

Festive Ambience, Free Goodies At GRA Trade Show

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Atlanta: Georgia Retailers Association organized a spectacular Trade Show at the spacious Gwinnett Civic Convention Center in Duluth, Georgia on Sunday June 28.

Georgia Governor, Hon. Sonny Perdue had conveyed his congratulations and best wishes on the occasion through his letter dated June 28, an enlarged copy of which was prominently displayed near the entrance to the Trade Show. The letter read, "It is a great pleasure to extend greetings to the GRA 2009 Trade Show. Allow me to welcome distinguished guest speakers, GRA members, exhibitors, vendors and other attendees to the Gwinnett Civic Center. I hope you enjoy what is planned for you. This annual event provides unique opportunity for retailers to buy their products directly from manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and professional service providers. I commend the GRA for representing the best interests of its members in maximizing sales and profitability and in negotiating group contracts on their behalf. Best wishes to all for a memorable and successful event."

At 11.00 a.m. sharp, composed and bubbly Sanah Sayani greeted all and congratulated GRA President Shaikat Sunny Sayani, V.P. Monty Hudda, Exec. officer/Hon. Sec. Zul Issani, Treasurer Hiran Desai, Exec. Officer Mihir Desai, and directors, Shabir Isani, Mamud Dhanani, Ashish Patel, Balbir Singh, Amin Panjwani, Kanaiyalal Patel, Rafiq Khoja and Mohamed Sohani, who lined up, flanked by the U.S. Flag, and proceeded to cut the tape and declare the show open, to thunderous applause.

The registration desk manned by several volunteers was smooth and well organized. The participants were entered into raffle drawings and every thirty minutes Sanah announced the lucky winners of various items sponsored by the vendors. Special arrangements were made for baby-sitting.

The booths by exhibitors along five aisles included A&V Dish network, ATM Services by Merchant Solutions; Cameras & POS Systems by I Link Professionals; Food & Ice Cream by Broaster Chicken and Premium Distributors (who were generously handing out samples of Ben & Jerry ice cream!); Medical services by Apex Medical clinic and Gwinnett Physical Therapy; Insurance by McKinney & Company and New York Life Insurance; printing & signs by Excel Designs; Petroleum Jobber by Next Level Petroleum; Tobacco by Atladis USA and several more; Attorneys Thompson & Singer, P.A.; banking services by United Central Bank, Chocolates by Cadbury; Cintron Beverages, Pepsi Bottling Company; and others; snacks by Frito Lays, Golden Flakes, Kellogg's; and others, to name a few.

The Trade Show had a festive ambience. The visitors were entertained with music and songs as they visited different booths. Exhibitors enticed them with free samples of goodies they showcased and made special offers to potential customers. There was a broad range of products and services and the show provided an opportunity to vendors and buyers a face to face opportunity to do business. All the attendees were provided with delicious lunch, and hot and cold beverages.

Attorney Ron Thompson, MBA, JD (Hons)

and LLM, is actively volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and Big Brother, Big Sister humanitarian projects." It is nice to come to the Trade Show. There is a family atmosphere here. Everyone knows everybody. Everyone is very support-

portunity of meeting directly with vendors, manufacturers, distributors, gasoline jobbers and many other service providers and saving thousands of dollars by negotiating deals for the entire year. There are over 95 booths set up by vendors like

Pepsi, Swisher International; Atladis USA; Merchant Solutions to name a few, who will give special discounts. We are expecting over 2,000 store owners and guests to attend from all over Georgia, including from Macon, etc. I take this opportunity to thank the media-NRI Pulse, Khabar, Atlantadunia and India Tribune for helping us with publicity. I feel very optimistic for this and future shows."

The vibrant trade show packed power and punch. All who participated were effusive with positive feedback. Everyone was seen with bags full of candies, chips, beverages, trial software packages and many other freebies offered by the exhibitors. Also many of the retailers were able to place their pre-order at the show prices which contributed to tremendous savings on their purchases.

The highlight of the show was the GRA's magnanimous contribution of \$25,000 to AKF Partnership Walk to help eradicate poverty in the third world countries. GRA Directors believe that they have succeeded in their businesses through the community support and it is now their duty to repay.

Following the show, GRA has received compliments from lots of vendors. Their effusive comments were that the show was well organized, well marketed and they were extremely happy that they were able to meet most of the retailers face to face. Overall the Vendors were pleased that they received tremendous response and the participant retailers were happy that they saved bundles.

At present GRA has over a thousand 1500 members. The Mission of GRA is to help member stores to buy products and services at discounted prices through bulk buying and associated contracts. Members will get rebates on their purchases on the negotiated products like beverages, tobacco, health & beauty supplies, automobiles and C-Store items. Members will also get professional services including accounting, attorney, insurance, tank and fuel management, pump repairs, digital video surveillance system, ATMs, Credit card Processing services etc. at best rates possible. GRA has its own in-house magazine through which it informs members of its events, deals, and other matters relating to the GRA organization. For more information, please refer to www.georgiaretailersassociation.com and for contacts georgiaretailers@gmail.com



GRA Board of Directors and Officers. Photos by M. Shabbir



GRA's donation to Aga Khan Foundation Walk.

ive. The array of things you see here is astounding-things you never knew where they came from, you didn't know what they were, and the variety that goes on in various stores. I think all this makes GRA a unique organization. It is a great opportunity to be here and I really appreciate it." he said.

Ms. Jane Newton of Cline Associates commented, "I am with Cline Associates. It is a wonderful show with a strong attendance. I am very glad to be part of this Association. I am selling coolers, stackers, candy and assorted items. Just having a great day. Everyone is very friendly."

GRA Vice President Monty Hudda has been an Atlanta resident for over 20 years. Energetic and genial Monty has been running a wholesale business for 15 years." The show affords an op-

Delta Cancels Nonstop Flight to Mumbai

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Mayani also observes that a significant amount of non-resident Indian funding is being attracted by states like Gujarat, thereby emphasizing the need for swift connectivity to India.

Desai notes that the new Indian Consulate being established in Atlanta by the end of 2009 will further act as a catalyst for trade ties. "Having a consulate in itself makes a huge difference. " He emphasizes how the current consulate in Houston and the honorary consulate in Atlanta have helped develop the business relationship between the states and also between India and Georgia. He states that according to the Georgia Ports

Authority, "they have seen more than a 200% growth in container traffic from India alone."

Mayani strongly believes that once the new Indian consulate is set up in Atlanta it will start regenerating the business sector, which in turn will give a boost to the airline industry. He says, "Don't look at the consulate only in terms of personal travel. It will also provide a boost to business travel."

As for maintaining loyalty toward Delta, Desai says, "Delta is still the preferred airline for most of us. Taking the product to the market will take longer, but the people who need to go to India, will still go to India". However, the world seems a little round these days, Mr. Friedman; especially for those on the wrong side of home.