



Region 7 Review

A monthly publication for the members of IPSSA, Inc. – Region 7

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IPSSA, INC. REGION 7

Board Officers

Mike Gregg, Director, (619) 224-3863
Brian Davis, Region Treasurer
Don Wall, Region Secretary

Director's Corner

I thought it would be interesting for me to outline my experience at the B.O.R.D. meeting in February. Our IPSSA organization has 10 regions that encompass California, Arizona, Nevada and Texas, and there are more than 3,000 members. The meeting was in Long Beach, and I arrived late Thursday evening. I attended an executive session prior to the regular meeting on Friday morning. At this time we discussed the pending agenda items and gave our regions' opinions. Because I had not yet been installed as your Region 7 director, I was unable to vote on these items. We presented Sally Ryan with a plaque and retirement gift. Vickie Lester, Sally's replacement, attended the meeting also. We discussed the increase in liability insurance (the \$6.00 increase is effective April 1 and will be reflected in your March billing), the general outlook for a new IPSSA web site, and new prices and programs for the IPSSA merchandise store. The BOARD meeting was held later that afternoon. I was installed as your new director on Saturday morning and then attended the leadership seminar and was proud to see the great turnout from our region. There are four more B.O.R.D. meetings this year; they will all be in the LA airport area. If you are interested in attending, it's a reasonable distance to travel.

Prepare for Tax Season

--by Joyla Gregory

This time of year is rather busy and definitely exciting. It encompasses all our hopes for starting the new year off strong, with renewed energy placed into our businesses, and yes, of course, tax season. This is the time for quantifying where all the money has gone and evaluating how much closer we are to our financial goals.

Before filing your tax returns, take a look at using both your business and personal retirement plans in the best manner for your current situation. Remember to consider tax sheltered and tax deferred investments for other members of the family as well. Also, look at what funds should be reinvested back into the business: new capital, storage requirements, expansion needs, etc. And, of course, work with your tax professional to properly file your applicable forms in accordance with the tax code.

After you have filed your returns, paid what you owe, and received any refunds to which you are entitled, take a look at your finances for the 2002 tax year. Plan the contributions you are going to make this year to your retirement accounts, college funds, vacation funds, and the like. Start off the year with a plan for keeping as much of the money you make as possible.

Being self-employed means you can make more money, it means you can save more money, and it means you can spend more money. Be sure to save as much as you can in preparation for the day when you no longer

Calendar of Events

- **SecuraMatic Seminar**, Mar. 7, Mar. 8. Blake Sales Associates, (619) 246-9377, fax (619) 226-2259.
- **Waterpik Technologies**, Fri. & Sat., Mar. 15 and 16. Laars Heaters, San Diego.
- **Waterpik Technologies**, Sun. Mar. 17. Jandy Control School, San Diego.
- **Walk for MS**, Sun., Mar. 17. SD chapter encourages everyone to attend.
- **R7 Board Meeting**, Tues., April 23, 7:00 p.m., Conference Room, Holiday Inn, SD.

desire to or are unable to continue working full-time for a living.

Enjoy this year to its fullest financial potential for you and your family.

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Donation Straight from the Heart

The San Diego chapter of IPSSA donated blood during the chapter's last meeting of 2001. The event, held in connection with the San Diego Blood Bank and Red Cross, generated 16 units of blood. Begun seven years ago, the chapter's blood donor plan started after several members came to the aid of a local woman with a life-threatening illness. Chapter members and supporters now donate more than 50 units of blood annually.

--as seen in **Service Industry News**, February 15, 2002.

Labor Rate\$

Pool service technicians are a group of highly specialized individuals who have not come to value their self-worth. Other trades, such as electricians, plumbers, HVAC, masons, carpenters, painters, auto mechanics, etc., are highly specialized, in that they primarily perform one task. Yet, a pool service technician performs many trades, many of which involve the health and safety of their customers.

A survey of the labor rates charged by other specialized trades averaged \$95 per hour. Many had a "service call charge" or minimum charge, which was in addition to the labor rate. This charge was to cover the overhead of providing the service call (wages paid while traveling to site, truck costs, fuel, maintenance, tool overhead, etc.). If a solo pool service technician stepped back and took an overview of their billing practices, they would soon realize that the "flat rate for time on site" billing practice is actually costing them money. The owner of a service company with employees quickly realizes that there are fixed costs associated with providing a service call, no matter how much time is spent on site performing repair work.

The cost of just being in business is called overhead. These are expenses that a business incurs even if no profit activities are occurring. For the single operator business, consider a stormy and rainy day -- the service technician does not go out into the field, so no profit activities are occurring. Yet, expenses are incurred. How, you may ask? There are all of those idle items costing you money while there are no profit activities. You may be making truck payments, though the truck is parked in the driveway. The Yellow Pages ad, IPSSA dues, auto insurance, license bonds, business license fees, all still need to be paid. These items contribute to your business overhead; they are expenses incurred even though you are not out earning income.

The only means a service technician has to earn money is to sell their knowledge. Providing troubleshooting advice free of charge over the phone just costs you income. Charging just

for the actual time on site is also costing you money. In order to cover overhead, there should be a minimum service call fee, based upon your individual overhead rate. Then there should be a minimum charge for time spent on site. Clients should be charged for our troubleshooting their problem, even before you quote them the repair charge.

We are the only trade wherein a trained professional will drive across town in sweltering heat and miserable traffic, diagnose a problem for free, and tell the customer exactly what needs to be performed, then provide a no-cost estimate to repair or solve the problem. Auto mechanics charge to diagnose your car's problem, then charge you to repair it. Electricians, plumbers, and doctors all charge for their time spent diagnosing a problem. They expect to be paid, even if you go and obtain a second opinion. These trades realize that all they have to sell is their education and training and that there is a cost association with that time... overhead.

It's about time the pool service industry wakes up and starts charging its worth. The consumers will abuse us as long as we continue to let them. Let's stop being the "pool guys" and start acting like "professional service technicians".

--as seen in the February 2002 issue of the **Santa Clara Valley IPSSA** newsletter.

Cool Web Site

Hey, Road Warriors! When you're out there servicing your pool accounts, do you get tired of getting caught in traffic due to road construction and detours? The County of San Diego Department of Public Works has posted a very good Web page detailing current and upcoming road closures, possible delays and roadwork. It has an address longer than Highway 78, but here goes:

<http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/landuse/works/roads/road-close.htm>

As seen in the *North County Roads* column, **NORTH COUNTY TIMES**, December 26, 2001 by **Dan Weisman**, (760) 761-4414, dweisman@nctimes.com.



Water Watcher Tags

As discussed at the February 2002 R7 meeting, it was suggested that the Water Watcher Tags distribution campaign be started again in the spring, when people start gearing up for the summer and swimming. Well, it's that time again. If you would like to purchase more tags (\$35 for 50 tags), give **Mike Gregg** a call -- he still has inventory. Don't forget -- the Tags are a business expense and therefore a write-off on your taxes. But don't think of the expense. Remember -- these tags can increase awareness of water safety and thus save lives. As **Don Wall** (San Diego East County chapter) said, "If the tags save even one life, they are worth the cost."

These are great tools to promote water safety, as well as your business. Give them to your clients with the monthly billing. Staple tags to press releases printed on your letterhead and distribute to real estate agents, PTAs, and property managers for homeowner associations. I know of several homeowner associations that are having their annual meetings in the spring and inviting their entire membership. A great venue for you to do a quick presentation on water safety! To get a list of property management companies, contact Community Associations Institute (619-299-1376, www.cai-sd.org)

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