

July 3, 2014

Fogleman-hosted show wins top honors at WVHI convention

Board member Phil Fogleman's beverage sampling won top honors while the legal panel and MHI general counsel Rick Robinson tied for second place for the favorites at the West Virginia Housing Institute Inc.'s 10th convention June 23-25 at Stonewall Resort, WVHI's attendees voted.

Fifty-six survey forms – a record number – were filled out by the 126 registered attendees. The number of personal comments were up this year, with several listing the conference as “awesome.”

“This certainly was an extraordinary conference from top to bottom.” Co-President Kevin Wilfong of Fairmont said on behalf of the 14-member board of directors that worked diligently in putting the meetings and entertainment together. “The board outperformed itself.”

Twenty-six companies and individuals, a record number for the association, provided \$26,000 in sponsorships for this year's two-day event, compared to \$21,000 last year.

“The outpouring of support has been impressive and reflects the hard work of the board to reach out to friends, associates and those with whom they have business relationships to provide a strong program,” Co-President George Gunnell of Winfield said. “It also shows the strong commitment of individual members who really have stepped up on their own to support the organization.”

People loved everything about Stonewall Resort from the location to the food. Only one person said he or she would not return, while 51 said they would welcome the 2015 convention at the north-central state park. “As usual, this convention is my favorite every year,” wrote one attendee. “Great convention,” another wrote. “One of the best.” “Great event,” wrote a third.

Eleven individuals said the legal panel, featuring WVHI General Counsel John Teare, Huntington lawyer Jason Stemple, Charleston attorneys Bryan N. Price and Jim Muldoon, and chief state regulator Mitch Woodrum, was the single best event at the conference. Another seven named the wine tasting and five specified the second-day presentation of MHI Chairman Nathan Smith of Kentucky. Individual praise was laid out for Champion Home Builders President and CEO Jack Lawless and humorist Leanne Morgan of Knoxville, Tenn.

“The wine tasting. Awesome. Love Phil,” one attendee wrote. “Loved the wine tasting,” echoed another.

All the speakers received excellent scores and they were only fractionally off from each other. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was a D and the 4-5 range constituted an A, Fogleman's second-day, afternoon sampling of various spirits, in which he was assisted by his wife, Jeanie Fogleman, and WVHI staffer Kari Preslar, earned a 4.72. This was only the third year for the wine tasting. More than 30 people attended the event as an alternative to golf.

The legal panel and Robinson, who is also MHI's vice president for governmental affairs, scored 4.6; Nathan Smith's folksy-yet-serious industry talk earned a 4.55; Lawless was at 4.47 and Morgan's second-day after-dinner presentation scored 4.45. One wrote that Morgan was “great.”

Those voting loved the accommodations, which earned a 4.9 score; followed by the space at 4.83; location at 4.82; and food at the resort at 4.7.

Golf at the Arnold Palmer-designed course was a hit. It earned 16-0 favorable votes. The golfing event was organized by Kris Hershberger of Middletown Home Sales. "Great golf course," exclaimed one. This is the first year the convention provided golf statues to the winners, but one golfer was disappointed. "Need better prizes for first place," he wrote.

The attendees rated the WVHI staff – executive director Andy Gallagher, Preslar and Linda Ray – at 4.93 and 29 people said the staff was extremely responsive. The staff "always is available," one noted.

Several people made strong comments about the fundraising auction run by Judy Ritchie of Elkins and one wrote, "Good job, Judy." Two said the event lasted too long, but others had this to say: "Great for PAC fund," "Fun!" "Great items," "Good fun," "Wonderful," and "Good."

One attendee specifically praised the first-day, two-hour boat ride on the Stonewall Lake.

Two people said they did not have sufficient free time, but 47 said they did. One person did not have sufficient networking time, but 47 did.

Here are some additional comments:

--"This is a growing event that imparts a lot of knowledge."

--"You need more manufacturers putting on presentations."

--"Truly enjoyable. Great networking."

--"Great event. Loved it."

--"Enjoy the whole experience."

--"Great time, as always."

--"Great time. Will attend next year."