



WETA DOES AUSTIN

Members of the Western English Trade Association gathered for the annual membership luncheon on Saturday during the organization's All Industry Conference in Texas.



Conference Draws Record Crowd

Members of the Western-English Trade Association gather in Texas.

Under the banner “An Industry United for Recognition and Growth,” Gary Mandelbaum accepted the position as president of the Western-English Trade Association (WETA) during the organization’s annual conference May 4-6 in Austin, Texas. Mandelbaum replaces outgoing president Ron Schmitz and becomes the third WETA president.

Mandelbaum, owner of Karman Inc., in Denver, Colo., unveiled an agenda to the nearly 100 members who attended that will focus on reaching both the general public and WETA’s membership with Web sites, as well as continuing the group’s marketing initiative, begun two years ago. The first leg of the initiative, a nationwide public relations campaign aimed at the mainstream media, began several months ago. Mandelbaum said emphasis will also be placed on recruiting more members during his term.

At a WETA board of directors meeting Thursday morning at the Hyatt Regency, plans were announced for a re-energized membership committee. The group will concentrate on recruiting new members at markets and trade shows this fall. Members will be encouraged to post WETA logos on their booths, and a distinctive badgeholder that would identify WETA members is also being considered.

Other board members include Cindy Chance, Stephen Day, Nina DePetris, Marjorie Dole, Harold Eichenbaum,



George Harris, Mark Jemelka, Kerri Kent, Allen Montgomery, Marge Owen, Tom Persechino, Roger Saba, David Sharp, Paul Wahl, Chris Weaver and Dennis Walkingshaw.

The annual WETA Golf Tournament and WETA All Industry Trail Ride kicked off the activities on Thursday afternoon. That evening attendees were treated to “A Hearty Texas Welcome Reception,” where they could try their luck in the wine toss, have their backsides sketched by Crandall the Butt Sketcher or choose from a large selection of “Mystery Boxes.” The remainder of the conference was devoted to

a variety of learning sessions.

Robyn Waters of the consulting firm RW Trend was the keynote speaker for the conference. Waters is the former Vice President of Trend, Design and Product Development for Target, and is largely credited for taking the store from regional discount chain to national fashion destination.

Waters shared her favorite “A to Z” examples for recognizing and reacting to trends, and then helped attendees understand how to profit from the paradox that is currently permeating our society. She explained the phenomenon of people wanting all the latest that technology has to offer, while still harboring the desire to retreat to a simpler, less complicated time. She then profiled several companies that have developed profitable product lines supporting that trend, thus embracing the paradox.