

History of the Missouri Rental Dealers Association (MRDA)

1987

- **November 25** – approximately 20 dealers from around the state met in Columbia to hear David Egan, chief legal counsel for Rent-A-Center discuss the legal status of our industry.

R.A.C. had arranged for John Britton, the top lobbyist in Missouri to handle a bill for our dealers if we decided to.

For \$25,000 Britton guaranteed us a law we wanted. As a group we decided to collect \$250.00 per store from as many dealers as possible and take a pro-active stance. We wanted a law that protected our rights to continue doing business and at the same time would provide our customers the full and completed disclosures they deserve.

John Thompson, owner of Thompson's TV was elected our first president and held this association together for the next four years through his leadership.

- **December 9** – Second meeting to find ways to raise the money.

1988

- **May** – John Britton delivered as promised. We had our Rental-Purchase Agreement Law - \$25,000 cost was a fraction of that spent by other states that waited till they had negative public relations, or legal aid problems.
- **June 29** – State Meeting – representative from Attorney General's office explained the ramifications and the do's and don't's as they saw it.

Continued at \$250.00 per store to pay costs.

1989

No official action as a group.

1990

- **January 17** – State association meeting

John Britton updated and continued to monitor our interest, Ron Waters – APRO – gave legislative update.

- **May 16** – Bud Holladay gave a rousing presentation in the form of a Collections Seminar. Over 50 owners, managers and account managers had the benefit of Bud's 20 plus years' experience and wit.

1991

- **June 19** – State association meeting

Glen Ehrhardt – our legal counsel gave us insight into pawnshop laws and criminal action.

John Britton – legislative update – no problems

Bill Keese – APRO overview of national

Election of Officers – Gary Romine – President
John C. Cleek, Sr. – Vice President
Dan Cole – Secretary/Treasurer

Board meetings - 7/30 By Laws
9/5 Code of Ethics
10/23 Collection Policies

1992

- **January 22** – Board Meeting
- **February 26** – State association meeting – adopted By Laws
Code of Ethics

Wayne Chambers – President of APRO gave national update on legislative issues. Tax and depreciation.

1993

- **February 10** – State association meeting at the Holiday Inn, Columbia, Missouri

Ed Winn – APRO’s legal counsel and the foremost legal authority in our industry educated, entertained and cautioned us about the obstacles and challenges we all are facing today. Ed also updated us on tax and accounting issues that hit us where it really hurts – in the old pocket book.

- **September 14, 15, and 16** – First ever Missouri Rental Dealers Fall Seminar and Trade Show – Excellent seminars conducted by the Reverend of RTO – Larry Sutton. Great participation by our partners in business – our suppliers.

1994

- **February 16** – Annual meeting – Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO gave us legal and accounting updates.

Gary Romine and about 30 dealers went to Washington D.C. to lobby for the RTO Industry.

- **September 20,21 and 22** – Second Fall Trade Show and Seminar – held at Inn at Grand Glaize – Sold out all booths – great turnout. Larry Randolph and Bud Holladay. Announcement was that the Missouri Rental Dealers Association was chosen the outstanding state association in the Nation by APRO.

1995

- **February 15** – Annual meeting
Elected officers and board members – John C. Cleek, Sr. – President
Dan Cole – Vice President
Barbara Keller – Secretary/Treasurer

Ron Waters, Director of Government Affairs – APRO, addressed sale vs. lease and how critical it is for us to get involved.

- **February** – Dan Cole and John C. Cleek, Sr. joined 75 other RTO dealers from across the USA in Washington D.C. to lobby the sale vs. lease issue.
- **March 24** – IRS agrees we are a lease not a sale!
- **August** – IRS “...you are a lease not a sale if you have more terminations than paid outs and you are on 5 years MACRS...”
- **August '95** – Gary Romine elected to National Board of APRO – first ever from Missouri.
- **September** – Ozark Getaway – Third Annual Trade Show and Seminar – 40 booths. Reverend of RTO – Larry Sutton gave arousing seminars – everybody had fun.

1996

- **February 22** – Annual meeting in Columbia – Richard May – APRO’s Director of Public Affairs previewed new image commercial “Gus” for RTO industry and gave us an update on national scene. Wayne Schirmer, our legal counsel, provided handouts on handling bankruptcies. MRDA adopted a policy statement concerning travel and lodging expenses for board members.
- **March 3,4 and 5** – John Cleek, Sr., Dan Cole and Gary Romine participated in the 3rd Annual APRO Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Lobbied support for J.C. Watts Bill but failed to get it passed.

Board meetings -	April 6, 1996	Planning	Fall Trade Show
	June 26, 1996	Planning	Fall Trade Show
	September 12, 1996	Reviewing	Trade Show
	October 16, 1996	Planning	Annual meeting and seminar

- **August 14** – “Tiger” John Cleek, Sr., President of MRDA is selected “National Rental Dealer of the Year” at the APRO Annual Convention in New Orleans.
- **September 10, 11 and 12** – 4th Annual MRDA Ozark Funfest Trade Show and Seminars at the Lodge of Four Seasons.

1997

- **February 2,3 and 4** – John Cleek, Sr., Dan Cole, Gary Romine and Mark Windsor participated in the 4th Annual APRO Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Their efforts along with about 50 other dealers had an obvious effect as Congress passed in July the “Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997” which for the first time ever directed the IRS to treat rent-to-own as a lease not a sale and established 3 years M.A.C.R.S. depreciation for our goods.
- **February 12** – Annual meeting in Columbia – moved at last minute to Ramada Inn due to water main breaking at Holiday Inn East. Ramada’s staff was very helpful. New format was well received with a 3-hour seminar in the morning by Bud Holladay, the founder of APRO and vice-president of Alrenco. Topics included, “How to add revenue without adding debt.”

Afternoon session featured Karlis Riks, from our lobbying firm, and Wayne Schirmer, our legal counsel discussing the Pawnbroker Bill. Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, described image building for our industry and also presented a legislative update.

Brief board meeting concluded the day’s activities.

Board Meetings – April 8, 1997	Planning	Fall Trade Show
June 18, 1997	Planning	Fall Trade Show
September 11, 1997	Reviewing	Fall Trade Show
October 15, 1997	Planning	Annual meeting and formulating public relations campaign.

- **September 9, 10 and 11** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar. All booths were sold out and a record number of attendees made it a tremendous success for the vendors. Larry Sutton, “The Reverend of RTO”, presented the most informative and enlightening seminar in our history on, “The Vital Functions of RTO Management”. Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, wrapped up our program with his insights and thoughts on our industry.

