

# Headlines & More



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## Massachusetts Eyes New Drycleaning Posting Requirements



IN A MOVE THAT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BRING MORE UNWANTED SCRUTINY ON THE DRYCLEANING INDUSTRY, THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE IS EYEING A MEASURE THAT WILL REQUIRE ALL DRYCLEANERS TO POST INFORMATION ON THEIR SOLVENT USE.

House Bill, Docket Number 2068 is sponsored by Representative Frank Smizik of Brookline and is currently in the Joint Committee on Public Health. The legislation calls for all drycleaners using a dry cleaning solvent system as their primary cleaning method to post information for their customers, neighbors and employees. The purpose of the posting is to educate consumers provide more information about the composition and potential risks associated with their use.

Drycleaners will be required to post, in a conspicuous location in the facility, a sign that includes the name of the drycleaner, the commercial brand name of the primary solvent used (e.g. DF2000TM Fluid; Green Earth®, Solvon K4, Gen-X), the chemical name of the solvent used (e.g. perchloroethylene, n-propyl bromide, hydrocarbon), and the name of the manufacturer of the solvent. Cleaners that use water as their primary solvent (i.e., professional wet cleaning) are exempt from this requirement.

The sign shall include the following words: “The primary chemical substance(s) used at this dry cleaning facility is(are) \_\_\_\_\_. Information about the hazardous chemical substance used at this dry cleaning facility can be found on the website of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and on the Material Safety Data Sheet, which may be read at [www.mass.gov/dep/drycleanermsds](http://www.mass.gov/dep/drycleanermsds).”

The regulation also calls the use of a color coded message for each chemical used. The intent of the color system is to assign a level of caution for each solvent ranging from RED for Perc, Orange for siloxanes, and to Yellow for hydrocarbons and acetals.

NEFA will be closely monitoring this legislation and will be presenting testimony in opposition to portions of the measure. Members are encouraged to contact NEFA for more information or to voice their concerns.

MARCH/APRIL 2015

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

### *Putting Winter 2015 Behind Us*

JUST WHEN WE WERE BEGINNING TO WONDER IF IT WOULD EVER END, IT LOOKS LIKE WINTER IS FINALLY IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR. I KNOW I ECHO EVERYONE'S SENTIMENT: IT IS ABOUT TIME.

I know if your business is like mine, it has been a terrible beginning to 2015. With record snow falls came record snow removal costs. With snow storms every Monday from January through March, we have had one of the toughest starts to a year in recent memory. Rest assured, you are not alone in your struggles. NEFA has been feeling the effects of a struggling northeast economy as well. Membership numbers have dipped slightly in the last 3 months reflecting the severe issues we have all been facing.

The good news is that is now all behind us, but the bad news is we will never be able to recover the loss of revenue or make up for those added costs associated with trying to keep our operations moving.

We now have to look at ways to keep moving forward and building our businesses back up. I am excited to be attending the Clean Show in Atlanta, and I hope many of you are also attending. I am looking forward to seeing new equipment, learning new techniques, and above all getting re-energized for the industry.

Our Executive Vice President, Peter Blake, will also be there and he will be working in the DLI booth greeting members and learning new and better ways NEFA can help you. We will be working together to look at new programs and services we can use to help make NEFA even more important to your day to day success.

We are in the process of planning NEFA's annual events like The Clean Classic and Fall Fest '15. We are also developing some new educational programs to help you build your business. Peter is also planning more member visits in the coming weeks, to make sure NEFA is in tune with your needs and that we are developing programs that will help you grow and succeed.

Spring may have come late, but things are definitely heating up with NEFA. Let us know how we can help, and if you would like to see some programs in your area. Call the NEFA Office to schedule a field visit from NEFA. We are committed to being one of your best business building tools.



*John Dallas, NEFA President*

## John Dallas

*Fabricare House*  
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# Quit Driving in Circles and Spinning Your Wheels



NEFA HAS TEAMED UP WITH THE ROUTE PRO, JAMES PEUSTER, TO DEVELOP A NEW WEBINAR DESIGNED FOR YOUR ENTIRE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

TEAM. THE PROGRAM WILL BE ON THURSDAY MAY 14TH AT 2:00 PM.

This webinar is geared for owners, managers, and all sales staff. James will share some of the basic, yet essential, strategies of Route Development. This webinar is for anyone who wishes to increase their route sales and who feel like they may be missing the extra edge to grow.

“We are excited to be able to present this opportunity to NEFA members,” commented Virginia Anton, NEFA Education Co-chair. James is known nationwide as the leading expert on route development and route sales. He has done presentations around the country and we are excited to be able to present our members with this opportunity to learn from the expert.”

The program will feature discussions of some of the core strategies for route development and growth including:

- How to get and keep staff motivated
- How to hold your team accountable
- 10 things to increase sales
- Effective Marketing materials & tools

The program will be held from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM. The cost for NEFA/DLI members is \$20/Connection and \$40/connection for non-members.

