



Hugh Stafford

Headings Work Intensifies

By Hugh Stafford, NAEDA OPE Council

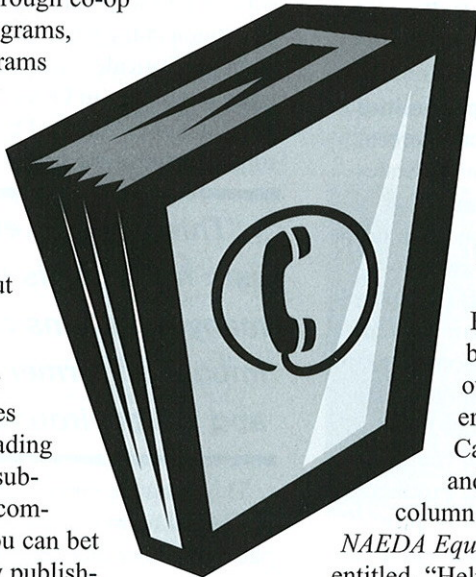
It's hard to believe, but we're already months into 2008. The NAEDA Outdoor Power Equipment Council hit the ground running with Yellow Pages Subcommittee work in January and it's not slowed down a bit. As I write this, we have approached the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) to seek their support on our efforts to reduce the number of phone directory headings used in phone directories such as the Real Yellow Pages. As you may or may not be aware, OPEI is the trade association for major outdoor power equipment (OPE) manufacturers.

Gaining the support of OPEI would be a major step in the right direction for our effort. Manufacturers often support OPE dealers through co-op advertising programs, including programs that either pay or help pay for phone directory advertising. If OPE manufacturers would put their weight behind the Outdoor Power Equipment Sales and Service heading – which is the subcommittee's recommendation – you can bet phone directory publishers would take notice.

In our OPEI request we wrote, "As manufacturers of OPE products, we are asking for your support. Consolidating headings is not only good for our customers and OPE dealers, it's good for

OPE manufacturers, too. It is in your best interest to improve phone directory productivity – make it easier for consumers to find your products and make phone directory advertising more cost effective for dealers. Fewer headings can directly reduce the complexity of manufacturers' and dealers' advertising programs, including co-op phone directory advertising programs."

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Our request for the organization's support was communicated to OPEI as it prepared for a late January board meeting. We'll keep you posted on the OPEI response, which we should have in hand soon.

Meanwhile, the Yellow Pages Subcommittee has been busy contacting various phone directory publishers from around the U.S. and Canada to share our efforts and ask for their support. My column in the November issue of *NAEDA Equipment Dealer* magazine entitled, "Help us with the OPE headings effort," noted our contacts to date and requested your help in the effort.

As I mentioned in November, one of my fellow subcommittee members made a sharp observation during a phone conference. Garry Thompson, the subcom-

mittee member, noted that if fellow dealers would simply delete one or two headings of marginal importance and redirect their advertising dollars to "Outdoor Power Equipment Sales and Service," the right message would be sent.

One of our major successes thus far is the agreement of AT&T to make the Outdoor Power Sales and Service heading available to its phone directory advertisers. AT&T, with 1,200 directories in 22 states, is a major player in the phone directory business and is the company behind the Real Yellow Pages, which seems to be the model of most, if not all, the other phone directories.

After discussions with AT&T headings group executives, they offered a suggestion that takes much risk out of eliminating marginal headings by dealers. AT&T is adding "see also" notations to 16 OPE-related headings.

Consequently, chances are that marginal headings you give up will be those that include a "see also Outdoor Power Equipment Sales and Service" reference directing Yellow Page users to the heading where you'll be represented.

AT&T's approval of the heading and its "see also" commitment has given us considerable leverage with other phone directory publishers throughout the U.S. and Canada. When we tell these other publishers what AT&T has agreed to do, they have taken notice and have either agreed to match the effort or at least put it into the hopper for formal consideration.

We've come a long way with Yellow Pages Subcommittee work since we began this effort two years ago. However, there is still a lot to do. We need your help. Tell your phone directory sales reps you want your business included under the Outdoor Power Equipment Sales and Service heading. ■