

NRRDA President's Letter March 2021

Dear NRRDA Members:

It is hard to believe that most of us have been living under life-altering COVID restrictions for nearly a year. Under normal circumstances this time of year, I would be writing to celebrate the success of our latest Annual Conference and remembering the great fellowship and camaraderie we enjoyed. Unfortunately, COVID affected all of us and we had no choice but to skip the Annual Conference this year. We are encouraged by the rapid drop in positive cases and hospitalizations around the country. While not perfect, the vaccine rollout has certainly reduced cases and gives us all hope that we will see the end of the most stringent restrictions by the end of the year.

With all of this in mind, the NRRDA Board and committees have been hard at work to continue our mission to support our Industry members in the retail and restaurant industries and lift each other up for support during the pandemic. We have made several decisions, which we will roll out over the course of 2021, and I am pleased to announce them now.

Annual Conference

The Annual Conference Committee assembled a great program for the May 2021 Conference. While restrictions are improving in certain areas around the country, we decided to postpone the Annual Conference in San Antonio until March 2-4, 2022. However, we will make the material from each session available live - virtually for all members who need CLE's. While we cannot get together yet, we wanted to bring our leading-edge content to you in a way that is most useful and beneficial. We will present a different topic each month thorough our online platform and allow members to register and attend online at no cost. We will announce each session in advance and give

members ample time to register. We greatly appreciate all of the speakers' time and willingness to present their material online and look forward to seeing many of you with us during those sessions.

Board and Committee Composition

Postponing the Conference was a difficult decision, but made the most sense for all members, especially those of us who may not be able or willing to travel. Without the Annual Conference, we are not able to hold our members-only meeting where we vote for Board members and install new officers. The Board unanimously approved a change in NRRDA's by-laws, which allows us to extend Board members' and officers' terms any time the members-only meeting cannot be held. Therefore, our current Board and officers will remain in place until our Annual Conference in 2022. Committee composition will also remain unchanged, however if you are interested in joining or changing committees please let the NRRDA office know at info@nrrda.org, and we'll help you join in whatever capacity you'd like to serve. NRRDA's strength resides in our members and volunteers and we appreciate all you do to help support our mission.

Lighthouse Conference

While we will not be able to meet in person in May, we fully expect to be able to host smaller in-person meetings during the fourth quarter this year. Our Lighthouse Committee is already working on conferences that will take place in October. We have yet to schedule a specific date, but we will be hosting the conference on both coasts on the same day. We expect the meetings will take place in Atlanta and Southern California virtually connected with members and speakers attending in person at both locations. The Lighthouse conference is generally smaller, which enables us to host up to 100 people in a way that complies with whatever social distancing requirements will be in place at the time. We will be addressing the emerging legal issues technology brings and that our Industry members confront every day. While the program is still under development, we are very excited to be planning in-person conferences on both coasts and create an opportunity for us to meet in person in the safest way possible.

We will announce dates and locations in the near future so please be on the lookout for invitations to register and save the date!

Industry Only Calls

Last year we recognized the need for our Industry members to learn from and work together to address the never ending issues presented by COVID. At times, we had more than 30 members on monthly calls in order to collaborate and guide their organizations through the pandemic. We hosted 17 calls last year and will continue hosting them regularly year, with our next one planned for late April. Our first call for 2021 year took place in Mid-February and was attended by 16 members. We are off to a great start and look forward to continuing to provide a platform that enables Industry members to work together.

2020 is a year that many of us would like to forget. We are hopeful that by the end of this year, 2020 is a distant memory and we can reclaim whatever the new normal looks like. On behalf of the NRRDA Board, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and participation in NRRDA. We are nothing without active and engaged members and look forward to seeing you all after what has already been too long of a break.

Stay well and cheers to a great new year!

Brian Chance, NRRDA President