

The way I see it...

New Year – New Hope

APPY New Year everyone – I hope you had a joyous and safe holiday season. One thing I particularly enjoy about this time of year is the optimism that seems to overwhelm our thinking as we contemplate the year ahead. Whether it is losing weight or expanding sales of equipment, the mood is typically one of optimism and hope.

It has become customary with our January issue to include an article by Lynn Grooms that looks at the outlook for the year ahead in the equipment industry. In preparing the article, she visited with several knowledgeable industry experts, present company excluded, about the forecast for 2008. Generally speaking, 2008 shapes up to be a pretty good year. Although some sectors of our industry may experience some fall off, particularly in construction related to residential housing, other sectors will be strong, such as those related to the renewable fuels boom currently sweeping North America. The outlook article begins on page 4.

Also, as we begin 2008, it is time for our biannual "Dealer-Manufacturer Relations" survey. Every two years, we check with you, the dealer, about the relationships you have with your suppliers. This year, working closely with the association executives of NAEDA's affiliates, we have updated and revised the survey to allow you an opportunity to rate more of the lines you carry – and not just the major OEMs.

The survey, distributed by e-mail on the 15th of this month, allows each dealer four opportunities to rate manufacturers of agricultural, outdoor power or light industrial equipment. Another change we believe will be popular is offering text boxes for your comments. All responses will be held in strict confidence – only the aggregate of the ratings will be made available.

The good news: The survey should only take about 10 minutes to complete – even less if you rate fewer than four manufacturers. But the more responses we receive, the better.

Information from these surveys helps us provide meaningful feedback to your manufacturers/suppliers – and they take it seriously. One company has used past results in its advertising and another indicated its results from the 2006 survey were "unacceptable" and laid out a challenge to company employees to do better.

I look forward to seeing many of you over the next couple of months at annual meetings of NAEDA's affiliated associations. It was a treat to visit with so many of you during the closing days of 2007 and take advantage of each opportunity to discuss the exciting issues we are working on at both the NAEDA and affiliate level. If there is ever any doubt about what we are doing to earn your support and respect, I encourage you to contact us and give us a chance to address your questions or concerns. In fact, I encourage you, if you haven't done so already, to get a copy of our 2007 *Report of Accomplishments* and read it as a start. This document, available by e-mail or in printed form, also contains information about the issues of concern for 2008 as well.

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As the title of this month's article suggests, the New Year brings new hope. It's a reminder to me, and hopefully to you as well, that hopes and dreams are important. Planning is important. Execution or acting on our hopes, dreams and plans is critical and now is the time we typically lay out our expectations for the year ahead. Write them down. Share them with your family or staff as a way of providing additional support and/or motivation to complete your plans.

My experience suggests what we think about, write down and focus on can become reality. If we plan for success, we will find it. Henry Ford once said, "Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right." It's a lesson we instilled in our kids when they were growing up and I hope it's a lesson we will continue to appreciate.

Personally, I am optimistic about 2008 and I hope you are as well – and that's the way I see it.

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