



# Making a Difference

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



# Board of Trustees

## 2012 Board of Trustees

Chair/Trustee at Large  
Doron Broadfoot  
The Rent-It Store  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,  
Canada

Vice Chair/Trustee at Large  
Catherine DeBusk, CERP  
Party People Rentals  
Phoenix

Trustee at Large  
Andy Cooke, CERP  
Cooke Rentals-Cornelius  
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Trustee at Large  
Delores Crum, CERP  
Premiere Party Central  
Austin, Texas

Trustee at Large  
Dave Garton  
John Deere  
Moline, Ill.

Trustee at Large  
Peter Maginnis  
Hermosa Beach, Calif.

Trustee/ARA Chairman  
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Ted Cook  
Ventura Rental Center  
Ventura, Calif.

Trustee/ARA  
President-elect  
Michael Blaisdell  
Bunce Rental  
Tacoma, Wash.

Executive Director/  
Trustee  
Christine L. Wehrman  
American Rental  
Association  
Moline, Ill.



ARA Foundation board of trustees and ARA staff, left to right: (top row) Marcy Johnson; Michael Blaisdell; Alan Wismer; Doron Broadfoot; Dave Garton; Jenni Venema (front row) Ted Cook; Andy Cooke, CERP; Chris Wehrman; Catherine DeBusk, CERP; and Delores Crum, CERP.

## Board members play vital role

The trustees on the ARA Foundation board, consisting of rental business professionals and a manufacturer/supplier, are critical to the Foundation's success in serving the industry.

The trustees set policies, serve as industry ambassadors, secure adequate funding, monitor finances, measure and monitor programs, create and update the strategic plan and advise the executive director regarding staff resources.

"They are actively involved in the Foundation's success. That is why board trustees must have a passion to serve, a willing heart and a giving spirit, demonstrate leadership, have strong knowledge of the industry and have the time to commit," says Chris Wehrman, executive director of the ARA Foundation.

The benefits of serving are many. Discover them by contacting Jenni Venema, ARA Foundation director of development, at **800-334-2177, ext. 236, or [jennifer.venema@ararental.org](mailto:jennifer.venema@ararental.org)**.

## New member feels 'honored,' ready to serve



When Alan Wismer, owner of George's Tool Rental in Hatfield, Pa., was asked to serve on the ARA Foundation board of trustees, he felt "honored." He knew firsthand the value of the services offered by the ARA Foundation.

"My wife and I received a great blessing through the Foundation when we were connected with REAP [Rental Executive Advisory Program] advisors Joe and Pam McKenney," says Wismer, who served as ARA Region Two director through February 2013. "It's awesome to have a resource like that to help you."

Wismer is determined to help the ARA Foundation continue its mission of assisting the industry. "Every year, the Foundation has grown. During my tenure on the board, I would like to continue to work with other board members to find even more ways the ARA Foundation can assist the membership. The ARA Foundation has momentum. I hope to continue it and build on it," he says.

# Rental Executive Advisory Program (REAP)

Even the best-run equipment rental businesses can benefit from good advice from someone who knows the business: That is the premise of the Rental Executive Advisory Program, or REAP, offered by the ARA Foundation. Rental-specific advice from a trusted veteran in the field is offered through:

- Phone calls
- Emails
- In-person visits
- Group interactions at state or provincial association meetings
- The “Ask the REAP Advisor” column in *RENTAL MANAGEMENT*

No matter which way it is done, these interactions make a world of difference to rental operators and their businesses.



## REAP experience was life-changing for new ARA Foundation board member Alan Wismer, his wife and their rental business

A little help from the right person can alter the course and success of a rental business.

Alan Wismer and his wife, Marty, found that to be true. After managing the family rental business — George’s Tool Rental, based in Hatfield, Pa. — since the late 1980s, Alan purchased it from his father-in-law in 2004. They borrowed the money to buy the business, creating “a new level of debt that we never had before,” Alan says.

