

**PRESIDENT'S PEN**  
Page 3



**MESSAGE FROM  
PHYLLIS**  
Page 4



**PEARLS &  
PEARLSNAPS**  
Page 8



**PROGRAM AT  
A GLANCE**  
Page 9



**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**  
Page 10



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Page 12



**BOARD NOMINEES**  
Page 13



**A CLOSER LOOK**  
Page 20



**GREETINGS FROM  
GREASY GIRL**  
Page 21



**MIXED SIGNALS**  
Page 22



**UNREALIZED BENEFITS**  
Page 23



**DISPLAYERS &  
ATTENDEES**  
Page 25





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## From the President's Pen ..

### A Proactive Board

I've mentioned to you all previously that as President, I felt it was my job to work hard to promote and enhance the organization benefits, plus engage the Board of Directors to do the same. The good news for me is that the current board agrees with all of this, so when we had a discussion at the Summer Board Meeting about members who haven't been attending the convention (and why) we decided to be a little proactive.



Jeff Griggs - President

We split this "absent" member list out so each board member had four or five contacts to make so we could get feedback as to why the respective member had not been coming. The answers we received lead me to wonder about some people, but what I am most proud of is this – we didn't sit on our butts and speculate or perhaps gossip..... we called each of them personally. And after an introduction we asked these specific questions:

*Is there a reason you haven't attended our conference and trade show in the last few years?*

*What can we do to get you to Little Rock?*

*Did you receive the registration information?*

*Is the Association meeting your needs?*

*Do you have any questions for me (about the Association)?*

The feedback was recorded and we will be discussing at the January board meeting, but I can personally tell you that my calls were very productive, and reports from other board members were the same. Did we get anybody to commit to the show because of the personal calls? Yes. Did we hear some negative comments? Yes. Did we open the door for the possibility of inactive members to reconsider becoming active again? YES! Do we know more than we did before we called? Well, duh! Kinda simple stuff when you think about it.

I'm starting to think this proactive board that you elected is getting some traction.....

See you in Little Rock.

Jeff Griggs

e-mail: [j.griggs@tractorpartsasap.com](mailto:j.griggs@tractorpartsasap.com)  
(please note new e-mail address)



## BULLETIN

PHYLLIS COX, Editor

### NTPDA

KIM CARROLL, *Operations Manager*

PHYLLIS COX, *Meeting Planner/Event Coordinator*

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# Message from Phyllis

It's hard for me to believe that Christmas is right around the corner. Especially when we are experiencing temperatures in the 80's these past few days. I actually hate cold weather but think we need a cold front at least by Christmas...which I'm sure we'll get. Hope this finds all of you doing well in both your businesses and with your families. I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Speaking of the New Year - I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Little Rock for our 2013 Annual Conference and Trade Show. The NTPDA office and the Board of Directors have worked hard to bring you a great show. Our Marketplace that we introduced last year was well received. We have tweaked it a bit and we will be bringing it back to this year's trade show. One big change is that the trade show will

close on Friday afternoon followed by our dinner and dance. You won't want to miss this year's entertainment - Paula Nelson Band will be performing! Yes...she's Willie's daughter and is an amazing singer/songwriter. See Page 8 for more information. We will also be holding our nominations for our 2013 Board of Directors. Please review Page 13 to see who is running for the board.

This is our Show Issue and contains information you will want to review before the trade show in January. Of course if you have any questions for Kim or I...or the board...just give us a call or shoot us an email.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

*Phyllis*



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# PAULA NELSON BAND

**P**aula Nelson was born into a family of music and entertainment. She started playing piano and singing at the age of seven. She drew early influences from singers like Jesse Colter and Rita Coolidge, whose bluesy, supple vocal style provided one of Paula's earliest templates as she found her own voice. Texas Monthly has called that voice "torchy," and the Los Angeles Times praised, "There's no missing the unforced power of Paula's singing."

The band just finished their second European tour in March 2011 and are gearing up for summer. Paula and the band have been playing together since the summer of 2004.

