

# PMAA JOURNAL

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# Spirit® and State Associations – Putting the Pieces Together



by Vera Haskins  
President of  
Spirit® Petroleum

I love Independence Day. I love to celebrate the concept, and I value those who have fought for the freedoms we enjoy in this country. As for *being* independent, I value that quality as well, but I know that those who are the most independent also recognize the value of interdependence — of relying on someone who can, in turn, rely on you.

At Spirit®, we recognize that valuable commodity well. We were built around it; it is a core value here. And the success of the Spirit® brand across the country can be directly accredited to our collaborative arrangements with the state associations who have supported us. And we are so grateful!

Dan Gilligan, PMAA president, reminds us that it is in everyone’s best interest that Spirit® realize continued success. “The state associations are shareholders in Spirit®,” he says. “Remember that one can’t simply be a retailer and sign up as a Spirit® retailer. Spirit® is available only through jobbers, which is a key membership element of the state groups.”

There have been cases where jobbers who were not members joined the state association specifically in order to access the Spirit® brand!

“In Iowa, most product is unbranded, so we see a real opportunity for Spirit® in our future,” says Dawn Carlson, president of the Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Stores of Iowa. “The credit card program with RBS WorldPay surely will attract new clients, and we are in the process of endorsing this processor to all of our PMCI members.”

“And our members appreciate the opportunity to be branded without all the additional rules and regulations imposed by the larger oil companies,” adds Natalie Isaacks, head of the Louisiana Oil Marketers and C-Store Association.

The Michigan Petroleum Association supported the Spirit® brand from its inception in 2001 because it allowed another option to the big companies, which were getting bigger all the time through mergers. “We didn’t want to be limited to just a few choices,” says Mark Griffin of MPA. “Spirit® offers state associations the ultimate member service; it’s a viable alternative.”

And from where I sit, the low-cost promotion provided through the state associations’ Web sites, publications and trade shows, as well as the opportunities they provide me to speak at their conventions and to their boards of directors is invaluable — or, as the ad says, *priceless!*

Please join me in welcoming Nancy Beckwith to Spirit® as our new marketing director. Nancy has almost 30 years experience in the petroleum industry, and she currently is vice president of Blodgett Oil in central Michigan, which her father started in 1958. Nancy’s strong



Nancy Beckwith

background includes serving as the first female Board chair in the history of the Michigan Petroleum Association/ Michigan Association of Convenience Stores. She also worked as marketing director there for two years.

Nancy told me that, through her activities with the Michigan state association, she has come to understand the vital role all state associations play in supporting us and how important the affiliation between Spirit® and the states has been and will continue to be.

“I’m looking forward to working with Vera to market Spirit® at regional industry trade shows and to introducing the Spirit® brand throughout the United States,” Nancy said.

Nancy and her husband, Richard, a retired Michigan State Police trooper, who works part-time with U.S. Homeland Security, have three children and three grandchildren. When not spending time with family, the couple enjoys fishing for walleye on Saginaw Bay.

We’re thrilled to have you, Nancy!

