

# CEO UPDATE

THE SOURCE ON ASSOCIATION AND NONPROFIT EXECUTIVE CAREERS & PEOPLE

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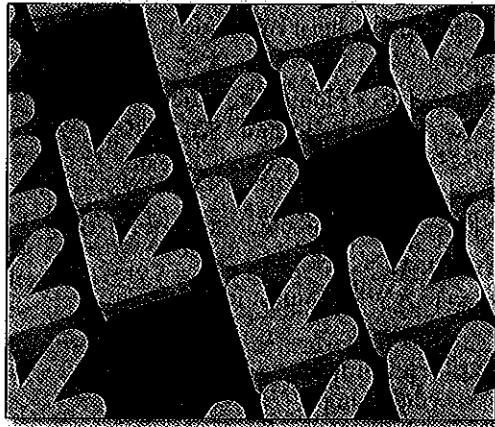
## Trade associations play offense to survive the recession

Some large Washington trade groups demonstrate their value to members by being aggressive in fulfilling their core mission despite the economic downturn

By Jonathan Hemmerdinger

Though the economic recession has led many trade organizations to cut staff and shrink operations, some of the largest groups in Washington have been on the attack, launching aggressive communications campaigns, enhancing their annual events and tirelessly tackling public policy issues.

Roger Dow, president of the U.S. Travel Association, a group representing a range of travel businesses, has been on the offensive since late last year, combating what Dow



called a "triple whammy" against the travel and meetings industry.

First came the downturn in the economy, said Dow, which led corporate controllers to cut staff travel. Next was the "AIG Effect"—the billions of travel dollars lost after what Dow said was the media's "vilification" of an American International Group Inc. conference held days after the company received billions in government bailout money. Then swine flu hit.

Through the turmoil in winter and spring, Dow said the USTA was "nimble" and quick to

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## SPECIAL REPORT

### Recognizing top leaders in associations

Input from recruiters and the executives themselves helped identify leaders who exemplify best practices

Assembling a list of top association and CEOs could be easy—or difficult—depending on approach.

Easy since, in the association community, there is a go-to list of usual suspects, familiar names who are fixtures, either in their own right or by virtue of their group's prominence.

Difficult if the goal is to stretch beyond those and avoid arbitrary choices.

As part of the research for this special report, *CEO Update* consulted the experts—CEOs themselves—to identify these leaders, asking peers who they think has made top marks.

They were asked to consider these factors:

- Legislative success
- Leadership ability
- Skill in raising a group's profile or managing a crisis
- History of building coalitions and reaching consensus

- Membership excellence in areas such as meetings, education, certification

Hundreds of CEOs were surveyed, many of whom responded with nominations—some predictable and some surprising. Input was sought from executive recruiters, those who know the current crop of leaders well. Finally, *CEO Update* staff tapped into its own expertise, developed in more than 20 years of covering association executives.

The resulting nominations were an interesting mix. Association professionals whose careers are legendary and others less well known came to the fore. Nominees included industry stalwarts and turnaround specialists. Some CEOs are clearly better at promoting themselves than others. Some have been thrust into public view by circumstances or current issues.

This first *CEO Update* list of Top CEOs (see page 9) is a broad sample of the good

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## SPECIAL REPORT

| **Top CEOs: Recognizing top leaders in associations***(Continued from page 1)*

work and sound leadership in the association community. It is not meant to be definitive. There are tens of thousands of associations. Even with a fraction being major players nationally, it's easy to see how difficult it is to determine just a handful of top leaders.

We hope this list, selected from among many nominees, will spark discussion of the best association leadership practices. Your comments are most welcome, easily registered at the end of all stories at ceupdate.com.

Someone who you think has been overlooked?

There's next year.

**Steve Anderson**

National Association of Chain Drug Stores

This former head of American Frozen Food Institute and the National Restaurant Association now navigates the tricky channels of health care legislation as CEO of the 170-member company group. An impassioned booster for associations, he's called them "The Fifth Estate—a counter-balance to the other estates" and "vital in the life of our nation."

**Gregory Balestrero**

Project Management Institute

Spending more than 200 days a year traveling around the world, this CEO was nominated by his peers for growing the group exponentially

since becoming CEO in 2002, tripling membership in the past five years to almost 300,000.

**Kevin Burke**

American Apparel and Footwear Association

He's been credited with injecting new energy into the group by increasing its Washington presence, boosting meeting attendance, energizing education programs and fostering a culture that makes members want to belong. "He turned the Titanic around," said one peer.