*"The chemistry between this band and I, is magic both on stage and off. I consider them both my friends and my family and feel truly blessed to be in the company of these amazing musicians." -- Paula Nelson*

Join us Friday night for a rockin' good time with Paula Nelson and her amazing band. It's been a long time since we've had a theme for our "closing ceremonies" so to celebrate Paula and her guys let's do "Pearls and Pearlsnaps." Now...for those of you that don't know what "pearlsnaps" are take a look at the picture provided.

And...ladies you probably all have pearls - and if you don't - a reason to go shopping. We'll have a great time Friday night!

PEARLS  
&  
PEARLSNAPS





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January 30th – February 2, 2013  
Little Rock, AR**

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE\*

***Wednesday, January 30, 2013***

2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Early registration /Statehouse Convention Center/Osage  
6:00 p.m. “Early Arrival Party”/Clinton Presidential Center  
Meet in Lobby of Peabody Hotel to board bus to event

***Thursday, January 31, 2013***

7:00 a.m. ***Displays set up. Must be completed by 3:00 p.m. – Governor’s Hall II***  
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Registration – Osage  
8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast/Foyer outside Peabody Salon C

**MORNING SESSION** (Afternoon is on your own)

Peabody Salon A

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Michael Libbie – “Five in Twenty-Four” Five things a business can do in the next 24 hours that will have a major impact on sales and marketing.  
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break  
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Rex Nelson - “Southern Fried: Welcome to a Land for Duck Hunters, Frog Giggers, Barbecue Eaters and Tall Tale Tellers.”

*Lunch and afternoon is on your own.*

5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. “Welcome to Little Rock” - Reception/Sneak Preview of Trade Show/Statehouse Convention Center/Governor’s Hall II  
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **NTPDA Marketplace I** –Regular members meet in small groups for potential business opportunities with exhibitors. (Details to follow)

***Friday, February 1, 2013***

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Registration - Registration Booth/Osage  
9:00 a.m. Trade Show Opens/Statehouse Convention Center/Governor’s Hall II  
10:00 a.m. – 11 a.m. **NTPDA Marketplace II** – Regular members meet in small groups for potential business opportunities with exhibitors.  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon General Session/Election of Officers – Governors Hall II – All Members Please Attend  
12:00 Noon Lunch/Trade Show Area  
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **NTPDA Marketplace III** – Governors Hall II  
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Displays Meeting – Trade Show Area - Board Members Please Attend  
4:00 p.m. Trade Show Closes – See you next year in Tucson, AZ

**Please tear down promptly at 4:00 p.m. – Governors Hall II is NOT available to us on Saturday**

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Cocktails/Peabody Salon C  
8:00 p.m. Dinner/Salon C  
***Following dinner join us for dancing with the Paula Nelson Band  
Theme for the evening is Pearls & Pearlsnaps – more info to follow***

**Saturday, February 2, 2013**

9:00 a.m. Breakfast/Board Meeting/Layfette Room/Peabody Hotel

***All day departures.***

# Keynote Speakers

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2013

Michael Libbie -- 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.



## **"5 in Twenty-Four"**

Five things a business can do in the next 24 hours that will have a major impact on sales and marketing.

Michael Libbie, a long time member of NTPDA, is an advertising and marketing professional specializing in creative methods to reach consumers. He owns Insight Advertising, writes for the Des Moines Register Online Business Edition and hosts Insight on Business a web based program about marketing.

Rex Nelson -- 10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.



## **"Southern Fried: Welcome to a Land of Duck Hunters, Frog Giggers, Barbecue Eaters and Tall Tale Tellers"**

Rex Nelson is the president of Arkansas' Independent Colleges and Universities in Little Rock. He is a regular columnist for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and appears regularly on various radio shows.

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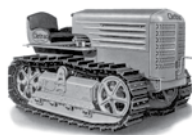
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By Kim Carroll



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you know that NTPDA has a discount program with Hertz that can save you some money during those times?

Hertz has more than 8,100 rental locations in over 147 countries worldwide. The Hertz Discount Savings Program is available through corporate locations only. There are independent licensee locations and corporate locations but the discount is only valid at corporate locations. I started to list on this page all of the corporate locations in the U.S. but quickly realized there are too many to list here. For a complete listing of locations visit the Hertz website at

[www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com). Once you are on the site you can select Locations and then the country, state, and city. The location type (corporate or independent licensee) will be indicated for each Hertz location in each city.

