Dear MSSA Members:

I hope your new year is off to a terrific start. 2013 will mark my 10 year anniversary in the sign business and I can’t think of a better way to celebrate it than serving as your MSSA president. I count it an honor and privilege to serve in this capacity and I look forward to seeing you at one of the outstanding conferences that we have planned for this year.

I also have the privilege of co-hosting the first conference of the year on March 1-2, 2013. Details on the conference and seminars are included in this newsletter. I would encourage you to mark your calendars now so you don’t miss it. I would also encourage you to reach out to any contacts that you have in the sign industry that are not members. This conference will be a great time for them to learn about MSSA as well as experience some of the benefits first hand.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions, ideas, or concerns that you may have regarding MSSA. My email address is harold@signsfirstmetro.com or phone at 601-922-6709. Again I wish you and MSSA a very prosperous 2013.

Harold Miller
Signs First Metro
MSSA 2013 President

MSSA goin’ to Jackson,
MSSA not gonna mess around,
Yeah, MSSA goin’ to Jackson,
Look out Jackson town.

(Part of Lyrics from Johnny Cash’s “Jackson” from the Album “At Folsom Prison”)

Friday, March 1st
• FlexiSIGN for the Real World, Mark Rugen, GiveMeHelp.com
  Seminar will address the more advanced features of FlexiSIGN. A Basic knowledge of FlexiSIGN is preferred.
• MSSA Board of Directors Meeting
  Interested in learning about MSSA and its leaders? MSSA board meetings are open to attendees.
• Tour / Dinner, Custom Products Corporation
  Custom Products is a sign manufacturer that specializes in making traffic signs, safety signs, custom graphics and decals, and sign blanks from reflective sheeting on many substrates including aluminum and distributes a complete line of traffic control devices.

Saturday, March 2nd
• Learning Stations while touring Signs First Metro
  Part of a Franchise network, Signs First Metro has been in business for over twenty years with three location and produces a diverse product line - silk screen on flat substrates, digital and traditional lighted signs.
  - “10 Software Programs Every Sign Shop MUST Have!” Mark Rugen, GiveMeHelp.com
  - “Getting The Most Value From Your LEDs.” Morgan Crook, EGL Company
  - “How to Transform a Vehicle into a Masterpiece!” Jamie Jamison, The DecalGuys
• Roundtable Discussions
  Have a business question that needs an answer? This is your opportunity to connect with other sign business professionals.
• Business Meeting with Lunch Provided by Reece Supply Company
  Learn what’s going on with MSSA. MSSA thanks Reece Supply Company for providing lunch, for the monies that would have been spent will now be placed in The Steve Metheny Scholarship Foundation account for our kids’ future education!

Conference concludes around 1:00 pm central time.

Available online at www.midsouthsign.org – Complete seminars descriptions, speakers, bios, schedule of events, hotel information and registration.

Eligibility for Steve Metheny Scholarship, one meeting must be attended during calendar year prior to making scholarship application.
“New Ideas, New Possibilities” Seminars  
March 1 – 2, 2013, Jackson, Mississippi

Friday, March 1st (all day seminar plus lunch = $120 fee)

FlexiSIGN for the Real World
In this seminar we will discuss the more advanced features of FlexiSIGN. A Basic knowledge of FlexiSIGN is preferred. Some of those topics will include:

- Making your own color library with custom patterns
- Working with files in multiple color formats (RGB,CMYK)
- Critical Color management Tools
- Working with PDF, EPS, AI and other formats
- Setting up and using Adobe Plugins
- Autoserializing and contour cutting
- Text Style tips and tricks
- Working with low resolution artwork
- Using Production Manager without FlexiSIGN

President of www.givemehelp.com, Mark Rugen has over 20 years of experience in the graphics market and has owned several sign shops. He is the world's leading trainer of FlexiSIGN. He currently is Manager of Training and Education for Neschen Americas and SEAL, the leader in laminating equipment and films. His methods of teaching are both informative and entertaining. He has taught thousands of students in design and production using FlexiSIGN and is commonly seen doing demos at sign shows.

Saturday, March 2nd (One hour educational courses offered during tour of Signs First’s facility - free with conference registration.)

10 Software Programs Every Sign Shop MUST Have!
This short lecture is based on a very popular seminar presented at ISA shows for the last three years. It includes tools, many free, that every sign shop should have to create art faster and better and can be used to enhance FlexiSIGN for better design and production. See a 5 inch, 100 ppi image turn into a 10ft mural without loss in quality and a full color 2 inch by 100 ppi image turn into an accurate full color vector image. See how to add color enhancement tools to flexisign for free and much more!