1998

- **February 8,9, and 10** – John Cleek, Sr., Dan Cole and Mark Windsor participated in the 5th Annual Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Although no RTO legislation passed, we continued to improve our image and presence on Capitol Hill.
- **February 26** – Annual meeting in Columbia – The day started with our Board of Directors and Vendors Breakfast meeting to get their input on our trade show. From 9 a.m. to noon Etta Valdes of Hire Insights gave an excellent seminar on “How to Spot Problem Employees Before You Put Them on the Payroll”. After lunch our business meeting included Karlis Riks from our lobbying firm who gave us a legislative update. Dan Cole reported on APRO’s Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. and Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO reviewed the NBC Nightly News piece that ran the previous day and then gave his heartfelt and optimistic view of “The Future of Rent-To-Own”.

Brief Board Meeting concluded the day’s activities.

Board Meetings – April 28, 1998	Planning	Fall Trade Show
June 25, 1998	Planning	Fall Trade Show
September 16, 1998	Reviewing	Fall Trade Show
October 21, 1998	Planning	1999 Annual meeting, reviewing public relations projects and selecting site for our 1999 and 2000 Trade Show.

- **September 15 – 16** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar at the Lake of the Ozarks – Tuesday morning started early with a Bass Fishing Tournament as well as a Golf Tournament. Early afternoon events included a cruise on the Lake. The Trade Show was our biggest and best ever featuring 50 booths and a big crowd of eager RTO buyers. Our annual awards dinner was a big hit as usual and then we showed everyone how to party at the Studio’s Lounge. Kent Sutherland, formerly of Home Choice, gave a full house their money’s worth with his presentation of “Managing Your Store for Growth”. Bill Keese gave us the latest happenings in the RTO world and after a brief board meeting, we said goodbye to the wonderful Lake of the Ozarks for another year.

1999

- **February 24** – Annual meeting in Columbia – Started with our traditional Vendors’ Breakfast with our Board of Directors. Gayla Welsh from Tan-Tar-A Resort described our new site and answered our vendors’ questions. Kent Sutherland, industry acclaimed consultant, presented a 3 hour seminar titled, “Top To Bottom Management’ that educated and motivated the crowd of over 80 rental dealers and vendors. Following lunch, Mr. Wayne Schirmer, our General Counsel explained the new Pawn Broker Law and answered all our legal questions. Jim Durham, our lobbyist, reviewed pertinent legislation pending in Jefferson City. Dan Cole explained our all new Recruiting, Hiring and Interviewing Guide, and Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, gave his State of the Rent-To-Own industry update. Following some open discussion we elected the following officers to our executive committee.

Daniel L. Cole – President
Dwight McQuade – Vice President
Chuck Kuluva – Secretary/Treasurer
“Tiger” John Cleek, Sr. – Past President

Plaques were presented to past officers and board members as a token of appreciation for their service to MRDA.

President Cole conducted a brief board meeting to conclude the day’s activities.

Board Meetings - April 21, 1999	Planning	Fall Trade Show
June 16, 1999	Planning	Fall Trade Show
September 15, 1999	Reviewing	Fall Trade Show
October 12, 1999	Planning	2000 Annual Meeting

- **May 11, 12 and 13** – APRO Legislative Conference – John Cleek, Sr., Dan Cole, Dwight McQuade and Mark Windsor went to Washington D.C. to represent the interests of all RTO dealers in Missouri. We secured some sponsors of the industry favorable bill, HR1634, but nothing passed Congress. This was the fifth such trip for Cleek and Cole; third for Windsor and first for McQuade, all at their own expense.
- **September 14 –15** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar at the Lake of the Ozarks – Tuesday started early with our Annual Bass Tournament as well as a Golf Tournament starting at 8:00 a.m. Tan-Tar-A Resort was a wonderful site for our Trade Show as we had 51 booths sold (we had 9 vendors on a waiting list we could not accommodate) and a total of 209 participants. Our awards dinner featured excellent food, valuable prizes and superb camaraderie. We partied the night away as only RTO dealers can do, but awoke to a stimulating seminar by Larry Sutton on Wednesday. “The Reverend of RTO” showed us all how to grow our stores and then Bill Keese explained the inner workings of Congress and why they don’t get much passed. A brief board meeting completed a fast paced yet rewarding experience in the Ozarks.

2000

- **February 23** – Annual meeting in Columbia – 7:45 a.m. MRDA Board of Directors met with our Vendors. Everyone seemed quite pleased with Tan-Tar-A Resort as our Fall Trade Show site. Approximately 100 RTO dealers and vendors listened carefully as Kent Sutherland explained the do's and don't's of Performance Appraisals. Mr. Sutherland's handout was especially helpful. After lunch, President Dan Cole introduced Jim Durham from our lobbyist's firm who showed us how to track state bills over the Internet and reported no bad RTO legislation was pending. APRO Executive Director, Bill Keese, suggested MRDA might have a legislative conference sometime in the future, and then gave his annual update on the RTO industry. President Cole reviewed MRDA's exclusive Recruiting and Interviewing Guide, another benefit of MRDA membership. A brief board meeting was held to conclude a very busy day in RTO.
- **April 26** – Board Meeting to plan the Fall Trade Show.
- **May 2, 3 and 4** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Missouri was well represented as John Cleek, Sr., Dan Cole, Gary Romine, Mark Windsor, Dwight McQuade and Al Zogorniak lobbied for favorable RTO legislation. A favorable survey by the FTC added credence to our message but once again Congress passed no RTO legislation.
- **June 29** – Board Meeting to plan the Fall Trade Show.
- **September 11, 12 and 13** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar at the Lake of the Ozarks – our year 2000 version was the biggest and best ever as 215 dealers, sponsors and vendors enjoyed the fabulous facilities at Tan-Tar-A Resort.

As always, Tuesday started early with both the MRDA Bass Tournament as well as the Golf Tournament starting at 8:00 a.m. Our exhibit hall was sold out and most vendors were very pleased with the traffic and sales orders. Wednesday, Dr. Lawrence Helms presented, "Romancing the Customer". This 3-hour seminar included the "Ten Commandments of Excellent Customer Service" and showed us ways to keep the customers we already have. Bill Keese gave us the State of the RTO Union address we all look forward to and then we adjourned.

- **October 18** – Board Meeting to evaluate the 2000 Trade Show and Seminar and we decided to move the exhibits to the much larger Windgate Hall at Tan-Tar-A Resort in 2001.