I wanted to test out the savings so I selected 7 days in the month of December and received a pricing of \$307.49 to Pay Later and \$230.62 to Pay Now without our discount. When I put in the NTPDA discount code those same 7 days and car came back with \$204.01 to Pay Later and \$181.33 to Pay Now. So you can see the type of savings you might expect and of course every little bit helps these days. So the next time you need a rental car remember to check out Hertz. E-mail me at [kim@ntpd.com](mailto:kim@ntpd.com) or call the office at 877-668-0900 if you need the CDP code or a copy of the Hertz membership card.

Remember this is YOUR Association. Please feel free to contact us with questions, suggestions, or comments to assist us in making this an association that benefits you now and for years to come!

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***NATIONAL TRACTOR PARTS DEALER ASSOCIATION***  
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TO: NTPDA Members

FROM: Nominating Committee

RE: 2013 Board Nominations

DATE: December 3, 2012

The NTPDA Nominating Committee would like to present nominations for the 2013 Board of Directors, including President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. This is our present slate of nominees for NTPDA Officers, Board of Directors and Associate Directors. Please be advised that we will continue to accept nominations and will accept floor nominations. The election will be held during our annual business meeting on Friday, February 1, 2013 at our 29th Annual Conference & Trade Show being held in Little Rock, AR.

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Vice President: Doug Swanson, Abilene Machine, Inc., Abilene, KS  
Secretary: Kathie Witte, Gap Tractor Parts, Inc., Cranfills Gap, TX  
Treasurer: Tom Winkleblack, Schaefer Enterprises, Wolf Lake, IL

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Randy Mittlestadt, Worthington Ag Parts, Maple Grove, MN

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

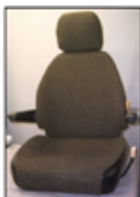
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# ↓↑ Sales Are Up, Margin Is Down ↓↑

**By Bill Lee**

I can't tell you how many times this year I have heard my clients use these exact words. It does seem that housing starts are gradually improving, but everyone is so hungry for sales that too many managers and salespeople are using the most convenient marketing tool at their disposal – cut the price.

We all are tempted to cut the price or bid jobs at skinnier gross margins than we need to cover our expenses, but for all of the wrong reasons. Many times we do this because we lack confidence in the competitiveness of our pricing.

## **Typical sources for “market” prices:**

Word of mouth -- Word of mouth is not a very effective way to determine what the “market” is for the products you sell. It's easy for customers and prospects to extract a discounted price out of a salesperson when the salesperson is a bit gun shy and insecure about asking for verification of the competitive price he's being asked to meet. He wants the order so badly that he will meet just about any pricing he hears come out of the customer's mouth if he thinks it will lead to an order.

Show me a copy of the invoice – Visual verification is, of course, the most credible way to determine if the price your customer says he has been quoted is really the truth and not just a technique to lower the customer's cost of goods sold. Customers and prospects often resist showing a competitive salesperson a copy of an invoice. The question salespeople must determine is, “Why so much reluctance?” Is the customer lying or is the customer protecting a confidence?

I believe someone in management should be accountable for determining the market price for commodity products and adjust those prices perhaps as often as weekly. He or she should certainly review commodity pricing every week at a minimum.

My favorite sources for what's really going on in the market place include my most conscientious vendors or suppliers. These guys talk to not only you almost every day of the week, but they also talk with each of your competitors just as often, so I rely heavily on knowledgeable vendor salespeople to keep me abreast of what's going on in the market.

Another confidence builder is for the “pricing doctor” in each company to document on a sheet of paper the prices he or she hears from the field. Then ask the following questions about the reported lower price:

Who said what and when did they say it?

What are the odds that the source of the competitive information is just using me to get a lower price he can shop to one of my competitors?

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is the integrity level of the person claiming to have been quoted a lower price?

What is the name of the competitor?

What is the salesperson's name?

What is the size of the job being bid?

