industry we need to leverage those choices.

Charles Anton was the next speaker, and he focussed on the economic changes taking place in the US. He highlighted the common belief that the middle class is eroding and there is a greater divide among income levels.

He said one of the keys to success in the future is to understand the trends, and to take in as much information as possible, and to use that information as a catalyst to increase your business. Too often the drycleaning industry looks over its shoulders and mimics what other businesses do. We need to stop looking behind and to start looking ahead. Be conscious of the shifts in economics. Know your customer's trends, and learn ways to capitalize on those needs.

He highlighted that there is a greater diversity in class. High-end cleaners are thriving while many of the low-price cleaners are struggling more than ever, and this is a prime opportunity to take advantage of the increased spending patterns of the wealthier consumers.

Chris White was the third panelist and he highlighted some of the areas that cleaners can focus on making substantive changes in their business models. His main message was to start thinking out of the box. Don't be conventional. Times are changing. Consumers are changing. You need to adapt and be flexible in your thinking and in your operation. Stop looking back, the past is the past. Look where customers are coming from and where they are going. Monitor behaviors and patterns, and then formulate plans to increase your business.

The luxury market is increasing. There is a tremendous amount of money being spent on the high end retailers. He suggested if you are struggling with competitive forces -- look into buying them out. Expansion. Leverage your assets. Put your assets to work for you.

Look at what you have to offer, ways you can change and offer added conveniences. Instead of just drycleaning, look at your home routes as a "home delivery service", what added conveniences can you offer? Can you provide additional services outside of your norm? Too often drycleaners are technicians and not entrepreneurs. We need to work and solve what our customers are looking for, be fast, quick in solving problems.



A full house at Fall Fest '14, Learning the benefits of EZ Products' Heat Seal Machines, NEFA'S Silent Auction another members favorite, Chris Allsbrooks exploring customer service



He also stressed the need to leverage your database, and to re-search your customers trends and activities. You have the information to move forward, you just have to grab it and get moving.

BRAINSTORMING LUNCHEON A SUCCESS

In a departure from the traditional luncheon, Fall Fest featured a brainstorming session. Members and attendees were invited to send in their greatest challenges facing their business. NEFA then selected the top seven topics, and assigned each one to a table during lunch. Then as people filtered through the buffet, they sat at whichever table had the most relevant topic.

"It was great to see," offered Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Director, "it worked just as we had designed it. The allied trades and attendees working together to brainstorm possible answers and helpful suggestions to combat some of the serious problems facing the industry."

Tables focussed on everything from innovative technology, to employee recruitment, to data mining your computer system. The one problem many people had was deciding which topic they wanted to learn about.

One person from each table took notes on what was discussed, and the information was compiled by NEFA and sent out to all those who attended.

JAMES PEUSTER, 21ST CENTURY DRYCLEANING

James made a return trip to NEFA's Fall Fest and displayed his

FALL FEST RECAP...

continued from page 4

management training expertise. He was able to explore the need to properly motivate your personnel to increase productivity.

KAREN STACEY OF KREATIVE LEARNING SOLUTIONS

NEFA was fortunate enough to have a leadership training expert on hand to shown proven ways of matching the right people for the right job. With the use of innovative tools like disc profiling and by knowing what to ask during hiring interviews -- Karen helped people understand ways to find the right person for the right job.

CHRIS ALLSBROOKS, TRAINING EXPERT

Chris was able to use small group interaction and exercise to highlight what great customer service is and how to exceed customer's expectations. Chris remains one of the best CSR trainers in the industry, and the attendees all left with a better understanding of their roles in the company -- and the effect they can have on the overall success of the business.

