

Masonry Heater Association of North America - Public Relations Committee Meeting
November 5, 2008 - 7:00 pm EST – Teleconference call

Members in attendance – Marge Padgitt (Chariman), Douglas Hargrave and Richard Smith (Executive Director).

At the beginning of the meeting Marge submitted a public relations report and proposal as follows:

1.) For the past several months I've been working on the MHA Directory of Builders and Suppliers, contacting all members of the association and getting their information in the directory. The latest update is online at the MHA website and in the chat list file section in PDF format that anyone can easily download.. This project has taken longer than I anticipated due to slow responses from members, and I will continue to add listings as people respond to requests for information. The directory is available to be printed and mailed or handed out at trade shows. Use of the directory is a fair way to represent the membership rather than people working the booths promoting only their own business.

2.) As for future marketing/PR efforts, I would like to do the following:

A. Send out a press release immediately regarding masonry heaters and their benefits through PR web. The cost for that would be \$380.00 and the releases are sent to all of the news agencies. This move should be beneficial for the MHA with regards to getting more public attention and should also spark some interview requests.

B. Have an MHA presence at more regional green energy fairs. This will involve sending Richard to be in charge of booths 4-5 times per year. We should also offer the Green Heating with Masonry Heaters class at these fairs. In order to do this we will need more money to work with (approximately \$2500 each fair) to pay for travel, Richard's pay, booth expenses, and some type of pay for others who help in the booth would be appropriate – at least for travel.

C. We need to look into joining more groups as an associate member and be more involved in networking with other associations. This will also cost us more money. We could offer to trade association memberships in order to cut our expenses.

With the above in mind, I estimate that we really need to have an annual PR/Marketing budget approximating \$15,000 instead of the current \$5,000.

3.) Additionally, I am currently working on two books called "The Masonry Heater Idea Book," which was mentioned at our last general meeting session as well as "Extreme Masonry," which is a newer idea. I have requested project photos from MHA members and other groups for these books. The scheduled deadline is late summer, 2009, then it will go to the publisher. I will insert information about the MHA in the books, which should also generate more interest in the organization.

Richard Smith suggested that we use the order of Marge's proposals in the report as an agenda for the meeting. This suggestion was accepted by all committee members.

The first suggestion, for which \$380 has already been approved at the October board meeting, was to send out a PR release through www.PRweb.com. Richard suggested setting up an account for the Association rather than using Marge's personal account. There was unanimous agreement. Richard will set up the account and Marge will forward the press release to Richard for posting. The decision was made to recommend to the board (2) additional news releases for April and November in 2009 and to recommend an amount of \$800 be budgeted for that purpose.

Marge's second proposal regarding MHA presence at more regional green energy fairs generated much discussion but no real resolution for 2009 activities. The committee will have to attempt to gain a greater consensus at the next meeting in early December in order to come up with a budget for these activities. Based on his experience with the Energy Fair in Wisconsin, Richard felt that regional shows of this type would best be handled by MHA members who would be primarily seeking contacts for their own heater projects rather than MHA attempting to run and staff the show for expanding our membership base. There is a great potential for controversy amongst members as to which regional shows should be done and how to represent various regions of the country in a fair and equitable manner. 4-5 shows per year could not begin to accomplish this or meet the need. Doug suggested that, rather than doing shows for marketing benefit, developing sales tools for shows and members would be more appropriate. Suggested sales tools might be providing brochures, producing a picture book of heaters with accompanying descriptive drawings, large pictures for booth presentations and scale models of masonry heaters for display. Richard said to would look into finding someone to build a scale model for possible loan to members and for use at the 2009 HPBA show in Reno this coming March. Doug indicated that he was working on a display book for his Tulikivi dealers which he would share as an example and beginning for a MHA effort in the same direction. Marge said she would put a budget together for assembling a similar MHA book, using her staff, for committee consideration at the next meeting. The figure of \$1500 was mentioned as the amount needed to organize this effort. Discussion shifted somewhat toward the effort for upgrading the HPBA booth at the Reno Expo. Richard will look into renting a booth backdrop which we can use with pictures that we bring into the show.

Marge's third suggestion regarding joining more associations was discussed but no action plan was decided upon. Success probably boils down to opportunity and contacts.

We decided to hold another meeting on December 4, 2008 7:00 pm EST to continue discussion and firm up a budget request for 2009.

Submitted by

Douglas Hargrave