Was the person asking for the quote asking because he was preparing to buy or because he wanted to know what price to quote his customer?

Is this a “new low?” or is this the first time you have heard this price? In other words, did the price represent precedent setting pricing? (This is where documentation is vital to an accurate answer.)

Nothing is confidential -- Managers, pricing doctors and salespeople alike must understand that whatever price

they quote is going to spread throughout the community like wild fire. Pricing is like water in that it seeks its own level.

Great question to ask the individual telling you your price(s) is not competitive to help determine if he is just shopping or if he sincerely wants to give you the business:

“Mr. Customer, IF I am successful at meeting this price, are you telling me that you will give us the order?”

If the customer says yes, I will give you the order, then use this statement: “In that case, would you be willing to go ahead and give me the order contingent upon our meeting the competitive pricing?”

If he gives you the order, you know the customer is sincere. If he says no, you cannot have the order on that basis, the odds are good that he's just playing games with you to get pricing ammunition he can use to keep his favorite supplier honest.

Let's assume a company has a 25% gross margin and is selling \$1 million each month. For every percentage point that company loses in gross margin, it must gain just over 4 percentage points in sales to earn the same gross profit dollars.

$\$1,000,000 \times 25\% = \$250,000$

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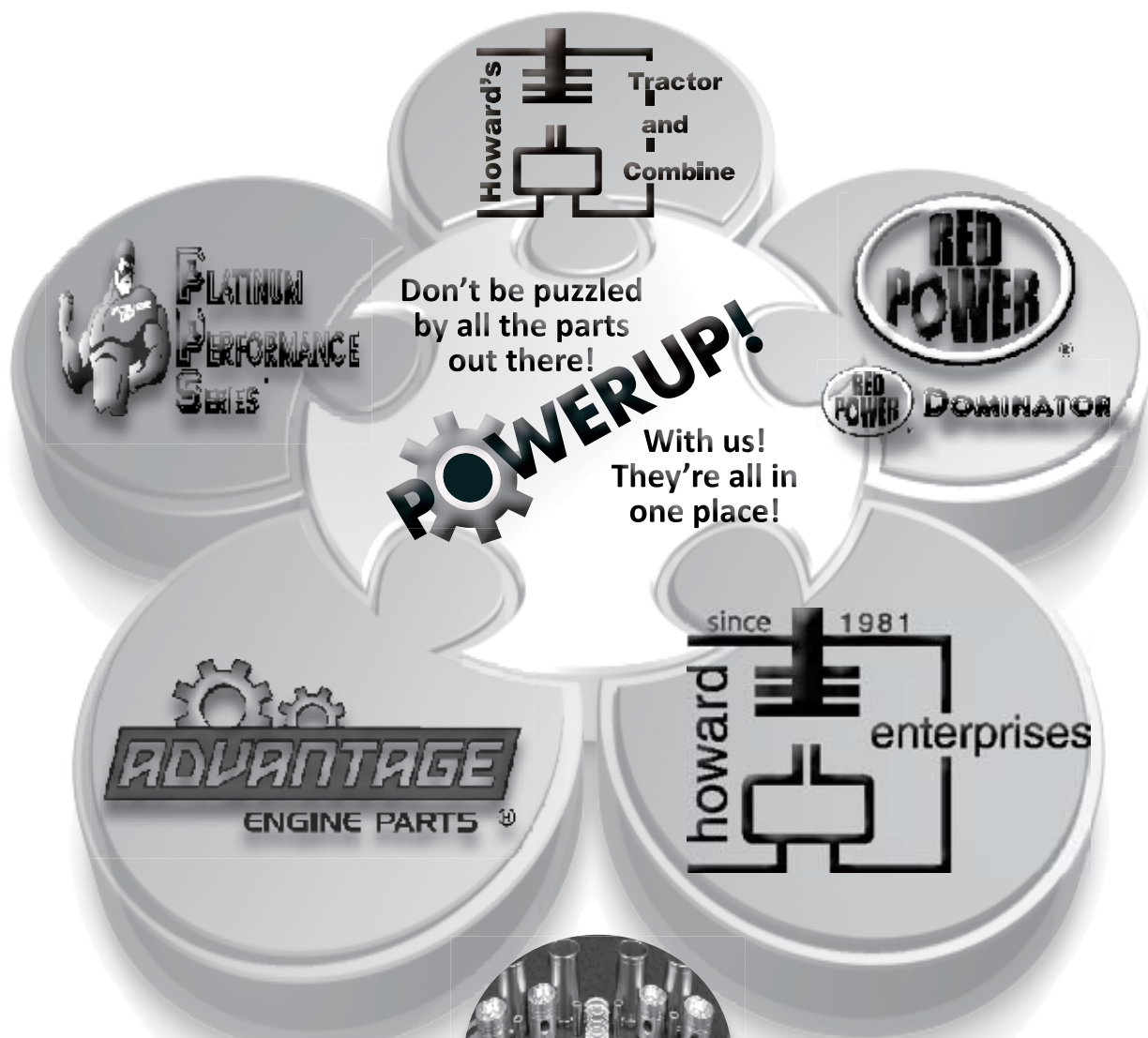


