

2012 Volunteer of the Year

Bruce Guiliani

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Bruce Guiliani is a man with a mission: Keeping people safe.

“The bottom line is nobody got up today saying, ‘I want to get hurt today.’ So, you look at the OSHA regulations, which are the minimum guidelines – ‘Here’s what you have to do’ – and then you look at what out there makes sense. A lot of times what makes sense aren’t the OSHA regulations (alone), but something better than that,” he asserts.

Guiliani is director of safety and loss control at Heritage Group Safety, which provides training programs across the country for The Heritage Group family of companies (industries include chemical refining, environmental services and highway construction) and outside businesses.

“I’m used to 300-mile days,” he reflects. “I drive 50,000 miles a year. Plus, I fly all over the place. That’s just normal for me and that’s the way I like it.”

He also enjoys sitting in the “driver’s seat” when recruiting expert presenters for the Indiana Safety and Health Conference & Expo. The annual three-day event offers valuable information to help companies improve safety practices and save money. It’s a partnership between the Indiana Chamber and the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Central Indiana Chapter.

Guiliani is a past ASSE chapter president and remains involved with the organization.

“We want people to get something out of attending,” he emphasizes. “The only way to do that is to make sure you get the right speakers who understand the issues and know what they’re doing.

“We’re trying to build safety. That’s the one thing we try to push with everyone who speaks. (We want them to focus on), ‘Here’s the problem and here’s how you can fix that problem.’ ”

Guiliani’s safety knowledge and leadership have contributed to the conference’s tremendous growth (although he says there is room for more expansion); today, it is one of the nation’s largest statewide safety events.

The road to safety

A passion for problem solving plays a critical role in Guiliani’s approach to safety.

“It’s my science-type background,” remarks the former math and physics major. “You see a problem out there and you find a way to make it work. That interests me – looking out there to see what (equipment) is already manufactured and if it’s not manufactured, how can we modify something to do what we want to do and keep people from getting hurt?”

Guiliani spent 25 years in the insurance industry, focusing on safety-related issues. He retired in 2000 – but not for long.

“I wasn’t ready to retire, so two weeks later I started here (at Heritage Group Safety),” he recalls.

“We’re a self-insured company, so my insurance background really helps. I’m used to liability insurance, fire issues, worker’s comp issues. It helps me have a good feel for what’s going on with all of this because some of the states are a lot different than Indiana from a worker’s comp standpoint.”

‘Play’ing it safe

When it’s time to unwind, Guiliani indulges his adventurous side. Hobbies include beekeeping (“It’s way too much work, but it’s interesting,” he notes) and motorcycle racing.

Dangerous? Not necessarily, he contends.

“Anything you want to do can be done safely if you understand the risk,” he points out.

“I’m a motorcycle person. In the older days, I raced motorcycles heavily. Then, I took up racing cars and I did sports cars for five or six years. Now, I’m doing Dual Sport – it’s an ‘on/off-road’ type of motorcycle.

“People go, ‘You ride motorcycles and you’re a safety (professional)?’ Of course, the next



Bruce Guiliani emphasizes hands-on training to demonstrate safety principles.



Guiliani seeks continued growth in the annual event as safety conference committee members exchange ideas during a 2013 planning session.

question they should ask is, 'Do you wear a helmet?' Well, of course I do. There are ways to protect yourself."

Making an impact

Guiliani and ASSE partnered with the Indiana Chamber on the safety and health conference several years ago. Today, he serves on the conference organizing committee and has been chairman multiple times.

Kerri Begley, Chamber vice president of conferences and special events, credits Guiliani with helping to boost the event's growth.

"Bruce has connected us with people around the country so we could have the best speakers in the area of safety and health," she declares. "He takes safety seriously and truly believes that what we're doing serves an important purpose."

Along with recruiting expert presenters, Guiliani works closely with the Chamber to choose educational topics.

"(We know) we're going to need 70 sessions, or whatever it is, and then we try to pick which sessions fit. We'll have different tracks laid out. Maybe this one's on fire safety or this one's on fall protection, and we have to try to line those up."

According to Guiliani, "success helps bring success."

"Once you get something that's successful, it starts growing and everybody wants to help. Everybody wants to get on board and it's easier to get speakers.

"When I try to get a speaker to come and they say, 'How many people were at your conference last year?' – and I say, 'We had 800-plus,' (it's a tremendous incentive to participate). Now, I've got people calling me up."

Guiliani maintains that collaboration – and involvement from up-and-coming safety professionals – is critical to future growth.

"What we need to do is build younger people with the knowledge and understanding because one of these days in 30 years, I'll retire or something," he says with a smile, "and someone needs to be able to drive this.

"That's really all I try to do. I want other people to get involved. I want other people to have responsibilities and become successful. I just kind of want to be driving this."