

ESTA Directions March 2002

by Mike Wood

This year the USITT show was held in mid February – earlier than normal – thus the regular meeting schedule has been altered accordingly to ensure we don't lose momentum. You'll see Karl Ruling's USITT show report in this issue. As usual ESTA was well looked after by the USITT Executive Committee and staff so this is perhaps a good moment to remind everyone of the sterling support USITT continues to show ESTA in all aspects of our association. In particular USITT has been an ongoing contributor to the Technical Standards Program funding as well as providing valuable input and personnel to many of the working groups. We really value the strong relationship between the two associations which has been key in making the ESTA standards program truly industry wide.

Talking of the TSP I sadly must report that Bill Groener has had to resign from his position as Technical Standards Committee Chair. Bill's work on the TSC has been exemplary and he has led the TSC from the foundation laid by George Sabbi to a position of unrivalled strength and authority in the industry. He has our undiluted and fulsome thanks for all his hard work. As you all know much of Bill's valuable contribution was not just the visible work at the meetings but rather behind the scenes, in between meetings, keeping the machine ticking along smoothly.

Happily we have other strong candidates who are willing to step into the void left by Bill's departure and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Steve Terry (ETC) and Paul Vincent (Vincent Lighting Systems) as Co-Chairs of the ESTA Technical Standards Committee. Bill is a hard act to follow, but I know you will agree that Paul and Steve will be extremely worthy successors. All three will be attending the May meetings in Dallas to ensure a smooth handover.

As you probably know the Certification Program is also now starting to flex its muscles, in a parallel process to the TSP Kam McCormick chaired the committee as it laid its foundations and now the committee is growing and changing to embrace its new tasks. So, I am pleased to announce that, with immediate effect, Wally Blount will be joining Tim Hansen in the role of Co-Chair of the Certification Program Committee.

The CPC had identified two initial areas as priorities to build the first programs – Electrical Skills (co-chaired by Ken Vannice of Leviton/NSI/Colortran and Dr. Marilyn Hetzel of the Metropolitan State College of Denver) and Rigging Skills (co-chaired by Rocky Paulson of StageRigging/Freeman Decorating and Baer long of MGM Grand, Las Vegas). Accordingly the formation meetings of these first two CPC working groups were held during the USITT session. These inaugural meetings went extremely well and these new committees look set to produce excellent programs.

ESTA's Market Research Program has just reached the end of its first full year of data collection, the figures have got increasingly more valid and useful as more data has been collected and as we move into the second year we start to see direct year-on-year comparisons and trends. Ten new companies are joining the Program in 2002 so we get an even better snapshot of the whole industry.

Finally the fog informational and outreach campaign is progressing well. The steering group has developed a coordinated plan which seeks to inform and educate users and performers about the correct use and safe levels for atmospheric effects and how you make sure you are within the safety guidelines. Look to an article by Andrea Sussman in this issue for further information.