

Hard to refuse

by Michael McConnell

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Wholesalers soak up the sun of Southern California's desert

PALM DESERT, Calif. — It was better-than-normal weather Nov. 4-6, when HARDI held its annual convention. And when you're talking about the Southern California desert, that's saying a lot.

It was sunny, warm and dry in Palm Desert, Calif., when the Heating, Airconditioning and Refrigeration Distributors International held its annual convention at the JW Marriott Desert Springs. Temperatures climbed into the 90s several days, making the luxury resort's pools more popular than they'd typically be in mid fall.

When they weren't golfing or enjoying the sights around the desert, HARDI members were busy attending one of the many educational seminars, committee meetings or manufacturer-sponsored receptions. They were also recognizing the incoming 2007 association president, Mark Faessler, and the outgoing president, Bill Shaw.

Here's a look at some of this year's convention sessions:

(We have only included the portion of the article regarding Michael Meier's presentation.)

'Like a bomb went off'



Meier Supply Co. recently endured a flood that damaged the company's offices so severely, "It was like a bomb went off," Mike Meier said.

Insuring against fire-related losses is standard at many businesses like Brauer Supply Co., but would you buy extra insurance for a once-in-a-lifetime event, like a flood, in an area that never has them?

Mike Meier didn't. The general manager of Meier Supply Co. Inc. in Johnson City, N.Y., said the neighborhood around his family's store hadn't had any flooded basements in 50 years — until June 28, 2006.

It took two days for the waters to recede enough for workers to inspect the damage.

"It was like a bomb went off," Meier recalled.

There were no working phones or computers. The company lacked a computer backup system. Many records were water-filled and destroyed, although Meier kept some important documents in a waterproof, fireproof box.

He said the experience taught him three things: "Have a plan, have a plan, have a plan."

The impact on the company's business will be in the millions, he estimated, adding, "If we had had a plan in place, we could have cut that by 75 percent."