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“Getting The Most Value From Your LEDs”
“Populating letters and sign cans with LEDs may look simple and straightforward, but you may not be optimizing the brightness and evenness of illumination. Learn some tips and tricks for making your LED signs look best for your customer and save yourself the expense of paying for too many LEDs. A demo will be given by using adjustable size sign cans, letters, and LED populations so attendees may see and measure the differences between what might seem right and optimal LED population.”

Presenter Morgan Crook (BSME) has been working with all aspects of signage lighting – neon, fluorescent, and LED - in the sign industry for more than 25 years. He is Technical Sales Manager for The EGL Company.
“How to Transform a Vehicle into a Masterpiece!”
If you’re searching for a new phase for your business are you aware that vehicle advertising generates several impressions a day, yet it costs only a fraction of radio, TV or billboard advertising. Come join Jamie Jamison of The Decal Guys, Inc. and learn some of the secrets to help make your vehicle wraps go smoother. You’ll even see an actual vehicle being wrapped from start to finish! Areas of discussion:
1. Proper cleaning of vehicle before installation
2. Application of vinyl graphics
3. Tips and tricks of application
4. Proper care for wrapped vehicle
5. Questions and answer session

Jamie Jamison started installing vinyl in 1992 and in 2000 he founded The Decal Guys, Inc., based out of Jackson, Ms. It grew from a vinyl application only business, into the full service design, print, and installation company it is today. The Decal Guys, Inc. have been certified as preferred installers by the leading wrap vinyl manufacturer.

MSSA 2013 Premium Gold Sponsors
MSSA is enthusiastic about the favorable response received from members referencing the request for 2013 Premium Gold Sponsorships. Premium Gold Sponsors receive the following recognitions:

- Sponsor’s logo placement on home page of website, convention promotional/registration mailing, convention program and convention / conference signage
- First choice of exhibit booth location by virtue of commitment received
- One free convention registration
- Recognition of sponsorship by President during all membership meetings
- Recognition of sponsorship in Mid South Messenger, Facebook & e-blasts to MSSA members
- Sponsorship level recognized in printed MSSA’s Buyers Guide

MSSA extends its gratitude to the 2013 Premium Gold Sponsors:
3M Graphics Market Center
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Gemini Inc
Graphic Solutions Group Inc
Herring Sales Inc
Mikos Kampakis Insurance Services
Reece Supply Co
Sign Builders Inc
Tubelite Co Inc
Watchfire Signs by Time-O-Matic
Z3 Graphics

Connect with other MSSA Members and get the latest on Facebook and Linkedin.
Updates from ISA

ISA Staff Working to Educate, Improve Rules for Signs
Over the next week, four ISA staff members and numerous ISA volunteer leaders will be criss-crossing the US to represent the sign industry at important conferences. ISA’s Rich Gottwald and David Hickey will be meeting with key sign users and association allies at the January 13-16 National Retail Federation Annual Convention in New York City, where they will be providing them with the latest academic research of the economic value of signs to businesses. ISA’s Sapna Budev will be leading an industry team developing the sign standards contained within the upcoming 2015 edition of the ANSI A117.1 (Committee on Usable Buildings and Facilities) Standard. And ISA’s Kenny Peskin will be representing the sign industry at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board, as well as the kickoff of the Virginia Certified Planning Commissioners Program.

ISA Proposes New Wind Design Criteria for Freestanding Signs
Culminating a 7-year research effort, ISA and the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) submitted a joint proposal on December 29, 2012, to revise the 2010 edition of the American Society of Civil Engineers /Structural Engineering Institute (ASCE/SEI) 7 standard. This standard specifies wind-load criteria for the designs of outdoor, commercial-type sign structures. These criteria are adopted and referenced in the International Building Code (IBC) which represents a key reference cited in local jurisdictions’ building codes across the nation. If successful, the code change will reduce construction costs for freestanding sign structures while maintaining safety as a priority.

Changes to wind-load requirements originally adopted by the ASCE in 2005 (and repeated in the 2010 standard) substantially increase construction costs for freestanding sign structures of all types. When these requirements were originally adopted, ISA’s Mechanical & Structural Subcommittee reviewed the changes and representatives of ISA and OAAA made presentations at ASCE headquarters to summarize concerns that the revised code might not be appropriate for commercial-type sign structures. The positions of ISA and OAAA suggest that, if the current ASCE requirements are found to incorporate certain elements that reflect over-design, this might create excessive project costs for sign construction projects in the U.S., while not resulting in improved performance.

