

SMMA Spring Management Conference

NAVIGATES RECOVERY

The SMMA – Motor and Motion Association is ditching the slickers and galoshes for this year’s Spring Management Conference, themed “After the Storm: Navigating in the New World.”

Conference chair Matt French, vice president/general manager of AMETEK Inc.’s technical and industrial products division, crafted the nautical inspired theme for last year’s recession-focused conference, “Charting a Course through Uncertain Times.” French and the conference planning team opted to continue with maritime terminology to retain continuity between 2009 and 2010. “The chair last year and this year has been very much involved in putting the program together,” Bill Chambers, SMMA operations director, says of French.

For the first time, the spring conference is being held in Fort Myers, FL. “We typically go west one year and east another,” Chambers says. “We try to select one coast or the other; although, we have also gone to Arizona.”

The event kicks off on a Tuesday evening with the chairman’s welcoming reception followed by a casual dinner. Members of the Permanent Magnet Division arrive earlier in the day to attend their scheduled meeting in the afternoon. The conference sessions begin Wednesday morning and wrap up Thursday at noon. “This used to be a Wednesday-Thursday-Friday affair. This past fall we started with a Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday format,” Chambers says. “A lot of people don’t like to travel late on Friday.”

The springtime conference focuses on specific management issues, as compared to the technical focus of the annual fall conference. Presentation topics include preparing for recovery, an update on the Electric Motor Education and Research Foundation (EMERF)—a pre-competitive motor research consortium—supply chain management, an investor’s view of the industry, the impact of mergers and acquisitions on the industry, taking advantage of the U.S. Commercial Services export resources and an economic forecast.

Two Wednesday afternoon breakout sessions correspond to the presentations: preparing for recovery and supply chain



(Courtesy Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa).

management. “The presentation is usually 45 minutes to an hour, normally PowerPoint followed by a few questions and answers,” Chambers says. “Breakouts are longer, more informal and include more speaker-attendee dialogue.

“It’s an opportunity for the people particularly interested in that topic to get into more detail with that presenter.”

There are several pre-conference options on Tuesday, including golf tee times and an SMMA Motor and Motion College, “Basic Motor Theory, Operation and Application.” The course is instructed by William H. Yeadon, PE, president of Yeadon Energy Systems Inc. There is a separate fee for the half-day course, which includes instruction, a course manual and afternoon refreshments. Chambers says the SMMA Motor and Motion College is an important part of the organization’s mission, which is to be a voice for the motor and motion industry while providing a forum for education, communication, research and networking.

SMMA has more than 120 member companies that include electric motor and motion control manufacturers, suppliers, users, consultants and universities. Chambers estimates 75 to 100 members will attend the conference; although, “it’s hard to tell because of the economy. Last year the attendance was way down.”

One other feature of the conference is table top exhibits. There may be 10 to 15 exhibitors, which is about half of what is typical for the fall technical conference. “It’s important to note that this is not a trade show. They are table top exhibits,” Chambers stresses. “It is unlike a trade show because the only times exhibits are on display are during the coffee breaks and continental breakfasts. The exhibits are not on display during the conference session.”

Chambers, along with his partner and wife Betsy, SMMA executive director, coordinate event planning details such as marketing and hotel arrangements, with input from SMMA volunteers and, after many years with the association, the benefit of knowing what works for SMMA. “We really don’t want a trade show,” he says. “The emphasis is on information and education. We’re trying to give people some good, solid material by the way we put the program together, along with ample time for interaction with industry colleagues also attending the conference.”

The SMMA 2010 Spring Management Conference takes place May 4–6 at the Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa, Fort Myers, FL. For more information, visit www.smma.org.