

Key changes are coming ... for both EDS and ERA

The last two years have really zipped by, and as my term as president of ERA is ending, many of us are looking forward to EDS 2015. This important event for reps, manufacturers and distributors has both a new venue this year at the Mirage in Las Vegas and a new "identity" as an "industry leadership summit."

These are timely changes for EDS and for those of us participating. The Mirage venue will offer attendees a more consolidated and easier-to-navigate overall space for meetings and exhibits (less time on elevators for all!), and the lower guest room rates compared to prior years are a bonus.

The EDS "summit" has been evolving and continues to evolve into the culmination of year-long matchmaking and planning. It is where ideas are exchanged, new goals are established and new opportunities are explored — in person.

A year ago in this space, I wrote about the tremendous benefit of EDS in helping us to overcome the relationship "remoteness" that has arisen thanks (or no thanks!) to social media and our ever-increasing connectivity. I still believe in the value of face-to-face meetings and discussions, and EDS facilitates those opportunities like no other event.

We can hear industry and trend updates, catch up with old friends, meet with our principals and our distributor partners, and make plenty of new contacts. And we won't have to wear out our fingers tapping on our cell phones or tablets to do it!

As always, one of the highlights of EDS will be the ERA-ECIA breakfast program this year on Thursday, May 14, in the Grand Ballroom of the Mirage. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Esmael Adibi, economics professor in the highly-ranked graduate economics program at California's Chapman University and the director of the university's A. Gary Anderson Center for Economic Research. If you want to know what's ahead, economy-wise, don't miss this free event, and bring your questions.

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Before EDS, and as a result of ERA's biannual election of officers, I will have moved up to the office of chairman and turned over the duties of president to my friend Dan Parks, CPMR, of West Electronic Sales. Great thanks go to Robert Logan, CPMR, of Kruvand Associates for his service on the executive committee, and we welcome two new officers — John O'Brien, CPMR, of Coakley, Boyd and Abbott, Inc., and Chuck Tanzola, CPMR, of Fusion Sourcing Group. They join returning executive committee members Kathie Cahill, CPMR, of Net Sales Company and Dave

Norris of Norris and Associates. (See the article about the newly-elected officers in this issue's News Beat on page 25.)

For myself, there are giant shoes to fill, following our immediate past chairman, Mark Conley of O'Donnell Associates North, who has concluded six years as an ERA national officer. He began his volunteer service to our association in the mid-1990s, holding many offices in the Northern California chapter and then chairing our national conference in 2004.

Amazingly, Mark is not ready to "retire" as an ERA volunteer! He is now chairing the committee searching for our new CEO — not an easy or enviable task because of the formidable legacy that Tom Shanahan and Bob Terwall will be leaving behind. Thank you, Mark, for your tireless contributions to ERA, past and future!

So major change is coming to ERA, and another significant change has just occurred. By the time this magazine is published, our all new website will have launched. We trust users will find the updated site much easier to navigate and will enjoy taking advantage of many new features. Be sure to explore the site at era.org. It will be well worth your time to reacquaint yourself with all the resources available there.

Finally, I look forward to seeing many of you at EDS. And if anyone finds a "round bar," please let me know!



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