

BOTH REGISTRATION AND HOTEL SPACE ARE SELLING OUT FOR ERA'S 2018 CONFERENCE

In a first for ERA conferences, both registration space and hotel rooms could be sold out for the 2018 event by the time this magazine reaches readers. ERA's 49th Management and Marketing Conference is scheduled Feb. 25-27 at the AT&T Conference Center in Austin, Texas. The program theme is "Tools of Our Trade — Constructing a Successful Future."

At press time of *The Representor*, more than 220 rep firm personnel, manufacturers and distributors had registered for the conference. Registration spaces are capped for 2018 at 250 to ensure that the main ballroom and breakout seminar rooms at the conference hotel can comfortably accommodate all attendees.

Conference program segments will lead off with a "tools"-focused keynote presentation by humorist and former design engineer Wayne Cotter. The event's four general sessions for all attendees will examine the customer of tomorrow, work-life balance, today's all-inclusive workforce and economic trends. The 14 breakout seminars are built around topics ranging from a sales techniques swap shop and software how-to workshops to sessions on cultural diversity, the "unsale," the rep value proposition, design registration and buying, selling or merging a rep firm. For details on the conference and to determine if registration space remains available, go to era.org.

HUTSON TO RECEIVE 2017 JESS SPOONTS - ERA WHITE PIN AWARD

The ERA White Pin Group has announced that John Hutson, CPMR, of the Massachusetts-based MacInnis Group is the 2017 recipient of the Jess Spoons - ERA White Pin Scholarship Award. He was nominated for the honor by White Pin member Tobi Cornell, CPMR, of Kruvand Associates.

To qualify for this award, nominees: must be from an ERA member rep firm; must have been involved in ERA activities and leadership roles on the local and/or national levels for a minimum of two years; and must be willing to devote significant volunteer time to ERA in the foreseeable future. The award is named for the late Jess Spoons, an ERA past president, member of the organization's Hall of Fame and past coordinator of the White Pin Group.

"John Hutson is a passionate, creative volunteer who epitomizes the new generation of rep firm owners involved in ERA ... He is the ultimate volunteer whom Jess Spoons had in mind when this award was created," said Mark Motsinger, CPMR, of Wallace Electronic Sales, a past president of ERA and the coordinator of the White Pin Group. As the award recipient, Hutson will receive a \$1,000 grant to be used for continuing education as a professional rep.

CHARITY FUNDRAISING CALLS ARE NOT COVERED BY TCPA

Are you exasperated by pesky calls from fundraisers, despite having signed up for the Do-Not-Call list? Relief may *not* be on the way. According to the latest newsletter from Howe & Hutton, Ltd., a Chicago law firm that works with many associations, the Northern Illinois U.S. District Court has ruled that charities' professional fundraisers can solicit funds by phone without violating the federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act. The act's prohibitions specifically exempt organizations that are recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt and nonprofit. Howe & Hutton points out that this exemption stands even if the fundraising company keeps a large percentage of the revenue it generates.

MRERF RELEASES 2018 CALENDAR OF COURSES

The Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Resource Foundation (MRERF) reports that the Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representative (CPMR) first-year course for 2018 is sold out. The session runs in January at the University of Texas in Austin. Other 2018 programs available from MRERF are: the Certified Sales Professional (CSP) courses that will run March 5-9 in Atlanta, April 2-6 in Dallas, Sept. 10-14 in Denver and Oct. 8-12 in Chicago; plus the Manufacturers Best Practices courses that are slated March 20-21 in Atlanta, May 22-23 in Denver and Sept. 25-26 in Chicago. For details and registration information, go to mref.org.

IN MEMORIAM

ERA mourns the passing in August 2017 of **Robert B. (Bob) Dillon**, the long-time manager of the Spirit of St. Louis Chapter. The World War II Navy veteran joined ERA through the Ensko Rep firm in 1970 and was a leader of the St. Louis Chapter, including serving in numerous offices and as the chapter's delegate to the ERA National Board. After retirement from the rep business, he began managing the St. Louis Chapter in 2001 and continued in that role until his death. He was both a White Pin and Life Member of ERA. Memorial contributions can be made to the Ronald McDonald House.