**John Castellani**

Business Roundtable

Since taking the helm in 2001, this CEO has strengthened the group's Washington reputation and led them to the forefront of public policy debate, tackling issues ranging from the overhaul of health care to green energy initiatives, corporate leadership to financial reform.

**Tom Donohue**

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The *de facto* leader of the business community, he's transformed the Chamber into a lobbying powerhouse that leads on every business issue from card check to climate change. Its new \$100 million campaign to "defend and advance America's free enterprise" and a push to raise gas taxes to fund highway repair shows that, even in his 70s, he isn't slowing down.

**Cal Dooley**

American Chemistry Council

After his 14-year career as a Democratic congressman ended in 2004, he has been on an association fast track. As CEO of the Food Products Association, he helped guide its 2007 merger with the Grocery Manufacturers Association. Just last year, he became head of the hugely influential ACC and is now a leading voice on cap-and-trade and energy-related stimulus funding.

**Roger Dow**

U.S. Travel Association

This veteran industry executive with 34 years at Marriott International Inc., took the reins of the group in 2005. Last year, as the economy foundered, he put the USTA on offense, launching Meetings Mean Business to promote the ailing corporate travel and meetings industries.

**Greg Dummer**

Association for Laboratory Automation

With just a few staffers and a limited budget, this young CEO, a former Smith-Barcklin executive, transformed what was once a financially troubled, annual event-focused group into a global, technology-driven association offering a range of programs to researchers and executives worldwide.

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John Castellani



Tom Donohue



Cal Dooley

# Top CEOs

(Continued from page 9)

## John Engler

National Association of Manufacturers

With a massive, diverse membership, this former governor and his team have tackled a dizzying array of issues on the Hill, especially since November's election. Card check legislation, oil and gas exploration, the federal budget, export controls, international trade policy, infrastructure funding, health care—all are heaped on his plate.

## Glenn English

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

This personable former congressman from Oklahoma was asked to stay with the group, which represents 900 members serving a whopping 42 million Americans, when his contract ended in 2007. Lately he's been working with lawmakers, advocating that any clean energy legislation be both achievable and mindful of the realities of increasing energy consumption.

## Frank J. Fahrenkopf Jr.

American Gaming Association

Following a career that took him from Nevada courtrooms to the chairman's office at the Republican National Committee, he has built his group into a powerful industry force and worked to soften the public face of gambling since he joined as the group's first CEO in 1995.

## Camden Fine

Independent Community Bankers of America

Bringing a Midwest Main Street sensibility to

Washington, in 2003 he went from constituent to CEO of the group, whose 8,000 members largely sidestepped the problems plaguing bigger financial services players. With political capital earned in October's lobby coup raising FDIC coverage to \$250,000, he's now hoping to help shape looming regulation of his industry.

## Michael Gallagher

Entertainment Software Association

He has transformed this year's E3—the largest video game trade show—from the disappointment that it was when he took it over in 2007, to an event that has become highly regarded, and he walks the talk; he's a passionate gamer himself.

## Jack Gerard

American Petroleum Institute

Since becoming CEO in 2008, Gerard has been outspoken in his criticism of Obama administration energy policies. He also worked with 15 labor unions to create the Oil and Natural Gas Industry Labor-Management Committee, aimed at creating jobs in the industry. No stranger to associations, he previously headed the American Chemistry Council, where he revised its mission statement and trimmed staff.

## John H. Graham IV

ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership

As head of the association for associations—22,000 individuals from trade groups, professional societies and nonprofits—he's their point person for issues like IRS Form 990 changes and

the new lobbying disclosure rules. The other side of his job is developing the profession through education and credentialing. A trained association professional himself with 25 years at the American Diabetes Association, he quadrupled ADA's annual revenue to \$200 million.

## John Gray

Healthcare Distribution Management Association

This Wharton grad and longtime association executive is credited with keen insight into his industry and for relating to his group's members, who range from regional to global companies. He's also boosted dues revenue, revamped his communications practice and doubled his government relations team, which now tackles state and national issues.

## Edward Hamberger

Association of American Railroads

As CEO since 1998, he has been a familiar face on the Hill this year, especially for his efforts to highlight the positive aspects of freight rail. An outspoken supporter of the stimulus package, he's eyeing \$1.5 billion that could be used for rail transport.

