

## CONFERENCE CALL RE: SC/SE-EPPC 2009 REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM

August 1, 2008 – 2pm EST

### Participants:

Chuck Bargeron (GA)(President)  
Joyce Bender (KY) (Vice president)  
Kristen Gounaris-Allen (Secretary) (VA)  
Lee Patrick (TN) (Treasurer)  
Stephen Enloe (proxy for Nancy Loewenstein – AL)  
Nancy Fraley (TN)  
Brian Bowen (TN)  
John Brubaker (SC)  
Karen Brown (FL)  
Johnny Randall (NC)  
Connie Gray (GA)

### Discussion:

John - Referenced his email of the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Was shocked to learn that SE EPPC didn't fund the Symposium. SC has been scraping by, but the Symposium Committee has a meeting in 6 days to put things in place for the Symposium. This is a very unusual way to run things.

Brian – One of the triggers for the upfront expense is the conference planner? John Confirmed. Brian pointed out that in all past meeting have been planned under this scenario and have never needed a planner;

Chuck – One point of the point of the conference was to make money for the state (KY, TN, GA all chimed in and said that the conference had made them a good deal of money; NC – hosted twice, and benefited financially. But they had the means to pay upfront costs.)

John- Can very easily hold a SC conference, doesn't need to do a regional conference when the region is not playing a role in the work and support.

Chuck-I agree. When we get to a planning stage, we should re-look at this business plan

Joyce – Don't the regional folks get larger grantors for fund-raising;

Brian – Yes. Brian got grants for Joyce and Co. (BASF). Regional sponsorships. Forest service. MS Commission paid for Biloxi. No regional sponsorship has been located for SC, per Brian, as he's "not in the loop." State supports the region and vice versa; And every 6 or 7 years, it's nice to support, and this is not all that atypical;

John – Unfortunate that this has come down to this planner; Planner = \$4000 (\$25/head @ 150 participants); Brenda Davis comes with a lot of experience; A number of experienced Symposium

planners on committee and no one felt they had the time to plan this; Wanted to maximize flexibility in planning—either pay a facility fee like Georgia Center and they do all, or do it this way. Planner services to include: attendance at symposium, booking of venue, registration design, price negotiation for foods, socials, hospitality, sponsors, field trips, brochure planning, scheduling speakers, social events, vendors, press releases, reserving field trip vehicles, AV needs, registration packets, confirmation letters, participant needs, badges, catering, onsite needs, registration desk, speaker needs. ***Includes cost of venue.*** Planner is independent of hotel venue. There is no fee for the meeting facility; And planners have the ability to negotiate discounts;

Brian – So if there is a planner, what does the committee do?

John – Committee decides what is done, and the planner gets it done.

Chuck – Committee will need to develop agenda

John – And committee will be involved in fund-raising.

Brian – Would be good to see conference budget.

John – Don't have one, but usually \$10-\$11K total for the event.

Brian – Do committee members have extensive experience with conference planning;

Chuck – How is planner being paid

John – Sliding scale; \$1300 up front; We can do it without help, but that doesn't seem appropriate; If I had known about this, I wouldn't have taken it on; Should have hired her a long time ago;

Brian – We should have had this conversation 6 months ago; And now we're starting conference planning with a \$4000 deficit;

John – Planner can negotiate discounts on participant charges;

Karen – So you feel like the planner would be paid for by cost savings elsewhere;

Chuck – Let's not get lost on this planner issue, since it has already been done;

Connie - \$25/head was at least what GA had to come up with for them to take care of this stuff; Think a planner is a good idea; Karen agrees it's a ton of work, etc.

Chuck - \$6000 is a lot of money for the SE EPPC to cover up front without more information on what it's being used for.

John – This is the figure that is adequate to cover all front end costs; We could do it without any money, but with the money it will shift the quality of their program; And could accept less; Think it should be done this way in the future;

Brian – Done for 11 years without a similar request; Seems a bit unfair to those that have hosted the symposium in the past

John: easier for chapters to raise money than a region. Meeting will be better if they can focus more on fundraising. It will benefit SE-EPPC, who John feels is under-supported.

Brian: cost should be leveraged against 60/40 split.

Chuck: Tony and Chuck offered help at planning meeting and it was rebuffed. SC said they would handle it. Now they want upfront expenses paid.

Chuck – There is a need to address how this is done;

Joyce – That is an issue for another day; What we have now is that this has not been done correctly; There has been plenty of communication with the chapter when this issue didn't come up; There are ways that this can be done without taking up tons of time and money;

Chuck- There were many conference calls where SC didn't seem to want any help or input from SE committee; This was never brought up;

Karen – Is there a compromise that someone could pose?

Nancy – How will you be able to increase revenues with this planner?

John - by having more time to solicit sponsors

Nancy - This is hard to swallow since the cart is before the horse but this may be a new way of doing business and SC is the guinea pig.

Chuck – This doesn't increase attendance since 150 people is where we're capped...

John and others – haven't had 150 at conferences recently;

Lee – John has a good point; May get a different crowd and may be hard to get 150 on the heels of the NAA in Nashville; Will this be reimbursed after the conference;

John – Could be a loan; All he's talking about;

Connie – In GA there was some resentment along the same lines;

Chuck – And this needs to be fixed, but today is not the day;

John – se-eppc underfunded. Yes, a loan. SE needs to be more vested, play a stronger role. This is an opportunity.

Joyce – SC made the decision on its own. Leadership offered by Tony and Chuck but discarded. John said he was not present at that meeting. Feedback was that Chuck and Tony expressed concern about hiring the planner but committee thought it was the way to go.

Chuck – if they don't need the money, why are they asking?

John – He's not going to be motivated to work on aspects of the meeting if se-eppc doesn't contribute something.

Karen – Suggests that someone propose an amended amount;

Brian – How about this be a loan that goes against the 40% reimbursement;

Karen – What is SE EPPC going to offer to earn 60%

Chuck: Made a motion that SE-EPPC allocates \$3,000 upfront to SCEPPC as a loan to be repaid prior to the 60/40 split of the proceeds of the regional meeting in 2009.

Connie – Second

Joyce – Too high – no; Otherwise unanimous “yes”

Chuck working on agenda for sept 11 conference call. Will be in touch.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05PM.