

World's Largest i-Related Exposition Rises to New Heights in Nashville

By Elise Deramo



Jeff Kennedy — one of the many winners at Passport-to-Prizes in Nashville

The 2008 Annual Meeting & Exposition held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tennessee concluded with resounding success as both attendees and exhibitors enjoyed a week filled with learning, networking and even a little fun. The Exposition, in particular, drew wide-spread attention, as 92 exhibitors packed the hall to showcase their latest products and live demonstrations to the IBM i community. This three-day extravaganza, filled with food, fun, and networking, attracted both the vibrant first-timers, as well as the seasoned veterans.

Beginning with a refreshment break on Sunday afternoon, the Exposition opened its doors to a large crowd interested in learning more about the latest solutions available to them. "I feel the level of products was high and many were competing with each other. I thought the Exposition was very informative—each booth was full of friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable people representing their companies," said **Cheri Sadler**, System Administrator for Ewing Irrigation Products.

On Sunday evening, the Exposition was home to the Welcome Reception, sponsored by 3COM. Here, individuals were not only able to meet other i users, but also network directly with those exhibitors who's specific products their company uses on a daily basis. "I needed information to improve document management and the Expo provided multiple vendors with options for my problems. Overall, it was a very valuable use of my time," said **Jeff Kennedy** of

Cerco, Inc.

Monday and Tuesday featured Exposition hours during lunch, allowing attendees and exhibitors alike to network with each other and with other decision-makers in the i community. Relationships were developed and strengthened as a number of IBM executives also toured the Exposition hall to view the latest innovations available to Power users.

A second reception was held on Monday night, this time allowing attendees the chance to relax and regroup after two long days of intense learning. It also gave attendees another chance to return to those exhibitors from whom they wanted to get more information, and delve deeper into a specific range of products best suited to their company's needs. "The COMMON Annual Meeting gave us a great opportunity to educate the System i and Power Systems community on our latest solutions and methodologies in a friendly face-to-face environment," said **Philip Roestamadji**, Marketing Director for Profound Logic Software.

Concluding with the popular Passport-to-Prizes drawing on Tuesday, the Exposition hall closed after lunch, with attendees heading back to the classroom, and the exhibitors heading home with a fresh set of new leads and possible sales for their companies. "Those companies that stood out were the ones offering message monitoring (lights out program)," Sadler added. "We have used the Bytware product to monitor for messages and it was interesting to talk with their competitors. Because we are

not a 24/7 shop, the message monitoring is very necessary in case of a system failure at night... "

This Exposition also featured a number of new exhibitors, as well as those that have exhibited with COMMON for many years in the past. "After several years away from COMMON expos, ASNA was pleasantly surprised at the response that we received when we re-emerged into the COMMON spotlight this year in Nashville. Since ASNA is all about evolutionary technologies and services for the i community, it was fantastic for us to actually experience the evolution that the COMMON attendees have gone through since we last met," said **Michael Killian**, VP of Sales at ASNA – A Blue Phoenix Company.

With the success of the 2008 Exposition now behind us, COMMON is already looking ahead to the 2009 Annual Meeting & Exposition in Reno, Nevada. We will undoubtedly prepare to expand our Exposition even more, giving additional companies the opportunity to showcase their products on the largest i-related stage in the world. "We were happy to be back, and plan to participate in future COMMON events throughout the upcoming years," Killian concluded. 

About the Author

Elise Deramo is COMMON's

Conference & Expo Coordinator. She can be reached at elise_deramo@common.org.

