

AN EVENT TO REMEMBER

— By Amanda Armendariz —





2009 was forecasted to be a year of “down,” and, for the most part, any reports from the media pretty much confirmed this prediction. Sales have been down, employment is down, and attendance at trade shows is down. So imagine our surprise when we were told — by multiple people! — that the 2009 PARCEL Forum was the best ever. Not “Well, you did the best with what you had” or “It was an okay Forum, considering the circumstances,” but “This was the best PARCEL Forum I’ve ever attended!” Wow! What a relief, especially considering that we drove down to Chicago feeling slightly anxious about what awaited us, only to find out that our expectations were exceeded beyond our wildest dreams!

Yes, attendance was slightly down — not many trade shows in 2009 can say otherwise. But the quality of our attendees was phenomenal. It was as if companies adopted a mindset of “If we’re going to spend the money, we might as well send the people who really want to be there — the real decision-makers.” So the slight downturn in numbers was more than compensated for by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic professionals who attended the Forum in early October.

“This is my third Forum in four years, and I’m still amazed at the content that is provided. The small-parcel industry is in constant change, and the Forum allows large and small shippers to discuss the impact the change has on their business.”

—Patrick McNamara, *Transportation Manager, RGH Enterprises, Inc.*

Our speakers, as always, were well-received. Some of the hottest topics this year were international shipping, negotiating — both rates and the human side of negotiating — and our peer-to-peer sessions with interactive discussions on technology, operations and carrier relations. And the exhibition hall was a lively spot, with plenty of attendees taking advantage of

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- ▶ **AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY** PARCEL Editor Dan O’Rourke (far left) takes the chance to catch a break between sessions and chat with some of the attendees and speakers. Attendees often say that in addition to the session content, one of their favorite things about the forum is the chance to meet with other like-minded peers in a casual, intimate setting.



► **BETTER GET THERE EARLY...** If you just peeked into many of the sessions taking place at the PARCEL Forum, you'd have no idea that the general trend of 2009 was decreased attendance at trade shows. Many sessions, whether they dealt with international shipping, rate negotiating or the fundamentals of transportation, were packed, with every chair (and some spots on the floor!) taken. PARCEL credits a large part of this success to our advisory board, which is made up of some of the top professionals in this industry. Their input regarding session content is always extremely valuable, and we'd like to thank them for another great year!

“Another great year. Very well done both in the sessions and the exhibit hall. Staff that puts on the Forum is both professional and friendly. Great job in putting this on. I fully intend to attend again next year and many years after that. We seem to bring more employees from my company every year. It's great insight into trends and changes in the industry. Thank you for a wonderful experience again.”

—Zach Bartlett, Delivery Services Manager, Blue Package Delivery

the knowledgeable vendors participating (I'm sure the bingo-card raffle, which allowed one lucky attendee to win \$5,000, didn't hurt either!)

And, of course, we can't forget our special events. The Endicia-sponsored WILDS (Women in Logistics and Delivery Services) Reception was well-attended, and the group was thrilled that they were able to put together a Midwest chapter. The USPS-sponsored Opening Night Reception provided a wonderful opportunity to network with like-minded peers (and enjoy some delicious food). Morgan Stanley's William Greene, the Opening Day Keynote Presenter, gave a speech at lunch that achieved the

difficult task of being both informative and entertaining, and the carrier roundtable (which Mr. Greene moderated) provided some deep insight into the current parcel industry.

All in all, we can honestly say it was one of the most enjoyable, enlightening and productive Forums we've ever had. And we're already gearing up for next October — hope to see you there! ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION regarding the 2010 Forum, which will be held October 4-6 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago, please visit www.PARCELForum.com.



► **WHATCHA GOT FOR ME?** Many people found the solutions they were looking for in the exhibit hall and said that alone justified their decision to attend.



► **A GROUP OF PEERS** Mark Taylor (far left) was lauded for his unique session that enabled a select group to have real, meaningful discussions with great takeaways.