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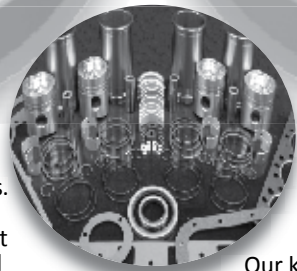
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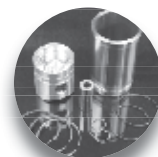


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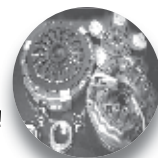
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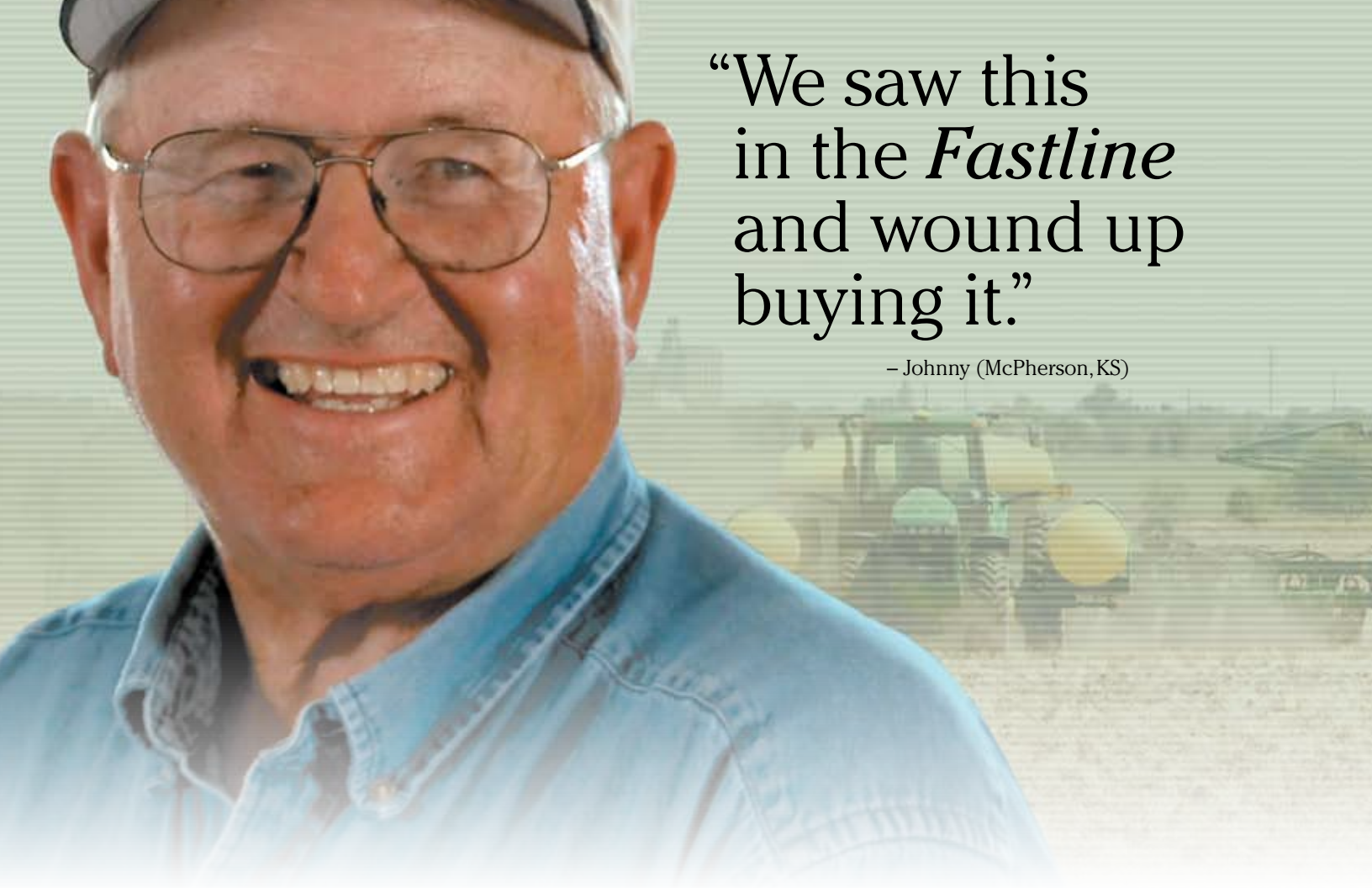
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## Closer Look at President Obama's Tax Policies