2001

- **February 21** – Annual meeting held at Ramada Inn in Jefferson City. An action packed day started at 7:30 a.m. with the MRDA Board of Directors sharing a breakfast meeting with our vendors/associate members. At 9:00 a.m., President, Dan Cole, welcomed over 120 dealers/vendors to our morning session featuring a state legislative update by Jim Durham from John Britton and Associates Lobbying firm. Wayne Schirmer, our general counsel, gave an in-depth explanation of handling replevins and included an informative handout. APRO Executive Director, Bill Keese, previewed the upcoming legislative conference. Noted industry consultant and speaker, Kent Sutherland, presented, “A Coaching Model” which challenged and motivated our managers to really analyze and learn from the communication mistakes we all make. The afternoon meeting included a by-law change that allows up to two board members from a member company. Following that the following officers were elected:

President – Dan Cole

Vice President – Dwight McQuade

Secretary/Treasurer – Chuck Kuluva

- “Tiger” John Cleek, Sr. automatically serves as Past President. Other Board Memmbers: Trent Agin, John Cleek, Jr., John Cox, Vic Lombardo, Scott Mitchell, Jerry Pinkley, Gary Romine, Richard Van Cleave and Mark Windsor. Brief board meeting followed where the rates for booths, registration, etc. for our Fall Trade Show and Seminar were determined.
- **April 19** – Board meeting to plan the Fall Trade Show. MRDA also allocated \$5,000 to participate in APRO’s e-learning project. All MRDA members will be able to use this valuable training tool for only \$9.95 per session instead of the \$49.95 normal rate.
 - **May 8, 9, 10 and 11** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. MRDA was again well represented by Dan Cole, “Tiger” John Cleek, Sr., Gary Romine, Mark Windsor, Larry Carrico and Keith Carrico. Increased acceptance and understanding of our industry and its leaders helped us obtain a record number of co-sponsors for HR1701, the pro RTO bill. Unfortunately, just like our MU football team, we’ll have to wait till next year for victory.
 - **June 20** – Board Meeting – Final details for our Fall Trade Show and Seminar were discussed and decided upon.
 - **August 9** – APRO Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. MRDA received the Continued Excellence Award, which is presented to state associations that demonstrate a continuous high level of activity over a period of years.
 - **August 22** – Accounting Management Seminar at the Ramada Inn in Columbia, Gary Hoyt, Vice-President, Furniture and Appliance Now, entertained and educated approximately 115 RTO employees with his “7 Steps to Successful Account Management”.

- **September 17, 18 and 19** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar at the Lake of the Ozarks. Just one week after the September 11th “Attack on America” 211 dealers and vendors gathered at Tan-Tar-A Resort for our annual event. The mood was more somber than usual; getting together as the close knit group that we are benefited us all. The Bass Tournament renamed the “Ben Neuharth Memorial” had a record number of entries as well as stories about the one that got away. The Golf Tournament was great as was our Trade Show with an all-time record of 61 booths! Larry Sutton was unable to attend due to the 9-11-01 crisis, but two talented veterans of our industry, Jay Roberts and Lindsey Semon, gave presentations on “Success in RTO” and “Prosperity for Business” respectively that inspired and educated us all. They proved again that RTO dealers find solutions; not excuses.
- **September 19** – Brief Board Meeting
- **October 24** – Board Meeting to discuss the Trade Show and plan for our February 2002 Annual Meeting.

2002

- **February 13** – The Holiday Inn Select in Columbia was the site of our annual meeting. The day kicked off with a 7:45 a.m. breakfast meeting including our Vendors and the MRDA Board of Directors. At 9:00 a.m. President Dan Cole opened the meeting to a crowd of nearly 100 RTO dealers and vendors. Mr. Jim Durham, our representative from the John Britton and Associates lobbying firm, gave us his annual update on state legislative activities that affected us. APRO Executive Director, Bill Keese, gave his version of the “Future of RTO” and made a strong plea for us all to get involved in our grass roots efforts. Keith Carrico, President, Innovative Insights and frequent speaker at APRO events presented, “The Doctor Is In” an informative seminar showing store managers how to diagnose and treat performance problems. Following a free lunch, Keith concluded his seminar and then about 22 dealers participated in our business meeting. A brief board meeting wrapped up another busy day for Missouri RTO dealers.
- **April 17** – Board meeting to plan our Fall Trade Show. Chairs for all committees were selected and their duties were detailed. A federal legislative update was enthusiastically received.
- **May 14, 15 and 16** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. MRDA was well represented by Dan Cole, “Tiger” John Cleek, Sr., Gary Romine, Mark Windsor, Dwight McQuade, Larry Carrico and Keith Carrico. Our groups met with all 9 House of Representative members or their staff as well as Senator Carnahan and a top aide of Senator Bond’s. In addition, “Tiger” John Cleek, Sr., Chairman of APRO’s State Association Committee, conducted a State President’s Workshop on May 14th featuring ways to help state associations including web-site design, e-learning, legislative activities and employee training.
- **June 19** – Board meeting to finalize plans for our Fall Trade Show and Seminar and to solicit more members for MRDA.
- **July 25** – APRO Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. MRDA received the Continued Excellence Award for the second year in a row. This award is given to state associations that demonstrate a continuous high level of activity over a period of years.
- **September 9, 10 and 11** – Fall Trade Show and Seminar at the Lake of the Ozarks. All the talk of a weak economy could not slow this prestigious event as a record 246 RTO dealers, spouses and vendors made this our biggest and best fall meeting ever! 61 golfers, our largest group in history, teed off at the beautiful Tan-Tar-A Resort Course at 8:00 a.m. Not to be outdone, 26 of the best bass fishermen and women in the rent-to-own business made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly memorable outing. Board member John Cleek, Jr., Chairman of the Vendor Solicitation Committee, helped sell 62 booths, an all-time high! On Tuesday night, great food, bass and golf trophies and valuable door prizes made our banquet a huge success. Keith Carrico demonstrated the wonders of APRO’s e-learning program during his seminar. Bill Keese kept us abreast of the changing RTO world.

- **September 11** – Brief board meeting following the seminar.
- **September 18** – HR1701, the industry-backed RTO bill, passed the House of Representatives 215 to 201. Our grass roots efforts were finally being rewarded
- **October 16** – Board meeting to discuss all aspects of our past Trade Show and Seminar and how to improve it. We also planned the agenda for our upcoming annual meeting in February, 2003.

2003

- **February 11, 2003** – Once again the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia hosted our annual meeting. At 7:45 MRDA's board treated our vendor members to a free breakfast and open discussion about ways to improve our fall trade show. At 9:00 a.m. President Dan Cole greeted 112 dealers and vendors eager to hear the latest about RTO in Missouri. Wayne Schirmer general counsel, and Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave lengthy presentations on the do's and don'ts of starting an MRDA PAC fund and other RTO related topics.

Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts. Renowned industry speaker, Frank Matthews, presented "Greater Sales Through Super Customer Service." His seminar was excellent and our board will look into bringing him back. The afternoon concluded with our annual business meetings and election of the following offices.