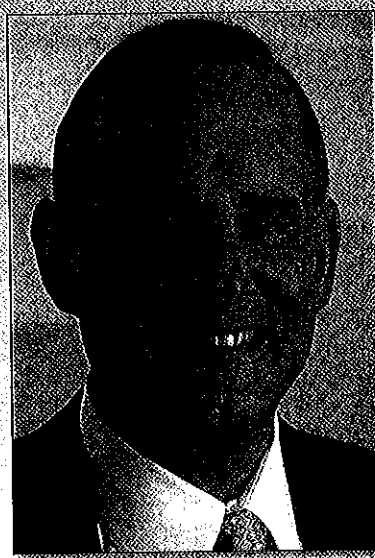
## Chris Hansen

TechAmerica

A key player in the consolidation of tech groups, he was CEO of AeA and shepherded its 2008 merger with the Information Technology Association of America to form TechAmerica.



Jack Gerard



John H. Graham IV



Edward Hamberger

**Bill Hudson****Global Cold Chain Alliance**

This CEO has led perishable food supply chain groups for 27 years, during which time he managed an expansion that now counts GCCA members in 65 countries. Praised for overseeing effective mergers, setting global standards and strong board relationships, one peer said, "The longer he has his job, the better he is."

**Karen Ignagni****America's Health Insurance Plans**

As CEO of the nearly 1,300-member group that provides coverage for more than 200 million Americans, she has operated at a high profile as the legislative battle over health care heats up. She's shown the capability to work with both Congress and her members to find common ground in the debate.

**Kathleen Jaeger****Generic Pharmaceutical Association**

Jaeger took over—and consolidated—GPhA as the association struggled to establish a unified voice after a three-way merger in 2001. Since then, she has elevated the industry profile, lobbing blows at the brand pharmaceutical industry over market exclusivity in what promises to be a mounting battle. An attorney and daughter of a community pharmacy owner, Jaeger grew her reputation representing corporations before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other government bodies.

**EDISON ELECTRIC CEO WINS PRAISE FROM PEERS****Tom Kuhn**

In seeking nominations for *CEO Update's* top names in associations, one surfaced more than any other—Tom Kuhn.

His is a familiar name. He's led the \$74 million Edison Electric Institute for 19 years, a feat in

itself when the shelf life of many CEOs seems to grow shorter and shorter. He's also chair of the Chamber of Commerce's Committee of 100, the prestigious group of major association CEOs, and former chair of the American Society of Association Executives.

But peers focused on the recent hard-fought consensus he wrought among his members, shareholder-owned electric companies, forging with them a plan to reduce carbon emissions. And he began this effort early

in 2007 before the political winds really changed in Washington.

Kuhn, a savvy policy insider, saw climate change legislation coming and wanted his industry to be ready and part of the solution.

"I saw it as important to our members, but I also saw it as important to our customers," Kuhn said.

To reach consensus, Kuhn recalls Saturday airport meetings with CEOs, constant conference calls and frequent discussions on technical issues to bring members, many facing significant sacrifice, to a united position. And Kuhn's efforts bore fruit as a major element of EEI's plan was included in the House version of the American Clean Energy and Security Act passed June 26.

Anyone who has met Kuhn knows he uses famous quotations to make a point. His favorite, appropriately, is from Thomas Edison: "If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves."

—Mark Graham

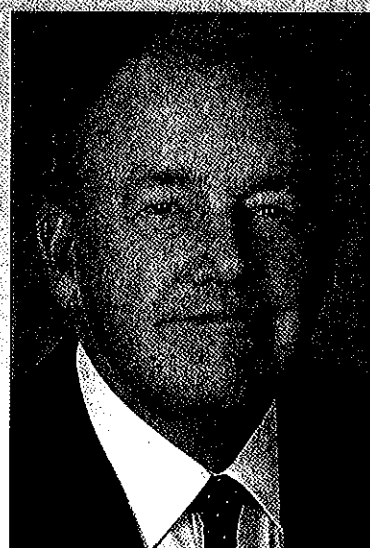
**Doug Lowenstein****Private Equity Council**

Founding president of this new group, he has worked to protect his members from tax reclassification that could cut their earnings significantly.