– November 15, 2012

Michael Fulco, CPA, CVA



Now that the campaigning is over, the votes have been tallied, and President Obama has been reelected, it is time to take a much closer look at his proposed tax policies. The proposals set forth by the President are similar in many respects to the proposals he made during his 2008 campaign. While it is questionable whether the President will have the required support of the Republican

controlled House of Representatives to enact his proposals, we will examine them as proposed and let you judge them on their own merits.

### **Ordinary Income Rates**

The President proposes allowing the 33 percent tax rate to return to its pre-2001 level of 36 percent as scheduled under current law but only for joint filers with adjusted gross income over \$250,000 (\$200,000 for single filers, with both values in 2009 dollars and indexed for inflation in future years). For married couples filing jointly, the 36 percent bracket would begin when taxable income exceeds \$250,000 minus the sum of the standard deduction for couples and the taxpayers' personal exemptions. For single filers, the threshold would start at \$200,000 minus the sum of the standard deduction for single filers and the taxpayer's personal exemption.

### **Capital Gains Rates**

In 2011 and 2012, long-term capital gains (gains on assets held at least a year) face a maximum tax rate of 15 percent. Taxpayers with regular tax rates of 15 percent or less pay no tax on that income. Under current law, tax rates on long-term gains are scheduled to revert in 2013 to their pre-2003 levels of 10 percent for taxpayers in the 15 percent bracket and below and 20 percent for taxpayers in higher tax brackets. The President would allow the rate to rise to 20 percent starting in 2013, but only for high-income taxpayers. The proposal defines high-income taxpayers as those in the top two tax brackets.

The higher rate on capital gains could induce taxpayers to hold on to assets with accrued gains and therefore realize fewer taxable gains. If people expect the President's budget to go into effect, they may also change the timing of gains realizations. Anticipation of higher taxation of long-term gains after 2012 would lead affected taxpayers to realize more gains in 2011 and 2012 and fewer in 2013 and subsequent years.

### **Dividend Rates**

In 2011 and 2012, qualified dividends face a maximum tax rate of 15 percent. Taxpayers with regular tax rates of 15 percent or less pay no tax on that income. Under current law, qualified dividends will be taxed at regular tax rates in 2013. The President would allow that to happen for taxpayers in the top two tax brackets. The higher rates on capital gains and dividends would increase marginal tax rates on capital

income for high-income taxpayers and could reduce private saving. It also might cause corporations to accelerate some dividend payments forward into 2012 to take advantage of the current lower rate.