President – Chuck Kuluva
Vice President – John Cleek, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer – Scott Mitchell

Ten additional members were elected to the Board of Directors. The board also decided to escalate John Britton & Associates activities from merely monitoring to actually serving as our registered lobbyist. And so ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- **April 23, 2003** – Board meeting at Tan Tar A – President Kuluva outlined his two main goals to increase membership and have seminars every summer. Plans were thus made to have customer-service-oriented seminars in St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield for store-level members. Chairs were selected for the 2003 Trade Show and uniform sponsorship levels were established for all MRDA functions. In addition it was decided to work with APRO and develop a MRDA website.
- **May 19, 2003** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Dan Cole, Tiger Cleek, Larry Carrico, Keith Carrico, Chuck Kuluva, Gary Romine, Mark Windsor, and his son Aaron all descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. For the first time ever, we had both House (HR996) and Senate (S884) bills to discuss. We had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. We were well received by them all.
- **June 11, 2003** – Board meeting at Tan Tar A – We voted to establish the MRDA PAC fund to be administered by a MRDA committee with John Britton & Associates to serve as treasurer. Final plans were made for our September Trade Show and Seminar.

- **July 15 – 17, 2003** – MRDA for the first time sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days Frank Matthews got them fired up with his presentation “Greater Sales Through Super Customer Service”.

- **August 15, 2003** – APRO Convention and Trade Show in Reno, Nevada. MRDA wins the Continued Excellence Award for the third year in a row. This award is presented to state associations that demonstrate a continuous high level of activity over a period of years.

- **September 8 – 10, 2003** – MRDA’s Annual Fall Trade Show and Seminar at Tan Tar A was without a doubt our biggest ever with 254 dealers, sponsors and vendors. We were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. Tuesday an all time record of 69 golfers teed off at Tan Tar A’s Hidden Lakes course, plus eleven teams consisting of 22 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event. MRDA Vice-President John Cleek, Jr. and his vendor solicitation committee sold a record 72 booths making our trade show a huge success. Lyn Leach, President of APRO, gave a rousing and informative keynote address at our awards banquet followed by Bill Keese’s rendition of just what rent-to-own is. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. Ernie Lewallen, President of the Ohio Rental Dealers Association, gave a provocative seminar on ways to increase your bottom line. The day ended with a short board meeting and abundant compliments for the job President Kuluva and Ken Steiner had done.

- **October 22, 2003** – Board meeting to analyze our most recent trade show and make plans for our February 2004 annual meeting in Columbia.

2004

- * **February 11, 2004** – Again the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia hosted our annual meeting. At 7:45 MRDA's board treated our vendor members to a free breakfast and open discussion about ways to improve our fall trade show. At 9:00 a.m. President Chuck Kuluva greeted 79 dealers and vendors eager to hear the latest about RTO in Missouri. Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave an in depth presentation on the do's and don'ts of starting an MRDA PAC fund and other RTO related topics.

Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts. Industry speaker, Keith Carrico, gave two presentations on "To Hire or Not To Hire: The \$100,000 Question?" and "Changing Perspectives: Gaining Strategic Advantage in the New Millennium." His seminar was excellent as our board had him back to present this seminar.

The afternoon concluded with our annual business meeting. Tiger Cleek gave the attendees an explanation of the new concept of the Membership Handbook. It is a 3-ring binder approach, in which pages will be replaced and/or added in future years instead of printing the entire booklet as in the past. It was decided to have the summer seminars again in 2004 and a review of the 2003 trade show was given. So ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- * **April 21, 2004** – Board meeting at Tan Tar A – President Kuluva outlined his two main goals to increase membership and have seminars every summer. Plans were thus made to have customer-service-oriented seminars in St. Louis, Columbia, and Kansas City for store-level members. Chairs were selected for the 2004 Trade Show and uniform sponsorship levels were established for all MRDA functions. Since Tan-Tar-A Resort did not have MRDA's preferred dates for the 2005 Trade Show, a bid from the Lodge of Four Seasons was secured. It was decided to hold the 2005 Trade Show at the Lodge based on the preferred dates and costs associated with the Show. MRDA officially endorsed our Past-President, Gary Romine, who was running for a Representative seat in the 106th Missouri district.
- * **May 4 and 5, 2004** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Dan Cole, Tiger Cleek, Larry Carrico, Chuck Kuluva, Gary Romine and Mark Windsor all descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. Many of these dealers have been attending regularly for as long as ten years. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all. Both Senators Bond and Talent were sponsors of rto bill in the Senate and Representatives Clay, Akin, Shelton, Graves, Emmerson and Hulshof sponsored the House bill.

- * **June 16, 2004** – Board meeting at Tan Tar A – Jim Durham, our lobbyist and administrator of the PAC Fund, gave an update on the PAC Fund and recommendations and suggested amounts for MRDA to contribute to candidates’ political campaigns. Final plans were made for our September Trade Show and Seminar and speakers and topics were discussed. It was decided to focus on products training instead of one selected topic. Stoney Creek Inn in Columbia was selected as the venue for the 2005 Annual Meeting. After receiving bids from Tan-Tar-A Resort and the Lodge of Four Seasons for the 2006 and 2007 Trade Shows, it was decided to select the Lodge for these two years, based on the bids and cancellation agreements.

- * **July 20 – 22, 2004** – Again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Kansas City, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Frank Matthews got them fired up with his presentation “Workplace Communications”, which was a skilled-based workshop to help employees develop the essential communication techniques necessary to further their career in the rent to own industry.

- * **September 11 – 13, 2004** – MRDA’s Annual Fall Trade Show and Seminar at Tan Tar A was successful with 212 dealers, sponsors and vendors. We were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. It was decided to hold this informal event in the exhibit hall to give the exhibits extra viewing time. Tuesday, 64 golfers teed off at Tan-Tar-A’s “The Oak’s” golf course, plus eight teams consisting of 16 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event. MRDA Vice-President John Cleek, Jr. and his vendor solicitation committee sold 70 booths, with another 3 companies on the waiting list, making our trade show a huge success. In Bill Keese’s absence, Tiger Cleek gave an update on the current state of the industry including APRO’s legislative efforts to date at the awards banquet. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. Instead of the usual seminar, two product training seminars were presented. Ben Lewin of DSI Systems and Mike Wood of Zenith Electronics presented the “ABC’s of HDTV” and Leonard Alonzo of RES Accessories presented on proper product care and refurbishment. Lyn Leach, Past-President of APRO, gave a rousing and informative keynote address on rent to own, the best industry on earth. The day ended with a short board meeting.

- * **October 6, 2004** – Board meeting at our new site for the 2005 Trade Show, The Lodge of Four Seasons, to analyze our most recent trade show, the summer seminars and make plans for our February 2005 annual meeting in Columbia. This meeting also gave the Board the opportunity to examine the location for the booths and where the other activities associated with the Trade Show would be located at our new venue. Also, it was decided to explore the possibility of holding a regional trade show for 2005.