**Michael Maves****American Medical Association**

An ear, nose and throat doctor and author of nearly 100 medical papers, he became AMA head in 2002 after leaving his leadership post at the Consumer Healthcare Products Associa-

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**Kathleen Jaeger****Michael Maves****Jim May**

# Top CEOs

(Continued from page 11)

tion. Bringing public policy and administrative expertise, he's now charged with uniting a fractured membership behind hugely controversial health care reform.

## Jim May

Air Transport Association of America

Since joining the group in 2003, he has led embattled members through a period of public and congressional scrutiny, staggering losses, capacity cuts and recent talk of further bankruptcies. Through it all, he's been at the forefront of advocacy, bringing his Hill experience to bear on issues ranging from airline safety to antitrust immunity, FAA funding to airport slot auctions.

## Walter B. McCormick Jr.

USTelecom

With more than 25 years of telecommunications experience and an extensive Hill background, he's successfully led his group through the changing political landscape since 2001. Previously CEO of American Trucking Association, McCormick is now branching his association into video and broadband industries.

## Dave McCurdy

Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

It takes consensus to lead an industry as challenged as the automakers, and that's what this CEO and former congressman from Oklahoma has delivered, most recently by garnering support from auto CEOs for a national fuel economy standard.

## Kyle McSlarrow

National Cable & Telecommunications Association

Cable industry leaders set out to find a general to lead their trade group when they hired him in 2005. They found one in this CEO with political know-how gleaned from running political campaigns and Senate offices, including roles with Bob Dole and Trent Lott. A former deputy secretary of the Department of Energy, he guided NCTA as it led the way in consumer education surrounding the digital television conversion through an extensive campaign that included \$250 million in TV ads.

## Dan Mica

Credit Union National Association

A former five-term congressman, he has spent the last 13 years promoting the interests of his 8,500 members and protecting them from the banks that, he says, are out to destroy them. With financial regulatory reform on Congress' plate, he may yet face the most critical battle of his career.

## Tracy Mullin

National Retail Federation

Leading the group since 1993, she's grown NRF's annual meeting and fostered a culture of employee satisfaction that led the group to high ratings in *CEO Update's* 2008 "Top Places to Work." And though she's retiring later this year, Mullin is no lame duck—on July 13 she an-

nounced her group had "come out swinging" at Wal-Mart over the company's support of employer-mandated health care.

## Patrick Natale

American Society of Civil Engineers

As CEO since 2002, he has been at the forefront of helping the public understand how to avoid future infrastructure disasters. This year, with stimulus money on the table, he has been more vocal, calling for the Obama administration to fix bridges and roads in desperate need of repair and issuing a report that graded U.S. infrastructure with a "D."

## Susan Neely

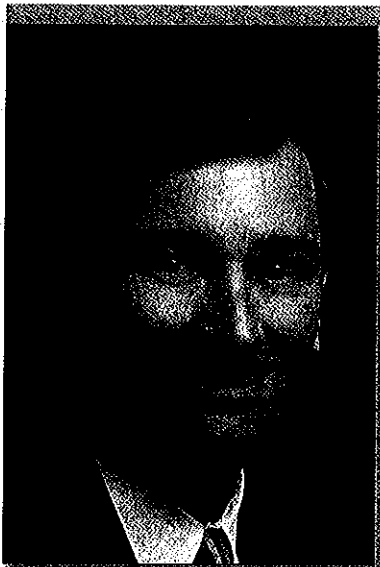
American Beverage Association

This CEO, known to peers as a consensus builder, just launched Americans Against Food Taxes to oppose a possible sweet drink tariff. She also partnered with the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation to create the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a campaign that has cut beverage calories shipped to schools. "It was a home run," said one nominator.