CHRIS WHITE, AMERICA'S BEST CLEANERS

In addition to his role on the panel, Chris was also a featured speaker on Sunday Morning. He highlighted ways cleaners can increase sales, and to increase business in a challenging marketplace. He was joined by new Partner in America's Best Cleaners, Catherine McCann to explore proven methods for increasing brand awareness, and utilizing all the resources at your disposal.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND UPDATES

One of the final programs on Saturday featured Joy Onash or TURI reporting on wetcleaning demonstration sites, Larry Fish discussing all the changes he has implemented in his plant due to the things he has learned at Fall Fest, and one of the most popular speakers of Fall Fest '14, Roger Fritz of ICS. Roger was able to show how he has reduced energy consumption in member plants by using variable speed motors and other devices. This has resulted in \$1,000's in savings. He also has been able to do it mostly at no cost to the cleaner by utilizing government grants. Attendees were flocking to Roger for more information on the service.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

Plans are already under way for next year's conference. Wentworth By The Sea lived up to its 5-star rating, and everyone was impressed with all aspects of the Resort. NEFA is now exploring potential dates and potential alternative sites for 2015. Areas currently under consideration include Boston and the South Shore.

NEFA is already hunting for new speakers and topics to bring to the Convention. Members are invited to email Peter Blake at peteblake@aol.com or call the office at 800-442-6848 to offer suggestions and ideas!



Luncheon brainstorming, small group discussions on customer service, Larry Fish highlighting some of the changes he has implemented in his plant and describing the profound effect its had on his business, sharing thoughts on business improvement during lunch.

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DLI's drycleaning performance test, known as the CPT, is an excellent tool that shows how well a drycleaning system is removing dirt and water soluble soils. "This is one of the most critical services we have for our members," commented Lorraine Muir, DLI's Director of Textile Testing and Research Services, "and the members just don't use it enough."

DLI recommends using the service at least quarterly, but urges members to use it monthly. DLI has set up subscription services for members who want to take advantage of it. Members are automatically sent the testing materials on the requested frequency.

"The tests give you a snap shot of your cleaning effectiveness during the test period," continued Muir, "and if you do it less frequently than monthly or quarterly -- you really risk a decline in effectiveness without noticing. This test is the best way to make sure you are offering the best service to your customers."

HOW THE CPT WORKS

When you order the CPT, you are sent a kit which contains all the testing materials. The towel has four fabric swatches attached to it. Two swatches are used to measure graying, whiteness and yellowness, which show if the solvent has impurities, such as dyes and oils that are redepositing on the fabrics during the cleaning cycle.

Two swatches are stained with DLI's proprietary formulas that measure the ability of your system to remove specific types of soil. A purple swatch shows how well a drycleaning system removes water based stains, such as coffee, tea, juice stains, perspiration and food. You will spend less time and money on stain removal if the drycleaning system removes water soluble soils. Let the system do the work.

A gray/brown swatch on the CPT towel is soiled with dirt only. Good soil removal is dependent on the use of suitable detergent concentration, adequate mechanical action, proper load size and sufficient wash time.

The CPT shows the performance of a drycleaning system at the

time the towel runs. If you run the towel only one time you get a snapshot of its performance. If you run the towel every three months or monthly you can see if there are fluctuations in cleaning performance. For example, if a CPT report shows good to excellent ratings for water soluble soils (food, beverage stains), but then the next report shows a poor rating in this category, you may wish to check that detergent is added in the correct quantity.

USING THE RESULTS

After DLI has received the materials from the plant and they have been analysed, the results and recommendations, if needed, are e-mailed back to the plant. DLI will provide you with recommendations to increase your cleaning effectiveness, and any steps that can be done to improve your cleaning quality. After these steps are taken, it is advisable to re-test the system.

Once the system is operating at its optimum level, and you get cleaning performance results that are exceptional, you will be awarded a certificate. This certificate can then be used in marketing your plant's success.

"We have had members that not only hang the certificate in their call office, but they have even taken a picture of their drycleaner holding it up and put it up on their website, or even Facebook," offered Muir. "We have also helped members write press releases for their local papers announcing the results of the test. It is a powerful marketing tool to be able to show the public you have 'exceptional' quality."