ISA’s initial outreach efforts attracted the interest and participation of OAAA whose members share a common interest in wind-load design standards. In 2007, ISA and OAAA made the decision to jointly sponsor research at the Texas Tech University Wind Science and Engineering (WISE) Research Center in Lubbock, Texas. The initial phase of this research launched in 2008 and the study involved construction and testing of both a full-scale, outdoor sign structure and various scale model signs analyzed in the Texas Tech wind tunnel lab.

The goal of this research and the corresponding ISA/OAAA proposal is to provide scientific data independently evaluating the current ASCE/SEI 7 design criteria and suggesting modifications. The ISA/OAAA research provides new data that supports improvements in design efficiency and safety of outdoor sign structures. For more information, contact Bill Dundas, ISA Director of Technical & Regulatory Affairs.

ISA Publishes National Sign Company Survey of Operations
ISA completed its 2012 Survey of Operations report which tracks economic indicators unique to national sign companies. The report allows companies to benchmark themselves against their competitors, set realistic and challenging goals for growth, and find any inefficiencies within their operations. The survey was distributed to 37 ISA members and contains data that is not found anywhere elsewhere in the sign industry. The final report measures items such as average annual sales, CEO salaries, distribution of income by type of business, complete income statement and balance sheet ratios benchmarked by company size, and many other operational financial data. The Executive Summary is available to the public, but the full report has been distributed only to those who participated in the survey.

Model Sign Code by Planners and Engineers Available Now
A new model code is available for planners and local officials to use to draft beneficial and effective sign ordinances. Urban Design Associates, made up of academics from the planning, legal and transportation engineering fields, wrote An Evidence-Based Model Sign Code to provide key stakeholders with the latest legal information and scientific research regarding the constitutional and safety issues involved with on-premise signs.

To obtain a hard copy or disc version of the UDA model sign code or for more information, please contact ISA’s David Hickey at david.hickey@signs.org.
“MSSA Spirit” Reception in Las Vegas, Nevada

To celebrate the “MSSA Spirit”, a Friday evening reception during ISA Expo 2013 for “MSSA Members only” is planned. Please place “MSSA Spirit” reception Friday, April 5th @ 5:30 pm in Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on your schedule. Additional information will be available in MSSA’s exhibit booth 4921 and future e-mail blasts.

Interested in sponsoring this event? Estimated cost of the reception is $2,500-$3,000 therefore, MSSA is seeking individual company sponsorships of $500.

Sponsors will be given the following marketing / advertising:

- A listing of sponsors inserted in several event invitations e-mailed to all MSSA members
- Acknowledgement of sponsors sent by MSSA through Facebook
- A sign containing sponsors’ logos located by MSSA booth during Expo hours
- A sign including sponsors’ logos located by reception room entrance
- An e-mail to MSSA members recognizing sponsors after Expo

We look forward to your positive reply and you may contact Karen (901) 452-6444.

The Signage Foundation, Inc.

The Signage Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit, non partisan organization dedicated to fulfilling the educational, research and philanthropic purposes of on-premise signage.

The Signage Foundation conducted three major research efforts in 2012:

- Economic Value of On-Premise Signs study conducted by the Economics Center at the University of Cincinnati
- Electronic Signs: Traffic Safety Statistical Analysis by the Texas Engineering Experimental Station at Texas A&M University.
- Updated Glossary of On-Premise Sign Terms and Classification of Signs
- Business Makeover Case Studies

These research studies, along with several additional research topics, were presented at the 2012 National Signage Research & Education Conference which was held on October 10-11, 2012 at the Kingsgate Marriott on the University of Cincinnati campus. Also, posters that chronicle the NSREC topics were developed and presented by UC DAAP students and representatives from 3M. These research presentations can be found on the SFI website at www.thesignagefoundation.org.

Have questions about The Signage Foundation, Inc.? Please contact Patty Herbin at patty@thesignagefoundation.org.
Members Supporting Members

At MSSA, we understand and appreciate the investment of time and money from all of our member companies. As a matter of principal, MSSA member companies do everything they can to conduct business within the membership of the association because MSSA understands it cannot succeed without the success of its member companies. The following product manufacturers, engineers and suppliers have agreed by registering as 2012 MSSA members to support MSSA in 2012. Please consider the following companies as you conduct business in 2012. A current membership list is available for viewing by visiting www.midsouthsign.org or if question a company’s MSSA membership, contact MSSA for clarification (901) 452–6444.

