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NRHA Expands Membership to Include Paint, Decorating Retailers, Enters New Era

INDIANAPOLIS—Beginning this fall, the North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA) is officially broadening the reach of its membership to include independent paint and decorating store operators and will be changing the association's name to reflect this evolution.

Effective immediately, the association will be known as the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA) and will represent the interests of all independently operated hardware stores, home centers, lumberyards and paint and decorating outlets throughout North America.

The change comes following the closure of the Paint and Decorating Retailers Association, an organization that NRHA had worked closely with for many years.

"Independent hardware stores and home centers share so much common DNA with independent paint and decorating retailers that this expansion of our membership can only benefit the industry as a whole," says NRHA president and CEO Bob Cutter. "We are excited to offer paint and decorating retailers an expanded breadth of resources, and we look forward to combining all of their ideas and insights with the already strong pool of retail thought leaders from the hardware side of the channel."

A New Era

Since 1900, NRHA has served independent retailers in the hardware and home improvement channel by providing them with a range of educational tools, industry advocacy and opportunities to come together and share ideas and best practices.

Throughout its history, NRHA has evolved to meet the changing needs of its members, and this recent decision to expand membership to paint and decorating retailers seemed like a logical extension to the association, according to current board chairman Dan Harris, owner of Palos Ace Hardware in Palos Heights, Illinois.

“We have so much in common with independent paint and decorating retailers, some of which already engage with our programs and services. It’s a win-win opportunity for all the retailers involved and for the association as well,” Harris says.

This broadened member base will help independent retailers from across the home improvement spectrum as NHPA can now tap into a wider network of retailers for research, best practices, success stories and more.

As part of this expansion, independent paint and decorating store owners and operators will immediately have access to all of the free programs and services available through the newly named NHPA.

Retailers who were paid training members of PDRA will have their membership transferred to the NHPA and have access to the complete range of paid training services NHPA offers.

Additionally, NHPA is assembling an advisory committee made up of key retailers from the paint and decorating industry to provide guidance in the future development of programs.

NHPA will also be reserving a seat on its board of directors for a paint and decorating retailer beginning in 2021.

"PDRA served the paint and decorating retail channel for more than 75 years, and while I am sorry to see this chapter close, I am encouraged by the opportunities that await with NHPA," says Craig Bond, former PDRA chairman and owner of three Tommy's Paint Pot locations in Oregon. "Gaining an additional 35,000 independent peers who are ready to welcome us into this storied association speaks to the strength and camaraderie we have always known about this channel."

Former PDRA CEO LeAnn Day will be serving as NHPA's newly created executive director for NHPA paint and decorating programs. Dan Simon, a long-time fixture with PDRA's publishing operations, will also continue to represent *Paint & Decorating Retailer* magazine to the industry. NHPA will take over publishing the monthly magazine, which includes new products, how-to management information, retail and manufacturer profiles and more.

"I am truly looking forward to the new opportunities this association will offer the channel," Day says. "Getting all these fantastic independent retailers from the home improvement side and the paint and decorating side under one umbrella will create so many opportunities that make sense for the channel."

For the immediate future, NHPA will continue to host the NRHA.org and PDRA.org websites as the two organizations' educational, training and information offerings are brought together under one umbrella.

Continuity and Enhancements

While paint and decorating retailers will immediately have access to all NHPA programs and services as home improvement retailers, they won't miss out on some of the most popular resources they enjoyed from PDRA.

NHPA will also continue to offer paint and decorating retailers targeted social media support, industry-specific newsletters and the opportunity to participate in annual research projects like the *Cost of Doing Business Study*.

"We want to make sure paint and decorating retailers have access to the programs and information they have come to rely on to run their businesses better and more efficiently, but also have them realize they are now part of a larger community with a broader range of resources and programs available to them," Cutter says.

At the same time, retailers from both home improvement and the paint and decorating side of the industry can expect to see even more targeted training programs, roundtables and informational content being developed by NHPA.

What the Future Holds

When it comes to the future opportunities for independent home improvement, paint and decorating retailers, the new, expanded NHPA has a number of dynamic projects on tap for 2021.

"In the coming months, we will be sharing some of the new programs and services we have in store for retailers, but one of the most exciting things that will mark the new year is the new pool of best practices, great ideas and thought leadership that we will be able to draw from with the addition of nearly 10,000 paint and decorating retailers to our membership," Cutter says. "For years we have preached that independent retailers are so much stronger when they come together through their association, and now we are stronger than ever."