2005

- **February 9, 2005** – The Stoney Creek Inn in Columbia hosted our annual meeting. At 7:45 MRDA’s board treated our vendor members to breakfast and open discussion about ways to improve our fall trade show. Despite a sudden snow storm the night before, at 9:00 a.m. President Chuck Kuluva greeted 96 dealers and vendors eager to hear the latest about RTO in Missouri. Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave a legislative update on key RTO legislation.

Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts. Renowned industry speaker, Kerry L. Johnson, MBA, Ph.D., professional speaker and author of “Mastering The Game: The Human Edge in Sales and Marketing”, gave a morning presentation on “Peak Performance: How To Increase Your Sales By 70% in 8 Weeks”. His afternoon presentation was titled “Management Magic: How To Get People To Produce”. His seminar was excellent and our board will look into bringing him back. The afternoon concluded with our annual business meetings and election of the following offices.

President – Chuck Kuluva

Vice President – John Cleek, Jr.

Secretary/Treasurer – Scott Mitchell

Eleven additional members were elected to the Board of Directors. And so ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- **April 13, 2005** – Board meeting at the Lodge of Four Seasons – President Kuluva outlined his two main goals to increase dealer membership and participation and to hold a regional trade show. Vice President, John Cleek, Jr. was appointed Chair of the membership committee. Plans were thus made to have customer-service-oriented seminars in St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield for store-level members. Chairs were selected for the 2005 Trade Show and uniform sponsorship levels were established for all MRDA functions. In addition it was decided to work with APRO and develop a MRDA website.
- **May 17-18, 2005** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Dan Cole, Tiger Cleek, and Mark Windsor descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all.
- **June 9, 2005** – Board meeting at the Lodge of Four Seasons – Dan Cole, Chair of our PAC Fund, gave an update on the PAC Fund and the committees plan for the coming year to raise funds. Final plans were made for the Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar and speakers and topics were discussed.

- July 19-21, 2005** – Once again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Leonard Alonzo of RES Accessories got them fired up with his morning presentation on “Proper Product Care and Refurbishing to Maximize Profits” and his afternoon presentation on “Ultimate Customer Service and Account Management”. The seminars were a great success as there were 214 dealer employees at the three sites. Both sessions were video taped and one set will be given to each 2006 Dealer organization as a member benefit.
- August 8-11, 2005** - APRO Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The convention had great speakers and an excellent exhibit area. The highlights of the convention were when MRDA won the State Association for the Year for the third time and when Dan Cole, MRDA’s immediate Past President, was awarded the first-ever Heritage Award, which is presented to those in the industry who take responsibility for the jobs out of the limelight that can only be completed under qualified leadership. Congratulations to Dan for his years of dedication to APRO and the rent-to-own industry.
- September 12 – 14, 2005** – The first annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar, hosted by MRDA, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort was a great event with 248 dealers, sponsors and vendors present, with dealers from Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas in attendance. There were 25 dealer companies in attendance, of which seven of these companies were from the bordering states. For those companies that purchased merchandise at the trade show, of which \$941,035.97 in merchandise was purchased, a drawing was held for chances to win up to \$3500. Attendees were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. On Tuesday 64 golfers teed off at the Lodge’s Witches Cove course, plus six teams consisting of 12 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event. MRDA Board Member J.C.Cox and his vendor solicitation committee sold 70 booths, with another 4 companies on the waiting list, making this trade show a huge success. Bill Keese gave an update on the current state of the industry and APRO’s efforts for those dealers affected by the Hurricane Katrina, which hit the gulf coast states, at the awards banquet. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. On Wednesday, Bryan Dodge gave a provocative seminar, titled “How to Build a Better You”. The day ended with a short board meeting and abundant compliments for the job President Kuluva, the Board and Ken Steiner had done.
- October 18, 2005** – The Board voted to retain 25% of the 2006 dealers dues to the PAC Fund. Board meeting to analyze our most recent trade show, the summer seminars and make plans for our February 2006 annual meeting in Columbia. Holiday Inn Select in Columbia was selected as the venue for the 2006 Annual Meeting. Since the APRO convention was moving to the week before the scheduled dates of the Heartland of America Trade Show in September, the Board voted to move the trade show to June 19-21, 2006. The venue (Lodge of Four Seasons Resort) will remain the same. Thanks to the success of the membership committee, chaired by John Cleek, Jr., MRDA had 29 Dealer organizations as members for 2005. This was a 38% increase in membership from 2004.

2006

- **February 8, 2006** – Since MRDA needed to change the date of our Trade Show, the MRDA Board treated our vendor members to lunch and open discussion about ways to improve our summer trade show. It was decided that carpeting parts of the exhibit hall would greatly improve the appearance. And final plans were made for the 2nd Annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar to be held June 19-21. It was also noted that thanks to the fine efforts of the membership chair, John Cleek, Jr., MRDA had a 38% increase in membership in 2005 over 2004. The Board decided to hold the Summer Seminars in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis again in 2006, with one session on HDTVs and the other on minor appliance repairs.
- **February 9, 2006** – Seventy-nine dealers and vendors convened at The Holiday Inn Select in Columbia for our annual meeting where they heard the latest about RTO in Missouri. Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave a legislative update on key RTO legislation.

Ed Winn, General Counsel for APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts. He then proceeded to give his presentation on “Collections”, which was very well received and generated a lot of questions. The afternoon presentation was titled “Growing Your Business” and was presented by Shannon Shrunk, President of Baber’s Inc., a 48 store RTO business based in Mississippi and second-term President of APRO. His seminar was excellent and well received.

The afternoon concluded with our annual business meeting. President Kuluva reviewed the Membership Handbook, packet updates and the DVD of the 2005 Summer Seminars which was distributed to member. A review of the 2005 trade show was given. President Kuluva also informed the group that MRDA was received the State Association of the Year for 2005 and that Dan Cole was awarded the APRO Heritage Award, which is presented to those in the industry who take responsibility for the jobs out of the limelight that can only be completed under qualified leadership. So ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- **February 28-March 1, 2006** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Dan Cole, Tiger Cleek, and Mark Windsor descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all.
- **April 19, 2006** – Again the Board met at the Lodge of Four Seasons. The 2006 Annual Meeting was discussed and it was decided to return to the Holiday Inn Select for the Annual Meeting in 2007. The dates and venues were identified for the Summer Seminars and President Kuluva announced that RentDirect Nationwide had offered to sponsor the lunch at the 3 sites. The Trade Show plans were reviewed and finalized.