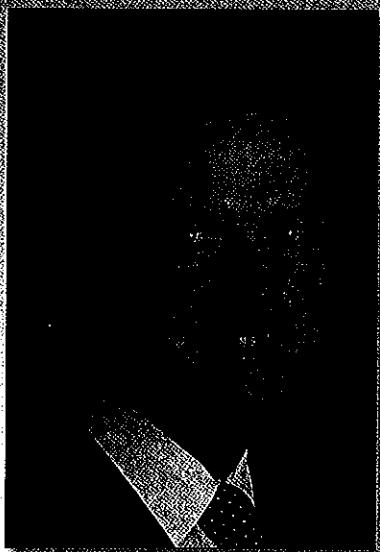
## Dave Parker

American Gas Association

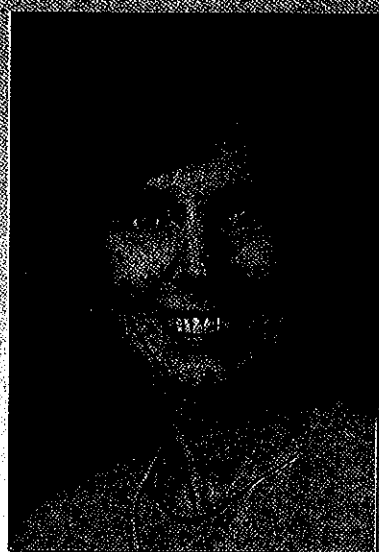
He continues to excel at the tricky balancing act of protecting the industry against damaging legislation while maintaining a proactive voice in the clean energy movement. A member of the "old guard" of trade association



Walter B. McCormick Jr.



Patrick Natale



Susan Neely

executives, he began building Washington connections as a scheduler for President Nixon and spent nine years managing public policy for the Edison Electric Institute.

### **Craig Purser**

#### **National Beer Wholesalers Association**

Credited with having a personable style and excellent relationships with his 2,850-distributor members, this energetic leader has engaged former adversaries, like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, to find consensus. Named CEO in 2005, he's been fending off efforts by big-box retailers to skirt alcohol sales rules, which would force down prices and hurt his members.

### **Steve Sandherr**

#### **Associated General Contractors of America**

Representing an industry slammed by the recession and a trade group comparably hit in non-dues revenue, he's been steering a careful course internally while keeping his GR-trained eye on Hill actions like the stimulus and highway spending bills. His consensus-building skills get a workout with both union and open shop members.

### **Gary Shapiro**

#### **Consumer Electronics Association**

A staunch supporter of the digital television transition that took place in June, he has been leading the way in consumer electronics since he joined the association in

1991. His group produces the annual International Consumer Electronics Show, the largest trade show in North America, and has recently begun to push an environment-friendly initiative.

### **Matthew Shay**

#### **International Franchise Association**

He has been leading his association through a tumultuous economy since becoming CEO in 2005. A vocal champion for the role that small businesses play in the economy, he has been calling on the government to make small-business loans easier to obtain.

### **Paul Stalknecht**

#### **Air Conditioning Contractors of America**

Another alumnus of the American Trucking Associations, that incubator of association execs, he is regarded by his peers as someone who really understands his members, designing programs to help them deal with their latest downturn-fueled boom—repairs. It's paying off—the annual meeting had the highest attendance ever.

### **Chris Stinebert**

#### **American Financial Services Association**

Shortly after he came to AFSA, he found himself at the helm of a trade group representing an industry caught in a downward spiral. Aggressive advocacy and grace under pressure have made him an effective shepherd as his members face significant regulatory reform.

### **Dale Stinton**

#### **National Association of Realtors**

Assuming his post in 2005, this 25-year NAR veteran is credited with uniting a diverse organization and reacting well ahead of the slumping housing market with programs, education and online resources—including the multi-million dollar campaign “Right Tools, Right Now,” to help realtors confront industry challenges.

### **Dawn Sweeney**

#### **National Restaurant Association**

Like others managing groups in hard-hit industries, she's been wrestling with trimming (and streamlining) her staff, focused on molding a strategic advocacy team well positioned to target the issues of food safety, immigration and card check legislation.

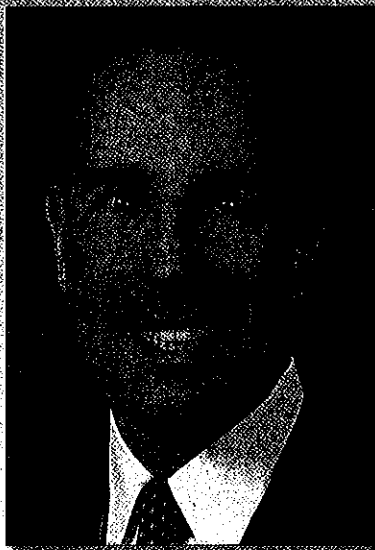
### **Dirk Van Dongen**

#### **National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors**

A shrewd coalition builder with deep political connections, Van Dongen packs serious punch representing the nation's middlemen. He played a central role in mobilizing business associations and member companies alike as stimulus legislation sprinted through Congress, and is geared up for a repeat performance as the health care debate takes shape. ■



**Gary Shapiro**



**Matthew Shay**



**Dawn Sweeney**