DLI also has a companion evaluation for Laundry, the Laundry Test Piece (LTP), which monitors the effectiveness of your wash formula.

Depending on your level of membership, the tests are included in your membership -- make sure you take advantage of them. Silver members get one of each free, Gold Members get 2 each and Premier Members get 4 per year.





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Inspect What You Expect



HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR EMPLOYEES WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM? ARE YOU MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR STAFF?

Many owners or managers never tell their employees what level of production is expected of them.

Put yourself in your employee's place. How much would you do if you did not know what was expected? Without a standard to meet, many employees will not be fully productive, and instead the likelihood is they will make the hours fit the workload.

"This is one question we are continually asked," commented NEFA Executive Director Peter Blake, "and it continues to be an important topic. On average, what production level can you reasonably expect. One of the keys I find is that anything measured

seems to grow. If you aren't inspecting the production levels -- or counting and evaluating, the minute you start, production will likely increase. When you stop inspecting and counting, over time you tend to revert back and counts will go down. In order to keep people mindful, and aware -- you have to inspect what you expect. You have to measure the results you want to achieve. It is just human nature to strive to hit a target, but only when the target is being measured."

DLI has produced some great information on production standards including averages that you can use as a rule of thumb. The information on how to measure production, and how to set standards is covered in Technical Operating Information No. 674. It is available on the DLI's "Encyclopedia of Drycleaning" of you can get a copy by contacting Peter Blake (877-707-7332, peter@nefabricare.com).

"Understanding your current production, and your potential production can be critical to your success. Keeping in mind the adage, "Inspect what you Expect" can really help you get the most of your resources.



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Connecticut DECD Sets Industry Meeting

AS ANNOUNCED IN JUNE, THE CONNECTICUT DECD WILL HOST INFORMATION MEETINGS TWICE PER YEAR TO PROVIDE UPDATES TO THE INDUSTRY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DRY CLEANING FUND AS WELL AS TO GATHER INPUT AND FEED-BACK FROM THE INDUSTRY.

The second of these meetings will be held on Wednesday, December 17, 2014, from 4 to 6 p.m. at DECD's offices at 505 Hudson Street in Hartford (Room 466). Please register for this meeting by emailing drycleaning@ct.gov.

Peter Blake of NEFA and members of the Hartford County Laundry and Drycleaning Association (HCLDA) will meet Representatives of DECD, the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). These agencies will be on hand to provide updates and answer questions regarding the fund and the progress that has been made.

After years of dormancy, this program has been rejuvenated and there is finally some activity. There have been new applications submitted and the Department will be annually taking more applications. There has also been some new actions taken for people that had submitted applications back in 2009 and even earlier.

"It is great to finally see some progress," commented Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President, "and to see that the industry's voice is being heard. Tim Sullivan promised to make it a priority, to revitalize the program, and to have an open dialog with drycleaners -- and he is fulfilling that promise. It is great to know that the hard work is paying off and we can potentially make the Clean-up fund a viable resource again. This is a great step forward in our continued effort to fix and adapt the program to make it meaningful again for the industry."

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

NEFA has also learned that the DRS has begun to investigate potential non-payers of the 1% mandatory surcharge. Everyone that is involved in the sale of retail drycleaning must pay a 1% gross receipts surcharge to the DRS on the drycleaning. This includes all tailors, laundromats, laundries who sell drycleaning, but have the work done elsewhere. This also includes all drycleaning regardless of what solvent you use.

This is not an optional surcharge -- it is mandated by law. NEFA has already become aware of at least three businesses that are facing penalties for non-filing. If you have questions, or if you are concerned you may not have been filing correctly -- you are urged to contact Peter Blake: 603-635-0322, peter@nefabricare.com.



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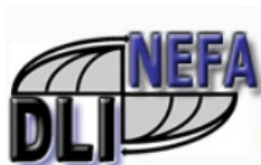
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