

Reynolds to seek industry unity before stepping down as CHFA chairman

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario - Laine Reynolds will step down as chairman of the Canadian Home Furnishings Alliance sometime over the next few months, once his successor has been elected.

Reynolds, who has held the post for the past three years, made the announcement during the association's recent annual general meeting.

"We are in a strong financial position," he said. "We've gone through a year of continuous change, which has been both positive and beneficial. Even in the current tough business environment, we have maintained a strong core of committed members."

He noted that the CHFA, which was known as the Ontario Furniture Manufacturers Association until a year ago, has made strides on a number of fronts. Perhaps the most successful has been its health and safety group. Working in conjunction with the Ontario Worker's Compensation & Insurance Board and the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA), the group has reduced compensation premiums for the majority of 20 or so CHFA members who participate.

Last year, the group earned total premium rebates in excess of \$238,000. The largest single rebate cheque was for \$27,000. "Being a member of the safety brings solid financial rewards - it more than justifies the cost of membership," Reynolds said.

"The association has also taken on more of an advocacy role, in particular with the two main levels of government," he added.

CHFA president Murray Vaughan has written to both the federal and provincial finance ministers with an eye to becoming of the industry groups whose opinions are sought in the run to both their respective budgets. He has also been working on getting the 14 per cent duty on upholstery fabric reduced or eliminated now that there are no more Canadian-owned companies producing this component.

In his remaining months of office, Reynolds said he is planning on having dialogue with both the Quebec Furniture Manufacturers Association and Furniture West in the hopes that the three groups would merge into one national association. "The intent is to look to the future and discuss the merits of a potential merge. The time is right to open a discussion on this critically important issue," he said.

No formal agreement on a merger is likely in the near future, but dwindling membership rolls for all three could make the prospect more appealing than has been historically.

Reynolds was re-elected to the CHFA's board of directors for the coming year. Once his successor is chosen, he will remain on the board as past chairman.

Also re-elected to the board for the coming year were:

- Al-Karim Chatur, Eztia Furnishings
- Dino Colalillo, Edgewood Furniture

- Alison Dosman, Durham Furniture
- Angelo Gallo, Statum Designs
- Robert Infusino, Future Chair
- Alan Kornblum, Distinctive Designs Furniture
- Stan Mintz, Reflections Furniture
- Hugh Owen, Owen & Company/Kingsdown Canada
- John Power, Star Bedding/Serta Toronto
- Paul West, West Furniture

Colalillo, currently serves as association treasurer. Owen is past chairman and Kornblum is vice chairman while Power serves as chairman of the marketing and events committee.

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