3M Graphics Market Center
ABC Sign Products
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Advantage Sign Supply
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Arlon Graphics, LLC
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Cincinnati Sign Supplies
Cooley Sign & Digital Products
Cornerstone Engineering
Curbell Plastics, Inc
Custom Foam Fabricators
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Cyrious Software
Daktronics, Inc.
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EBSCO Signs & Displays
EGL Company, Inc.
Eliott Equipment Company
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MET Laboratories
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Miratec Systems, Inc.
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Saginaw Pipe
Seiko Instruments USE, Inc
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Sullaway Engineering, Inc.
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Trinity Products
Tubelite Company, Inc.
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Ventex Technology
Voltarc
Wagner Zip–Change, Inc.
Watchfire Signs by Time-O-Matic
World Wide Sign Systems
Wrisco
YESCO Electronics
Z3 Graphics, Inc.
Zlight Technology, LLC
How Cloud Changes The Game: A Sign Of The Times
Written by: Brigette Merten
Posted in: KeyedIn Job Shop Best Practices

Some change is inevitable. Back to school, the start of football season, the changing of leaves from crisp summery green to the muted shades of fall. Perhaps technology adoption would be easier if it, too, just changed with the seasons. In many ways, cloud-based business solutions delivered as Software as a Service (SaaS) can provide that almost instinctive transition. The first step: making the change to get on the cloud.

If SaaS seems like a new fangled idea, it is. But while it emerged around 2006, it has only truly found its strength and stability in the past couple years through providers who are experienced in SaaS deployments and able to successfully deliver a truly zero-client, multi-tenant infrastructure.

For new business ventures, cloud-based systems are the logical choice because they eliminate the guesswork of how much to invest in computing capacity. The technology provider takes care of that. But what about that old dog who is simply hesitant to try a new trick, despite how much its value has been touted in the media and praised by industry analysts? Wall Street Journal blogger and editor, Michael Hickins asserted in a recent post that, "Organizations that embrace the cloud as a means of fostering innovation are likely to enjoy a significant competitive advantage over their rivals." (Wall Street Journal’s CIOJournal.com, June 24, 2012)

Many sign manufacturers, print manufacturers, discrete manufacturers and other job shops were built from the ground up, through specific ideas and ideals that have melded their operations, values, even technology infrastructure. With the rate at which technology – and the landscape of technology providers – is changing, it’s understandable that these companies might just avoid adoption altogether.

But, in the case of SaaS solutions, the rapidly changing technology landscape is a strong reason to take a good look at SaaS adoption instead of wondering and waiting to see if a new trend in functionality or process actually sticks. Because the SaaS model enables new releases and upgrades to be rolled out without expensive upgrades and extensive consulting contracts, it enables you to stay on top of emerging technologies with virtually no hassle.

Still, the “if it ain’t broke” mentality is common among job shops that may not realize the full potential of cloud-based industry-specific solutions like sign management software and have the perspective that things are fine as is. Such was the case with George Lay Signs, a 25 employee manufacturer of electric and billboard signage in Kansas. In this case study, we see a situation where management was perfectly happy with the status quo.

For George Lay Signs, founded and owned by who else but George Lay and run today by George’s son, John, it wasn’t that their current systems weren’t working for them. They were doing just fine. But other sign businesses had seen success using cloud-based business solutions which were designed expressly for the sign industry, and so, John Lay grew willing to make the change too.

SaaS delivers a solution that integrated information for estimates, sales orders, purchase orders, job costs, invoices and more – accessible in real-time, at any time – which Lay cites as a big advantage. Going forward, George Lay Signs will continue to benefit from the latest technology and innovation through instant updates to the newest software releases.
MSSA Sign Companies, do you need help fighting state and local government sign industry issues? YOU are the first line of defense; contact MSSA if help is needed. Call 91-452-6444 or email Karen@midsouthsign.org.
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Contributed in 2008 by Eric Johnson – Jasper Products

Looking for suppliers of Aluminum Extrusion Systems? Or, how about LED Components or Channel Letters?
All this and much, much more supplier information is available by viewing the MSSA Buyers Guide located in back of the printed 2011-2012 Membership Directory and a detailed search is available by clicking on “Buyers Guide” located under “Resources” of www.midsouthsign.org.

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