- June 19 – 21, 2006** – The second annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar, hosted by MRDA, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort was a great event with 255 dealers, sponsors and vendors present, with dealers from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma and Kansas in attendance. There were 26 dealer companies in attendance, of which eleven of these companies were from the bordering states. For those companies that purchased merchandise at the trade show, of which \$663,696.30 in merchandise was purchased, a drawing was held for chances to win up to \$3500. Attendees were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. On Tuesday 56 golfers teed off at the Lodge's Witches Cove course, plus ten teams consisting of 20 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event. MRDA Board Member J.C.Cox and his vendor solicitation committee sold 70 booths, with another 2 companies on the waiting list, making this trade show a huge success. Bill Keese gave an update on the current state of the industry and APRO's efforts for those dealers affected by the Hurricane Katrina, which hit the gulf coast states, at the awards banquet. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. On Wednesday, Larry Sutton gave a provocative seminar, titled "Plan for Peak Performance". A great time was had by all as well as walking away with an abundance of new ideas to take back to their stores.
- August 15-17, 2006** – Once again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Ben Lewin, District Manager of DSI Systems got them fired up with his morning presentation on "The ABCs of HDTV – The Update". The afternoon presentation was presented by MRDA member, J.C. Cox Owner of Gateway Rent-To-Own and his repair man, on "Minor Appliance Repairs". In addition to discussing these repairs, several members of each audience had the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned on several appliances. The seminars were a great success as there were 179 dealer employees at the three sites. Both sessions were video taped and one set will be given to each 2007 Dealer organization as a member benefit. MRDA also thanks RentDirect Nationwide for sponsoring the lunch at the 3 sites.
- September 21-23, 2006** - APRO Convention and Trade Show in Orlando, FL. The convention had great speakers and an excellent exhibit area. One highlight of the convention was when Chuck Kuluva, MRDA's President, was awarded the Heritage Award, which is presented to those in the industry who work on jobs out of the limelight. Congratulations to Chuck for his years of dedication to APRO and the rent-to-own industry. This was the second year an MRDA member has been given this award. MRDA again was awarded the State Association Continued Excellence award. Also, MRDA member, Larry Carrico, President of SKC Enterprises, Inc., dba, Rent One, was elected President of APRO for the next two years.

October 18, 2006 – The Board wrapped up the year with their final Board Meeting. The Board decided to continue to assign 25% of the 2007 dealers' dues to be turned over to the PAC Fund which has been so successful in Jefferson City. The Board met to analyze our most recent trade show, the summer seminars and make plans for our February 2007 annual meeting in Columbia. Speakers and topics were discussed and selected. The MRDA Board decided to renew the contract of Ken Steiner, MRDA's Administrative Manager and owner of Steiner and Associates,

for 2007-2008. And as the two year term of the current Board and Officers draw to an end; Dan Cole took on the responsibility of chairing the Nomination Committee for elections of the new administration at the 2007 Annual Meeting

2007

- **February 13, 2007** – The MRDA Board treated our vendor members to lunch and open discussion about ways to improve our summer trade show. It was decided to change the time for the Bass tournament to 7 AM since the month of June could be quite hot on the lake for fishing. It was also decided to hold a product-training program in addition to a keynote speaker for the Wednesday program. And final plans were made for the 3rd Annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar to be held June 18-20. It was also noted that MRDA would be celebrating its 20th Anniversary and that MRDA would be honoring the Past Presidents of MRDA and well as those vendor companies that have supported MRDA for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years. The Board decided to hold the Summer Seminars in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis again in 2007, with one session on furniture care and repair and the other on minor appliance repairs.
- **February 14, 2007** – Eighty-five dealers and vendors convened at The Holiday Inn Select in Columbia, despite the snow storm we had the day before in Missouri, for our annual meeting where they heard the latest about RTO in Missouri. Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave a legislative update on key RTO legislation.

Bill Keese, Executive Director for APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts. Larry Carrico, APRO President and a member of MRDA, gave a presentation on “Leadership in RTO”, which was very well received. The afternoon presentation was titled “Replevins and Other Legal Issues” and was to be presented by James Fendelman, an attorney from St. Louis, but would not travel to Columbia to present due to the weather. Therefore, Larry Carrico presented “E-Communities”, which he talked about how to use electronic communications to help in the RTO industry. His seminar was excellent and well received.

The afternoon concluded with our annual business meeting. President Kuluva reviewed the Membership Handbook, packet updates and the DVD of the 2006 Summer Seminars, which was distributed to member. A review of the 2006 trade show was given. President Kuluva also presented the Board members with plaques for their service for the term of 2005-2007. He then had Dan Cole, Chair of the Nomination Committee, to conduct the election of the officers and Board members for 2007-2009. The 2007-2009 Board of Directors is as follows:

MRDA Executives 2007-2009

John Cleek, Jr, Cleek’s Lease or Own; MRDA President
J. C. Cox, Gateway Rent to Own; MRDA Vice President
Trent Agin, Rent One; MRDA Secretary/Treasurer

MRDA Board of Directors 2005-2006

John "Tiger" Cleek; Cleeks Lease or Own
Dan Cole; National Rent to Own
Joe Laney; Rent-A-Center
Jerry Pinkley; Show Me Rent to Own
David Reed; Premier Rental

Gary Romine; Show Me Rent To Own
Mark Windsor; National TV Sales & Rental

So ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- **April 11, 2007** – Again the Board met at the Lodge of Four Seasons. The 2007 Annual Meeting was discussed and it was decided to return to the Holiday Inn Select for the Annual Meeting in 2008. The dates and venues were identified for the Summer Seminars and President Cleek, Jr. announced that RentDirect Nationwide had offered to sponsor the lunch at the 3 sites. The Trade Show plans were reviewed and finalized. APRO Legislative Conference was discussed with a schedule of who was meeting with which legislature.
- **April 16-18, 2007** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Dan Cole, Tiger Cleek, John Cleek, Jr., David Reed, Chuck Kuluva, Gary Romine, J. C. Cox, Trent Agin, Murray Beck, Larry Carrico, Mark Williams, Aaron Windsor and Mark Windsor descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all.
- **June 18 – 20, 2007** – The third annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar, hosted by MRDA, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort was a great event with 266 dealers, sponsors and vendors present, with dealers from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma and Kansas in attendance. There were 20 dealer companies in attendance, of which eight of these companies were from the bordering states. For those companies that purchased merchandise at the trade show, of which \$653,345 in merchandise was purchased, a drawing was held for chances to win up to \$3500. Attendees were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. On Tuesday 64 golfers teed off at the Lodge's Witches Cove course, plus ten teams consisting of 32 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event. MRDA Board Member J.C.Cox and his vendor solicitation committee sold 66 booths making this trade show a huge success. Bill Keese gave an update on the current state of the industry. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. The Past-Presidents of the MRDA were honored with a plaque for their service to the Association, since we were celebrating the 20th Anniversary of MRDA. Vendors who had supported the MRDA throughout this time period were honored with 5, 10 or 15 year plaque depending on years of membership. And President Cleek, Jr. presented a surprise Executive Assistant, Ken Steiner, with a plaque for his services in managing the association. On Wednesday, Robyn Peck and Mike Wood from LG Electronics gave an excellent presentation on HDTVs that was very well received and Larry Goad, President, Zion's Rental with locations in Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia and President of the Tennessee Rental Dealers Association, gave a provocative seminar on building a better business. A great time was had by all as well as walking away with an abundance of new ideas to take back to their stores.

