



EMDA's 2020 Fall Convention & COVID-19



The past four months have been crazy to say the least – and now it's time to give everyone an idea on how we plan to approach the *next four months* leading up to the Fall Convention this October 27-29 in Orlando. Since the cancellation of EMDA's Spring Management Workshop back in early April, the EMDA Board has held numerous calls regarding plans for the Fall Convention. And, after conversations between the Boards of EMDA and the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association (FEMA) – **the Fall Conventions will go on if we feel it can be done safely** and in a way that does not negatively impact the valuable networking experience noted as one of the biggest benefits of EMDA membership.

Decision-making is difficult to say the least when we see how quickly things change and how no one really knows what will come next. Our takeaway from watching the last four months is that it pays to stay patient and adaptable. "Flexibility" and live events are usually at odds with each other. From hiring vendors and speakers weeks in advance, and attendees having to confirm travel plans – it's impossible to take a completely "let's see how things work out" approach to convention planning. We've all seen how localized the issues caused by this virus can be. A couple of months ago Florida wanted New Yorkers to stay out ... and now it's the opposite. Some areas of the country may seem to be in recovery while others are headed in the wrong direction – and two weeks from now it could all change again. So, what does it all mean for the EMDA Fall Convention?

It is EMDA's responsibility to deliver the best experience we can in a safe environment. **There is no doubt that this year, the Fall Convention will be different.** That's okay, so long as we feel that we can still create a dynamic experience worthy of your time and money.

That's our bar, and, after discussions with the leaderships of EMDA and FEMA, we've identified late July/early August as the first target time period for us to make a decision on how to proceed. We will communicate all details and options if a pivot to a virtual or hybrid event has to be made (The Associations are exploring how to integrate a digital component for those who prefer it). Once that decision is made – which will largely be dependent on what the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista hotel and public health officials tell us, as well as how other events and attractions in the Orlando-area are handling crowds – we will communicate our plan, as well all of your options.

Registration opened as usual this week – and be assured, if you register and it turns out we have to cancel the in-person event, fees will be refunded. Thank you for the patience everyone has shown as we all work through what will likely go down as the most challenging year in all our careers. With so much going on in the world there has never been a more important time for the networking and education opportunities that EMDA delivers. We will do our absolute best to ensure that continues.

Remarks in the Shortliner by Vernon Schmidt, Executive Vice President of the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association, states it nicely:

We fully expect to have a meeting. We are of course committed to members' safety and wellness, but we consider that a collaborative effort with the hotel and each attendee. More importantly, we are singularly focused on creating an experience that is rich in content and provides opportunities for you to grow your business. That means working through how to create dynamic networking events and high-energy speaker sessions in the context of worldwide safety measures. We understand everyone feels a higher level of risk, our no-risk registration is our way of eliminating some of the worry for members and expressing to you how much we value your presence in Orlando."



Fall Convention Business Program

Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista hotel – October 27-29, 2020

Beginning with Roundtable Discussions on Tuesday afternoon and ending with the Joint Industry Reception on Thursday evening, EMDA reps and distributors will fill their convention times with member-to-member contact; manufacturer and supplier interviews; and informative and entertaining convention programs. Meeting and networking opportunities are the main reason attendees and exhibitors participate in the Fall Convention and EMDA strives to provide the most effective structured means to enable such interaction.

Due to uncertainty surrounding future social distancing recommendations and guidelines, all Convention events and speakers are tentative and are subject to change.

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Arrival day for most attendees.

Registration Desk & the Communications Center

Daily – 7:00a to 5:00p: Be sure to stop by the Registration Desk to pick up your badge. The Communication Center features profile cards for each convention attendee.

EMDA – Gateway to North America

2:00p to 3:00p: Get a jump on convention networking with this special roundtable session geared toward manufacturers looking to sell product into North America through reps and/or distributors. A panel of EMDA members will be on hand to help manufacturers learn the keys to creating successful partnerships with distributors and reps.

Member Roundtables

3:00p to 4:30p: Before jumping in to two full days of meetings and networking, this afternoon is devoted to member-to-member interaction. Join your fellow distributors and reps and choose a table with a topic that interests you. (Topics to be determined.)

Wednesday, October 28, 2021

Joint Opening Session & Breakfast

8:00a to 9:30a: The EMDA and FEMA Joint Opening Session is designed to bring the members together to “kick-off” their conventions with a dynamic presentation that will set the tone for an intensive week of appointments and meetings.



David Houle

The Joint Opening Session will tentatively feature **David Houle** presenting “**The 2020s: The single most disruptive decade in human history.**” A futurist who tackles mega concepts that provoke thought and invite questions about how we will live and work in decades to come.

Corporate Annual Meeting

9:30a to 10:30a: EMDA’s Corporate Annual Meeting which includes the Association’s annual report to the membership and Board of Directors elections. A speaker will be confirmed shortly.

Wednesday, October 28 (cont.)

EMDA Contact Session

10:30a to 12:30p: EMDA’s Contact Session is designed to provide manufacturers an opportunity for a quick introductory interview with individual EMDA member reps and distributors. The Contact Session is a “scheduling” event specifically designed to allow manufacturers to make initial contact with EMDA member reps and distributors to establish structured times for appointments during the convention week. New this year – The first 30-minutes of the Contact Session is open to EMDA Associate members only.

The EMDA Partners Party

6:00p to 7:00p: Wednesday concludes with a fun tradition, the EMDA Partners Party bringing reps and distributors together with the manufacturers that they do business with. The party is a “Thank You” to the manufacturers who understand the value that the EMDA network of distributors and reps provides in bringing their products to the marketplace.

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Joint Industry Breakfast Buffet

7:00a to 9:00a: When you don’t need to schedule a full-blown private appointment, but still need to make contact with certain suppliers – why not meet for breakfast at the Joint Breakfast Buffet.

EMDA’s 2020 Industry Showcase

12:30p to 3:30p: EMDA’s annual Industry Showcase is a highlight of the Fall Convention, bringing suppliers, distributors, reps and vendors together in more than 100 booths which feature products and services of interest to all. EMDA’s Industry Showcase is the gathering place for the industry at convention time to inform potential customers about products and services.

Joint Industry Reception

5:30p to 6:30p: Thursday concludes with the **Joint Industry Reception**. Meet your friends for hors d’oeuvres and cocktails at this party sponsored by the two associations party – a celebration of great meeting completed – and the perfect time to get in some last minute face-to face with attendees from both FEMA and EMDA.