### **Personal Exemptions and Itemized Deductions**

High-income taxpayers also face reductions of their personal exemptions and itemized deductions as their income exceeds specified levels. The 2001 tax act scheduled a gradual phased elimination of the reductions beginning in 2006 with complete elimination in 2010. The 2010 tax act extended the elimination through 2012, after which, under current law, the reductions return at their original levels. The President proposes to allow both reductions to resume in 2013 but only for high-income taxpayers.

### **Estate Tax**

In 2001, Congress voted to phase out the estate tax gradually and repeal it entirely in 2010. The 2010 tax act reinstated the tax with an effective \$5 million exemption and a 35 percent tax rate. The act also for the first time allowed portability of the exemption between spouses: any of the \$5 million exemption not used when one spouse dies may be added to the exemption available for the second spouse (if he or she has not remarried). However, unless Congress acts, the estate provisions in effect prior to 2001 would be reinstated starting in 2013. Under these provisions, estates valued at \$1 million or more would again be subject to tax at progressive rates as high as 60 percent, and portability would disappear.

The Obama budget proposes permanently setting the estate tax at its 2009 level beginning in 2013: estates worth more than \$3.5 million would pay 45 percent of taxable value over that threshold. It would also make portability permanent, allowing couples to share a combined exemption of \$7 million.

### **Corporate Income Taxes**

The President has proposed cutting the corporate rate from 35 percent to 28 percent. He says he'd accomplish this by scaling back business tax preferences, but has left those targets largely unidentified. He'd retain the current tax regime for multinational firms, but limit their ability to delay tax by keeping foreign income overseas. Beyond those international tax changes, he has identified only a handful of minor base-broadeners, such as higher taxes on oil and gas producers and owners of corporate aircraft.

### **Congressional Outlook**

As mentioned previously, the past two years have been marked by perpetual congressional deadlocks limiting the President's ability to advance his agenda. Immediately following the election, leaders of both parties have called for bipartisan action to address the "fiscal cliff" we face on December 31, 2012. Republicans and Democrats all agree that inaction is not an option. Historically, "lame duck" sessions have not succeeded in passing meaningful permanent legislation, and a temporary fix is much more likely. Until a permanent solution to the country's fiscal problems is agreed upon, the overall level of uncertainty in the business community is likely to persist.





Greetings from

# Greasy Girl

*By Terri Stevens*

Hello Friends:

If you are like me you cannot even believe that it is time for Christmas. It seems like the months are more like weeks. As I am writing this article it is the end of November and Christmas is just a few weeks away.

I can't believe how fast my life is going. I have been a member of this association for over 15 years and I have been on the board for awhile. I have been in the tractor business since 1976 and when I was young I thought anyone that had been in a job that long was surely ready to die. But now that I am here I don't feel that way at all. Funny how your perspective changes as you get older. My preacher says that he and his wife are getting to the age that when they get ready to go somewhere one of them has to remember where they are going and the other one has to remember how to get home. There is some truth to that.

Age is a funny thing. I recently went to a funeral for a friend of mine and she was 100 years old. The preacher said he had asked her what she attributed living so long to. She said that she loved the Lord and had always been happy. My friend was born in 1912 so can you imagine all the changes that she had seen and how many hard times she had lived through? However, that is the things that make life worth living. Those are the times we remember when life is hard and a struggle and we make it through. She had lived on a 300 acre dairy farm and lost her husband and her son. However, at the age of 90, she moved to another home and she did all the moving. She was an amazing woman; always had a smile on her face and was always very grateful for anything that you did for her. She lived alone in her own home when she passed onto glory. I am sure that her great attitude had a lot to do with her long life.

What is your attitude? Do you

make the most out of difficult situations? Do you learn from your hard times?

This has been a difficult year with the drought but, as we go into winter, the pasture is growing back and things are green again. In the bible it says there will be a time for all things.

I want to thank each one of you for the opportunity to be in this association. It has been a pleasure to serve on this board and to call you friends. It is so neat to have friends in all the states and even into Canada. I love how we can travel and go to different places and come to your businesses and be among friends. That is a wonderful thing.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in Little Rock. We are sure this will be a great show with the Marketplace, and being in a central location (however Florida wasn't too bad in Jan). So come ready to learn, network, meet some new people and even have some fun. The Peabody is a great hotel. So we will see you there.