- August 14-16, 2007** – Once again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Sue Hartman, Training Coordinator, Guardsman Furniture Pros presented on “Extending The Life Of Your Rental Furniture”. Given concurrently, the other presentation was presented by MRDA member, J.C. Cox Owner of Gateway Rent-To-Own and his repairman, James DeJardins, on “Minor Appliance Repairs Made Easy”. In addition to discussing these repairs, several members of each audience had the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned on furniture repair and appliance repair. The same programs were repeated in the afternoon, but the participants changed sessions from in the morning. The seminars were a great success as there were 156 dealer employees at the three sites. Both sessions were video taped and one set will be given to each 2008 Dealer organization as a member benefit. MRDA also thanks RentDirect Nationwide for sponsoring the lunch at the 3 sites and Marcone Appliance Parts for sponsoring the appliance sessions.
- September 24-27, 2007** - APRO Convention and Trade Show in Reno, Nevada. The convention had great speakers and an excellent exhibit area. One highlight of the convention was that MRDA was awarded the State Rental Dealer Association of the Year for 2007. Also, MRDA member, Larry Carrico, President of SKC Enterprises, Inc., dba, Rent One, was elected President of APRO for the next two years and “Tiger” John Cleek, President of Cleek’s Lease or Own, was elected 2nd Vice President.

October 17, 2007 – The Board wrapped up the year with their final Board Meeting. The Board decided to continue to assign 25% of the 2008 dealers’ dues to be turned over to the PAC Fund, which has been so successful in Jefferson City. The Board met to analyze our most recent trade show, the summer seminars and make plans for our February 2008 annual meeting in Columbia. Speakers and topics were discussed and selected. It was also decided to take an active role in updating our web site for more information in promoting the association.

2008

- **February 6, 2008** – The Holiday in Select in Columbia hosted our annual meeting. At 7:45 MRDA's board treated our vendor members to breakfast and open discussion about ways to improve our summer trade show. At 9:00 a.m. President John Cleek, Jr. greeted 123 dealers and vendors eager to hear the latest about RTO legislative efforts on the national level. Bill Keese, Executive Director of APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts and the status of a possible RTO bill. Renowned industry speaker, Bryan Dodge, professional speaker and author gave a morning presentation on "Taking Ownership of Leadership of Your Own Life" in which he addressed the important issues faced by all managers: professional development, selling and negotiation. His seminar was excellent and our board will look into bringing him back. In the afternoon, Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave a legislative update on key RTO legislation in Missouri and concluded with our annual business meeting. And so ended a long and productive day for MRDA.
- **February 11-13, 2008** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Tiger John Cleek, John Cleek, Jr., Trent Agin, Gary Romine, Steve Braning, Aaron Windsor and Mark Windsor descended on the Capital city trying to get federal legislation passed. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all.
- **April 24, 2008** – Board meeting at the Lodge of Four Seasons – President Cleek, Jr., outlined his main goal to increase dealer membership and participation. The date and site for the 2009 Annual Meeting was selected. It will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott and held on February 18, 2009. It was noted by the President that MRDA donated about 28 computers to Representative William Clay's Project of Computers 4 Kidz in St. Louis. Plans were made to have customer-service-oriented seminars in St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield for store-level members in the Fall instead of the late summer. Chairs were selected for the 2008 Trade Show, booth prices were set and uniform sponsorship levels were established for all MRDA functions. In addition, President Cleek announced the future dates for the Trade Shows in 2009 (June 16-18th) and 2010 (June 15-17th). Both years have changed to a Tuesday to Thursday format
- **June 16 – 18, 2008** – The fourth annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar, hosted by MRDA, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort was a great event with 225 dealers, sponsors and vendors present, with dealers from Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky and Missouri in attendance. There were 28 dealer companies in attendance, of which eleven of these companies were from the bordering states. For those companies that purchased merchandise at the trade show, of which \$1,171,911 in merchandise was purchased, a drawing was held for chances to win up to \$3500. Attendees were treated to a Welcome Reception Monday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. On Tuesday 62 golfers teed off at the Lodge's Witches Cove course, plus twelve teams consisting of 24 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event.

MRDA Board Member J.C.Cox and his vendor solicitation committee sold 66 booths making this trade show a huge success. Bill Keese gave an update on the current state of the industry. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. The Presidents of the surrounding states, who were in attendance, were introduced at the dinner to address the group. After the dinner, the group gathered at either the lobby bar or HK restaurant bar for some fun and libations. On Wednesday, Mike Franks from Speakers Unlimited gave an excellent presentation on “Finding, Hiring, Training, Motivating and Keeping Good People”. A great time was had by all as well as walking away with an abundance of new ideas to take back to their stores.

- **August 11-14, 2008** - APRO Convention and Trade Show in our own St. Louis, Missouri. The convention had great speakers and an excellent exhibit area. MRDA won the Continued Excellence Award for the fifth time. “Tiger” John Cleek was elected President of APRO after serving on their Board for a number of years and holding other officer positions. Congratulations to “Tiger” John.
- **September 23-25, 2008** – Once again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Frank Matthews of Decision Makers got them fired up with his morning presentation on “Customer Satisfaction” and his afternoon presentation on “Communicating in the RTO Workplace”. The seminars were a great success as there were 150 dealer employees at the three sites. Both sessions were video taped and one set will be given to each 2009 Dealer organization as a member benefit. MRDA also wants to thank Rent Direct for their financial sponsorship of these seminars.
- **October 16, 2008** – The Board voted to retain 25% of the 2009 dealers dues to the PAC Fund. Board meeting to analyze our most recent trade show, the fall seminars and make plans for our February 2009 annual meeting in Columbia. The Courtyard by Marriott in Columbia will serve as the venue for the 2009 Annual Meeting. Since the APRO is no longer handling the MRDA web site, MRDA will be looking at other options to get our web site up and running. Also, other educational options are being examined for the educational portion of the trade show. Ken Steiner’s contract for management services for MRDA was renewed for two more years. Thanks to the success of the membership committee and the entire Board, MRDA had 25 Dealer organizations as members for 2008. This was a 19% increase in membership from 2007.

2009

- **February 18, 2009** – The Courtyard by Marriott in Columbia hosted our annual meeting. At 9:00 a.m. President John Cleek, Jr. greeted 100 dealers and vendors eager to hear the latest about RTO legislative efforts on the national level. Our own, “Tiger” John Cleek, President of APRO, gave us an update on our federal legislative efforts and the status of a possible RTO bill. Dan Coughlin, professional speaker and author gave a presentation on “Accelerate Your Impact as an Executive” in which he explains practical ways to accelerate the quality of the impact you have as an executive on your employees, suppliers, and customers. He also focused on personal effectiveness, leadership, priority management, innovation, value-added selling, and branding.

