



Hugh Stafford

Yellow Pages Subcommittee Enlists AT&T's Help

By Hugh Stafford, NAEDA OPE Dealer Council

The Yellow Pages Subcommittee, authorized by the North American Equipment Dealers Association (NAEDA) OPE Dealer council, has been involved in talks with AT&T for a number of months. In April this publisher of 1,200 phone directories in 22 states agreed to make "Outdoor Power Equipment Sales and Service" an available heading with the AT&T Real Yellow Pages®.

We believe this is a step in the right direction because prior to this,

outdoor power equipment was a sporadically offered heading based on local request. That's changing and that's an improvement.

AT&T representatives also agreed to add "see also" to a list of primary, existing headings associated with outdoor power equipment, which will routinely route directory users to the OPE heading. We recently submitted a list of suggested headings where attaching "see also" notations make sense.

Speaking for the subcommittee, we're making progress. But we do have a ways to go to ultimately reach the goal of reducing the number of headings and thus improving the efficiency of dollars spent on phone directory advertising. We

are not losing sight of this goal.

The thing we're happy about right now is that dealers in the AT&T service area will at least be able to request the heading. You can be sure AT&T Real Yellow Pages® sales representatives will look at this as an opportunity. Undoubtedly they will bring availability of the OPE heading to the attention of OPE dealers in their sales territories.

There is an opportunity here for OPE dealers to contribute to fundamental change and show the OPE heading support. We hope you will give serious thought to making use of the OPE heading in your

next AT&T Real Yellow Pages® advertising contract. Confidence in the heading will potentially be reinforced for everyone involved once those "see also" headings are established and links to the OPE heading can be clearly demonstrated. We will keep you posted.

"We believe this is a step in the right direction because prior to this, outdoor power equipment was a sporadically offered heading based on local request."

One thing we've learned from our discussions with AT&T is the fact that headings typically are added when customers, such as we dealers, make the request and offer to advertise under the heading in our local directories. Those headings getting support stick and those failing to maintain support are eliminated. In some ways, the cause of the proliferation of headings we complain about relates directly back to ourselves.

If we cause it, we can change it.

Change is what the Yellow Pages Subcommittee is all about. There's much more work to be done. While AT&T is by no means small with its 22-state coverage, there are many states and Canadian provinces to go and Yellow Pages publishers for those areas will be hearing from us. When you add in all the non-Yellow Pages publishers involved in phone directory publishing, you can see it's not an easy road. If you'd like to lend some hands-on help, we're looking for volunteers to get involved. ■

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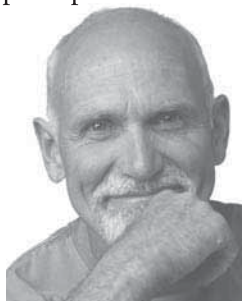
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