tough call. Incident management is here to stay and we find ourselves trying to be a part of what is typically a governmental function. So, do we give this service up? How do we pay for the equipment necessary to provide the services that are so desperately needed by the public? It can't be done at the hourly rate from years gone by, and the rate can not be compared to AAA rates.

The solution needs to be worked out and we, the industry, need to quit fighting over it and do something about it or the government will. I don't have heavies but I do care about the companies that I dispatch though my office. I train with them so I can understand what they are up against. It is complicated, but if we are to participate, we need to fix it and fix it soon.

Read the report and keep it for reference. I suggest we look at it as a guide to what we need to do to make our industry better — a report card!

Officers of the Women's Towing & Recovery Association of America: President Geri Roskopf, Menomonee Falls, WI; 2006 Tow Woman of the Year Award Recipient and Scholarship Chair Stacey Tucker, Bremerton, WA; Secretary Angela Roper, Georgetown, TX; First Vice President Marci Gratzianna, Northlake, IL; Second Vice President Mary Weber, Pewaukee, WI. Not pictured: Treasurer Beverly Fitzgerald, Liberty MO

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THE BOTTOM **LINE**

Paying Your Dues

Which one of these three kinds of people are you?

By Chuck Ceccarelli

I once read a sign that said there are three kinds of people: Those who want things to happen, those who make things happen, and those who wonder what happened.

It seems that I continually meet people who want things to happen. Once in a while you meet those great ones who are making things happen, but it's more common to find those who wonder what happened. Let's talk a little about these three kinds of people and try to figure out where you fall:

Those who want things to happen. This type of person attends trade shows and complains about all the things wrong with our industry; they complain about the problems he or she is having in business; they complain about the people running their towing association. They complain about the people who put on the trade show, or how they could have done a better job. They talk about how the person doing a demonstration is doing it wrong. Here are a few of the typical stories you may have heard from this type of person:

• "Boy, we have a huge problem with abandoned vehicles. The local police never seem to get the paperwork done so we can process the vehicle and dispose of it. I am sick and tired of getting up in the middle of the night to go tow an abandoned vehicle that we will not get paid for."

• "I never get my fair share of rotation calls. My competitor is paying off the police to get all the calls [puh-leeez!]."

• And my personal favorite: "I don't want to send my drivers to training – what if they quit!" A wise man, upon hearing that statement said, "Yeah, but what if they stay?"

I am sure some of you are smiling as you read this because you have heard these stories before. I would venture to guess that many of you have heard these same stories last year and the year before and the year before that. This type of person typically does not want their problems solved because if they get solved, well, what would they talk about in all their spare time?

They typically do not belong to their state towing association; they never attend industry meetings; they've never donated money to the Towing Museum or the Survivor Fund. They pay their drivers average wages, set their rates based on their competitors' rates, and have an average business.

Those who make things happen. You know who I am talking about: These are the ones who belong to their state towing association, and they regularly attend meetings. They understand the importance of preserving our history by supporting the International Towing and Recovery Museum and Hall of Fame.

They truly understand that as tow truck operators, it is our obligation to pay homage to those who lost their lives operating a tow truck. This type of person understands that every time they head out on a tow, their name could wind up placed on the Wall of the Fallen.

This type of person is very proud to be a tow truck operator. They have a passion for this industry and a desire to see the entire industry profit and grow. They are at every local training event or are supporting it in some way. They are at every local tow show. This type of person gives continually from their heart, their wallet, and their mind. This kind of person sheds a tear watching the video of the Wall of The Fallen dedication.

I am very lucky because I have met several of these people. Each one holds a place in my heart, and most have had some sort of an impact on my life.

Those who wonder what happened. This type of person…well, I hope you get the picture by now….

They tell me a story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You just read the beginning. The middle goes like this: if you are in the towing industry, you must donate to your local towing association. You must donate to the museum and Wall of the Fallen. You must support local and national training. It is our responsibility to support the very industry that we make our living from.

It is much like supporting your alma matter – it's not open for discussion, you just do it. It's no different than when a kid comes to you in person and asks for a donation – you give them a donation. When a Girl Scout comes to your door selling cookies, you buy some whether you like cookies or not.

You need to pay your dues. I believe that if you do not belong to your state association, you have no right to complain. Take a moment to join your association. If you don't like how it's run, then pay your dues, run for office, and change it.

I would encourage all of you to ask your towing equipment supplier if they donated to your local towing association, and if they donated to the Wall of the Fallen. I would also encourage you to thank those who have donated and suggest you spend money with those who spend money supporting our industry.

The world is full of average people – dare to be different. Go out and improve our industry, go out and change the world.

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