



UPDATE: Western-English

WETA Membership Promotion Kicks Off

In June, the WETA board approved a dues structure for retailers that will make membership a more affordable option, particularly for small retailers. Essentially, retailers are being of-

fered the opportunity to join the organization for half of the regular dues price between now and Jan. 31, 2006.

Dues are based on gross sales. Under the new plan, a retailer with between \$250,000 and \$500,000 in annual sales would pay \$180 per year rather than \$360 for WETA membership.

According to WETA membership committee chair Cindy Chance, an all-out blitz to recruit every retailer in business today will be undertaken.

"Grassroots support is what we need to succeed," Chance said. "For everyone who said it's too expensive, well, we've just removed the primary barrier."

Marketing Initiative Steps Ahead

A massive campaign to promote Western products and lifestyle was unveiled during the WETA-sponsored All Industry Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, in May.

Vanguard Communications of Denver has been selected to prepare a public relations program based on focus group research conducted by Solutions Marketing Inc. The research revealed a number of trends in the Western market, among them the idea that light-use consumers are looking for Western "pieces" to support their lifestyle, not necessarily wishing to buy everything from hat to boots.

Capturing those consumers, who often are finding what they want in mainstream stores, will be a major thrust of the marketing initiative, along with encouraging them to become heavier users.

The focus of the plan is a series of national public relations blitzes designed to place Western products in the forefront of the mainstream media in the United States.

According to Holly Parker, coordinator of the project for Vanguard, the series would be divided into product groups, and the manufacturers whose images and information would be fea-

