2002 Brought Out Best and Worst

BY PAT JONES

FOR MANY IN OUR INDUSTRY, THIS HAS BEEN THE YEAR FROM HELL. BUT THERE WERE A FEW BRIGHT SPOTS AMID THE GLOOM

Best Inside Joke: An anonymous superintendent who has a chainsaw nicknamed "Lightning," says, "When a member asks what happened to a tree we took out, we can look 'em right in the eye and say, 'Lightning' got it."

Worst Timing: On the heels of proposing a 20-percent dues increase, publicly acknowledging investment losses, and raising prices for educational seminars and trade show space, GCSAA offered critics a perfect opening by sending a generous contingent of staff, officers and spouses to England for the Ryder Cup. Is a dues increase overdue and probably justifiable? Sure. Is it good for GCSAA to be represented at major golf events? Yup. Do long-suffering spouses deserve an occasional perk to make up for all the time board of directors' members spend away from home? Unquestionably. Should the association have seen this coming and avoided raising the whole silly issue by just sending just the CEO and president? Yes.

The truth is that the association has operated in the red for the past two years. Managing costs, particularly discretionary expenses like these, is important for the fiscal integrity of the organization and for the integrity of its image with the members. The real issue is how an organization that is facing revenue challenges and asking for more money will respond to calls for clearer, more detailed financial reporting.

So, on that interesting note, we bid a not-so-fond farewell to 2002. What will the year ahead hold in store? Darned if I know. Hey, if I could predict the future, I wouldn't be using my Enron stock certificates as fireplace kindling.

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