**Greasy**



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# ***Sending “Mixed Signals”?*** by Michael Libbie

We’ve all seen what happens when a company changes the look of a familiar package of products we’ve used for years: Confusion. You might be looking right at the box of “***Self Weasel Winding Torque Inducers***” but because some dummy in the marketing department said a blue box is better than a yellow box...we get confused.

In advertising and marketing it’s always best that we “***think like a consumer***”. Here is a prime example and hang with me because this story impacts your business success:

This past Sunday a friend of ours spent **12 hours** on a television commercial shoot. That’s right...12 hours. It was a full fledged operation with set building, lighting, talent and removal of the set. Twelve...hours. Why?

This is the part you need to pay attention to: Our friend



has had this client for several years and for most of that time he has told his client, “*You are selling really high end stuff but your television ads look like...crap.*”

Did the client listen? No, not until my friend formed a focus group familiar with the business to review about a dozen television commercials that had been shot over the years. Their opinion was, “***You are selling really high end stuff but your television ads look like...crap. You are sending mixed signals to consumers. Stop it.***”



So the questions are obvious: Are you sending mixed signals to the consumer? Does the product/service you sell match the marketing message or are you confusing the consumer?

Everything is in play from your business cards to your advertising message. It all matters and if you think like a consumer you’ll avoid sending mixed signals.

*Michael P. Libbie is a long term member of NTPDA and owns Insight Advertising, Marketing & Communications a full service advertising agency based in Des Moines with clients in the United States and Europe. You can learn more at [www.InsightCubed.com](http://www.InsightCubed.com) where you can subscribe to his blogs and other marketing/advertising tips.*

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# UNREALIZED AND UNDERUTILIZED BENEFITS

By Tom Winkleblack

President Jeff mentioned in his most recent *Bulletin* article that the board has frequently (even very frequently) discussed the benefits of being a member of the National Tractor Parts Dealer Association. The board is constantly discussing and debating the relative value of the benefits that we currently offer and we have compared them to what other associations have available to their members.

Our thought process is that a valuable package will attract new members and thus we are always discussing amongst ourselves what we could or should be pursuing as far as benefits.

Merriam-Webster defines value as a fair return or equivalent in goods, services, or money for something exchanged. That sounds like mostly tangible objects, but who can put a real value on the camaraderie we offer? Due to the current economic climate the board decided to increase membership

dues to a paltry \$400 in 2011 (the first time they have been changed in at least 15 years).

Jeff admitted that he had been embarrassed by not being able to rattle off most of the NTPDA benefits when questioned about them.

I was even more embarrassed when I was reviewing the list of benefits this summer and I wondered how significant the OfficeMax discount was since I regularly see their statements when opening the mail. So I asked one of our clerical staff who regularly orders office products about it. Her response to me was, "What OfficeMax discount?" Further investigation revealed that the OfficeMax Partner Advantage Program has a list of 239 specially priced items (discounts in the 27-73% range on a few that I checked). Orders of a minimum of \$50 qualify for free shipping. Our rural location dictates that we order products and have them shipped frequently. I hate to admit that we purchased 13 cases of copy paper last year from OfficeMax that we could have saved \$12 per case if we had known about and asked for the discount. Yes, it's that simple-when you phone in an order you mention being an NTPDA member and receive the discount. It gets worse! We found several items on their list we have been paying more for and buying from other vendors.

Herein lies the problem. We have a selection of good member benefits that are probably either unrealized and/or somewhat underutilized because we have not effectively promoted them to our membership. Please take a moment

to scrutinize the list on our website to make sure you are not overlooking an



opportunity to save some money, i.e., add value to our relationship.

We have tried to respond to requests and suggestions as to how we can grow and attract more people to our annual convention and trade show. Of course, this always leads to the ever-present, never-solved membership criteria discussion.

This is your association so please share your ideas for growth with a board member and please be understanding if we don't get it perfect on our first attempt at change.

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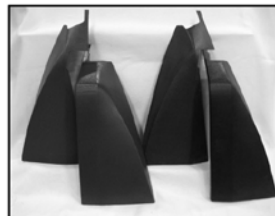
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