

# CONFERENCE VICE-PRESIDENT



THOMAS M. JORDAN

**W**hen I wrote this message a year ago, we were still feeling the effects of September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, those effects are still with us today, as evidenced by the continuing low conference attendance. However, SMPTE is not alone, and most other organizations that give conferences are also reeling from poor attendance. This is driven by the economic malaise, and the fact that companies are cutting travel budgets and restricting employee activities to only those necessary to support their immediate missions. Sadly, in the view of many senior managers, conferences are low on the list of “necessary” activities. However, we firmly believe that SMPTE must continue to provide conferences as forums for leading industry participants to share ideas and technology, and to interact with peers and all interested parties in a professional environment. The challenge, then, is to reposition SMPTE conferences in the minds of senior managers, by delivering content that is relevant, easily accessible, and cost-effective.

To this end, we are reformulating our approach to conference planning and execution. Our sessions are responding to the need for more tutorial-based seminars, and we’re offering more time for attendees to visit the exhibitors. We’ve also added half-day registration, so that if you can’t attend the entire conference (and I certainly hope you will), you can at least attend the seminars that are relevant to you. Further, it is my responsibility as conference vice-president to ensure that venues, hotel arrangements, A/V requirements, and in effect, all logistical conference arrangements are done to give you the most value (both financial and educational) for your money, and a great conference experience.

Annually, the Society convenes once in the winter for the Advanced Motion Imaging Conference (AMI), and again in the fall for the Technical Conference and Exhibition. The general consensus is that the bi-annual rotation of the fall conference between New York City and Pasadena is working well, because these cities offer many attractions and advantages to both the attendees and the Society. We expect this pattern to continue for the foreseeable future. The winter AMI Conference, on the other hand, moves around in an attempt to reach as many “non-coastal” constituents as possible. Therefore, we’re striving to improve the logistical aspects of the AMI, to make things easier and more cost-effective for you. As our current contractual obligations to hotels are being completed, we are looking at new models for conferences that will be near airports and are convenient to cities, as opposed to expensive downtown areas. Other organizations are using this model successfully, so we have confidence that its viability will save you money, while making the venue more accessible. The first opportunity for us to use this model will be the AMI Conference in 2005. Hence, we’re looking for hotels willing to work closely with us to minimize room and catering commitments, to improve room block rates and cutoff dates, and to widen the scope of complimentary services and space. In both of our conferences, we’ll continue to apply pressure on A/V expenses, advertising, and non-sponsored events to achieve our cost objectives, thereby helping you achieve yours. We will strive to provide compelling and educational content that will motivate managers to approve attendance at SMPTE’s unique events. There’s a lot of work ahead of us, but we firmly believe it’s absolutely necessary if the Society is to continue providing the motion imaging industry with these essential forums.

These changes are already taking place with our upcoming Technical Conference and Exhibition in November, so I urge you to check out the Conference website at [www.smppte.org/Conferences](http://www.smppte.org/Conferences), and register to attend. As well, your input and suggestions about SMPTE conferences are always welcome and encouraged. Please contact us at [conferences@smppte.org](mailto:conferences@smppte.org) with your comments.

—Thomas M. Jordan