Dealing with the heavy debt load was significant enough. Add to that a party division that was in a facility that wasn’t suited for this type of inventory and ended up zapping resources from other parts of the business and the situation just snowballed.

“I contacted the American Rental Association because I had heard about REAP [Rental Executive Advisory Program]. They sent me a questionnaire to see what issues I was dealing with. The ARA Foundation connected me with Joe and Pam McKenney,” says Alan, a new ARA Foundation board of trustees member.

That rental connection was a life-changing event for the Wismers and their business. “When Joe called, he gave me a laundry list of things that he wanted to see — my financials, my marketing plan, etc. — to get a snapshot of our business,” Alan says. “I sent him a box full of stuff. His response was that he would gladly come up to Pennsylvania and spend a few days with us. I said, ‘Are you serious?’ I couldn’t believe that he would be willing to do that. He spent three days with us, looking at our business, our competitors and asking us why we did things the way we did,” Alan says.

That visit was just the beginning. More visits and phone calls ensued. The end result was a complete “reorganization of our business,” Alan says. “During one of our visits, Joe and Pam really emphasized that we needed to understand our financials and we needed to understand the party end of our business. We learned that we should never own a type of business we don’t understand and that we should not continue to do things just because it is the way we’ve been doing it for years.

“At the end of the day, we knew what we needed to do,” he adds. “Joe never said this is what you need to do. He just asked you the questions. You knew where he was going. He was very affirming and very positive. When we had a game plan, we acted on it.”

That action plan included selling the party store. “That took a lot of pressure off and allowed us to refocus on what we liked to do. After our consultations with Joe, we became a lean, smooth-running machine. Joe definitely prepared us for the recession,” Alan says.

Today, George’s Tool Rental is going strong, and last year the Wismers opened their third tool store.

Alan attributes his business’ success to the McKenneys’ help that was offered through REAP. “I don’t know of other businesses that offer industry-specific assistance like this — help that is so affordable. You normally can’t get good counsel for less than \$300 an hour. The REAP program is such a bargain. Then to get help from those who have been in your industry, well, that is almost unheard of today. The ARA Foundation does an excellent job of choosing REAP advisors. They are there to help,” he says.

Alan, who says this experience was a major reason for wanting to join the ARA Foundation board of trustees, encourages other rental operators to request a REAP consultation. “Those in the industry need to take advantage of this program. It made a major impact on our business. It would benefit their businesses, too,” he says.



## Laminated cards show how easy REAP consultations are



When you have a question about your rental business, who can you turn to for assistance? A trusted advisor from the Rental Executive Advisory Program (REAP), offered through the ARA Foundation.

To help those in the equipment rental industry discover how easy, confidential, affordable and rental-specific REAP consultations are, the ARA Foundation has printed pocket-sized, laminated REAP cards. These cards highlight the fact that consultations are available via phone, email or one-on-one, in-person store visits. On the card, you also can see that REAP consultations can be scheduled by going to the ARA Foundation website, [ARAfoundation.com](http://ARAfoundation.com).

“These cards are a simple and handy way to remind owners that rental-specific advice can be quickly and easily accessed through REAP,” says Dave Garton, marketing manager at John Deere in Moline, Ill., who serves as an ARA Foundation board trustee. “They can be kept in a pocket, a file folder or other convenient location. REAP consultations allow rental operators to gain knowledge from REAP advisors — fellow rental operators who are willing to share their time and expertise on subjects, from marketing, insurance and risk management to personnel and operational issues. REAP consultations are a way to receive needed advice in return for a very low-cost donation to the ARA Foundation that is tax-deductible.”

## REAP is there for you

▶ Discover the REAP advantage for your business. For a REAP laminated card or to schedule a REAP consultation, contact Jenni Venema, ARA Foundation director of development, at 800-334-2177, ext. 236, or [jennifer.venema@ararental.org](mailto:jennifer.venema@ararental.org).