In the afternoon, Dan completed his seminar and Jim Durham, our lobbyist, gave a legislative update on key RTO legislation in Missouri and concluded with our annual business meeting and elections. President Cleek, Jr. reviewed the 2008 Trade Show, the 2008 Summer Seminars, the Web site and the PAC Fund. A preview of the 2009 trade show was given as well as a discussion of MRDA’s charitable contributions. President Cleek, Jr. then had Chuck Kuluva, Chair of the Nomination Committee, to conduct the election of the officers and Board members for 2009-2011. The 2009-2011 Board of Directors is as follows:

MRDA Executives 2009-2011

John Cleek, Jr, Cleek’s, Inc.dba Aaron’s Sales ; MRDA President
J. C. Cox, Gateway Rent to Own; MRDA Vice President
Trent Agin, Rent One; MRDA Secretary/Treasurer

MRDA Board of Directors 2009-2011

John "Tiger" Cleek; Cleeks, Inc. dba Aaron’s Sales & Lease
Dan Cole; National Rent to Own
Joe Laney; Rent-A-Center
Macy Mitchell, All-American Rental
Scott Mitchell, All-American Rental
David Reed; Premier Rental
Gary Romine; Show Me Rent To Own
Mark Windsor; National TV Sales & Rental

So, ended a long and productive day for MRDA.

- **April 21-23, 2009** – APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. As usual MRDA was well represented as Tiger John Cleek, John Cleek, Jr., Trent Agin, Dan Cole, Gary Romine, and Mark Windsor descended on the Capital city trying to get federal

legislation passed. They had meetings with all 9 members of Congress or their staff as well as top-level staff members of both Senators. They were well received by them all.

- **April 29, 2009** – Board meeting at the Lodge of Four Seasons – President Cleek, Jr., outlined his main goal to increase dealer membership and participation. He also introduced Macy Mitchell as the new Board Member elected to the Board and welcomed the return to the Board of Scott Mitchell. Plans were made to have computer and electronics training and appliance installation seminars in St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield for store-level members in the Fall. Chairs were selected for the 2009 Trade Show, booth prices were set and uniform sponsorship levels were established for all MRDA functions. The Board also discussed the problem of the Web site and ways to fix it. The President appointed Macy Mitchell as the Chairman of the Communication Committee, with the web site as his top priority. In addition, President Cleek, Jr. announced the future dates for the Trade Shows in 2010 (June 15-17th), 2011 (June 14-16th) and 2012 (June 12-14th). These years have changed to a Tuesday to Thursday format
- **June 16 – 18, 2009** – The fifth annual Heartland of America Regional Trade Show and Seminar, hosted by MRDA, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort was a great event with 254 dealers, sponsors and vendors present, with dealers from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri in attendance. There were 20 dealer companies in attendance, of which four of these companies were from the bordering states. Companies purchased merchandise at the trade show totaling \$1,022,291. Attendees were treated to a Welcome Reception Tuesday evening featuring free food, beer, and friendly conversation. On Wednesday 48 golfers teed off at the Lodge's The Cove course, plus twelve teams consisting of 22 of the best bass fishermen and women in RTO made the Ben Neuharth Memorial Bass Tournament a truly classic event.

MRDA Board Members Trent Agin and Dan Cole and their vendor solicitation committee sold all 70 booths making this trade show a huge success. At the dinner, Bill Keese gave an update on the current state of the industry. The food was excellent and the humor abundant as the winners and losers of the bass and golf tournament were announced. The Presidents of the surrounding states, who were in attendance, were introduced at the dinner to address the group. The Board surprised MRDA's Administrative Assistant, Ken Steiner, by celebrating his 65th birthday with a cake, a gift certificate to a restaurant in Columbia and a 12 year old bottle of Scotch. Plaques were given to those vendor companies that have supported MRDA for 5, 10 or 15 years. After the dinner, the group gathered at either the lobby bar or HK restaurant bar for some fun and libations. On Thursday, there were six (6) product trainings, which allowed each dealer to attend 40 minute trainings of each of the product trainings. Product trainings were provided by Ashley Furniture, Archbrook Laguna, LG Electronics, O'Rourke Sales, Welton USA and Whirlpool Corporation. A great time was had by all as well as walking away with an abundance of new ideas to take back to their stores.

- **August 30-September 2, 2009** - APRO Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The convention had great speakers and an excellent exhibit area. MRDA won

the Continued Excellence Award for the sixth time. “Tiger” John Cleek of Cleeks, Inc. dba Aaron’s Sales was re-elected President of APRO for a second term after serving on their Board for a number of years and holding other officer positions. Larry Carrico of SKC Enterprises, Inc., dba Rent One, a Past President of APRO, was re-elected to the Board of Directors. Congratulations to “Tiger” John and Larry.

- **September 23, 2009** – The Board voted to retain 25% of the 2010 dealer dues to the PAC Fund. Board meeting to analyze our most recent trade show, finalize the fall seminars and make plans for our February 2010 annual meeting in Columbia. The Hampton Inn and Suites in Columbia will serve as the venue for the 2010 Annual Meeting for February 17, 2010. President Cleek, Jr. also announced that David Reed of Premier Rentals had resigned from the Board of Directors. He has replaced David with Cindy Boyers of Heartland Furniture and Appliance Sales and Leasing to serve out David’s term. Since APRO is no longer handling the MRDA web site, MRDA will be looking at other options to get our web site up and running. Also, it was decided to continue the product trainings for the 2010 Trade Show as they were a success and to maintain the same pricing for the booths and the product trainings for the 2010 Trade Show. Thanks to the success of the membership committee and the entire Board, MRDA had 29 Dealer organizations as members for 2009. This was a 16% increase in membership from 2008.
- **October 27-29, 2009** – Once again, MRDA sponsored seminars for our store-level employees in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis. On successive days, Kelly McClellan of Archbrook Laguna/The Expert Warehouse got them fired up with his morning presentation on “Computers and Electronics Training”. In the afternoon presentation, Nick Wuesthoff and Curt Bannigan of Whirlpool Corporation gave great information on “Appliances Installation and Delivery”. The seminars were a great success as there were 123 dealer employees at the three sites. Both sessions were video taped and one set will be given to each 2010 Dealer organization as a member benefit. MRDA also wants to thank Rent Direct, the TRIB Group and Whirlpool Corporation as the major financial sponsors of these seminars. We also want to thank High Touch, Pioneer Furniture, and Pioneer Music for sponsoring the refreshments.