

## Potter Speaks at FAPC Marketing Workshop

STILLWATER, Okla.—A representative for the Oklahoma Restaurant Association was one of nine presenters during the Food & Agricultural Products Center's second annual “Real World” Marketing Workshop held recently.

Lee Ann Potter of Glenpool, Okla. has more than 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry working as a sales manager and director of sales for Marriott, Doubletree and Hilton hotels in Chicago and Tulsa.

She is currently a member services representative for the ORA. Potter has been with the ORA for a year and a half, and her primary responsibility is to travel across eastern Oklahoma to work with restaurant and hotel operators and enroll them into the association and promote the programs.

Potter discussed the benefits available to ORA members. The purpose of the ORA is to promote, protect, educate and be the representative voice of its members and the Oklahoma foodservice industry.

“We represent all types of restaurants and other food service entities,” Potter said.

The ORA was founded in 1,933 with 74 initial members and was formed to protect the restaurant owner’ mutual interests, she said. Today, the association has 1,700 members representing 4,500 locations. The membership includes commercial, noncommercial and allied.

The primary functions for the association include providing governmental affairs, education and scholarships, and money saving services, Potter said.

Governmental affairs include influence with the state legislature, grassroots involvement in the political process and accomplishment in the areas of licensing, unemployment and municipal regulations.

Some of the education and scholarship services are specialized training, lending library of professional training materials and resources, seminars and workshops, tradeshow and scholarship awards.

Finally, the money saving services include credit card processing, payroll processing, work comp insurance, property and casualty services, health insurance, natural gas program and preliminary legal consultation.

The purpose for the marketing workshop was to help participants address marketing issues such as market identification, market research and market planning, said Jim Brooks, FAPC business planning and marketing specialist and chair of the workshop.

"The fact is a good marketing program is essential to survive and succeed in the highly competitive food-marketing arena," Brooks said. "Marketing is not just radio, television and other advertising. It's not just knocking on doors of prospective buyers and attending trade shows. It's critical for success."

Other speakers during the workshop included Del Van Horn, Advance Food Co.; Steve Long, Food Marketing Specialists; Bob Johnson, Sysco Food Services; Vince Orza, Eateries, Inc.; Randy Earhart, Taco Mayo; David Books; Shawnee Milling Co.; Gerald Cockerham, Associated Wholesale Grocers; and Mark Harsha, Harsha & Associates.

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