## TO REGISTER

To register, call NEFA at 800-442-6848 or visit us at [www.nefabricare.com](http://www.nefabricare.com) to download a registration form.

Seats may be limited so don't delay, register today.

This is the first in a series of webinars being explored by NEFA. Next up will be a customer service program currently being developed. Keep watch on NEFA's website for updates.



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## Be your Company's Best Spokesperson

Written by Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President



### GRASSROOTS MARKETING CAN PAY HUGE DIVIDENDS FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

The old adage “word of mouth” is as true today as it was in the past - only the voices and methods have changed. In today’s world you have to be more creative in your approach, and use more of the tools available to you.

What if I told you you could increase your sales by an average of \$1,300/month by investing just 2 hours a week? Pretty good return isn’t it? This is the real-world results of one drycleaner’s experience with Business Networking International (BNI). BNI is just one of many similar business networking groups. The same principals can work for Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, and other civic and business development groups. But you have to participate and really be committed to the process

### HOW IT WORKS

BNI meets once per week for an hour and half. Each group is made up of one company from one business sector. You have one drycleaner, one insurance person, one construction company, etc. The purpose of the group is for each member to be a spokesman for the other members in the group. Their motto is “givers gain”, which roughly translates to by referring people to other people’s businesses in the group, you are more apt to reap similar benefits. The group meets weekly, and at each meeting every member gives a one minute description of their company and/or service. Then, armed with the information, each member proceeds to sell and promote the other members to everyone they know. They track their sales from referrals and quantify the results of the group.

It is really an interesting process. The ability to really educate people about your business pays long-term dividends and helps to slowly build your business from a grassroots level. I was an invited guest to a recent BNI meeting, and I was really impressed with the commitment the members show. I was also impressed by the amount of referrals that were given during the last portion of the meeting. The drycleaner involved in the group had 7 new secondary referrals from the group. That is seven new customers that referred by current customers that had been obtained through the BNI group.

One cleaner I know is heavily involved with BNI for a little over 2 years now and as a direct result of the group -- he is now seeing well over \$1,300/month. That is just from direct BNI referrals -- not including referrals from new customers obtained by BNI. It has been a great route development tool.

The cost of BNI membership is approximately \$450/year. Seems

like a small price for the potential impact on your business. As you get acclimated to your group, the rewards can be felt pretty quickly as each and every week you are re-educating your new “sales force” about the benefits of your business. Just as they are promoting your company, you in turn will be promoting theirs. The effectiveness of this new “word of mouth” advertising can be dramatic.

One of the hidden benefits to groups like BNI is that it makes you more comfortable speaking about your business to strangers and acquaintances. It helps train you to talk about your own business. One would think that it would be second nature, but to many it is way outside their comfort zone. After a few weeks of giving your one-minute sales pitch for the company, you become a much more effective spokesperson. It also helps you prepare for other networking situations.

Word of mouth is still the best marketing -- but today it is more important than ever for you to be the spokesperson. For you to spread the word. Go out and get involved in the community and business groups and make sure your business is synonymous with drycleaning in your town. Networking works, plain and simple. If you would like more information on how to get started, contact me -- I would be glad to help, and point you in the right direction.



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# Why and How to Invest in your Biggest Asset: Your Employees

Written by James Peuster, 21st Century Drycleaning



IT'S NO SECRET THAT MANY OF YOU STRUGGLE TO FIND AND KEEP GOOD EMPLOYEES. IN FACT, WE OFTEN HIRE WHEN WE ARE DESPERATE AND THEN HOPE AND PRAY THEY WILL REACH THEIR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

Whether you are starting a route or have 5 vans out there, you want and need top talent to grow and add

value to your company. Company culture, productivity, and overall employee happiness stem directly from how much training, responsibility, and empowerment you have. With the growing need for route drivers and the escalating trend of high turnover rates, it's more important than ever to be investing time, resources, and money into your employees. Instead of spending endless amounts of dollars to hire and retrain new employees, dry clean owners need to focus more on how to hire and retain top talent.

Additionally, dry cleaners who are starting routes simply cannot afford to have a high turnover because of a lack of cash flow early on. Avoid high turnover rates and invest in your team with this in mind.

## HIRE FOR WILLINGNESS, TRAIN FOR SKILLS & CAPABILITIES

I heard this saying early on. Just because someone's skills are a perfect fit does not mean they are a perfect fit for your company.

In interviews, besides asking about a candidate's qualifications, I like to figure out what type of person they are, what they like to do outside of work, and what their true passions are. It's much easier to teach someone a skill if they are willing and motivated than it is to motivate someone who has the skills — or worse — try to change their personality or workability within the company. This is why we recommend DISC profiles and MOTIVATORS. This allows both you and I to look into the soul of the potential hire.

## EXPECT TO SUCCEED.

One of the biggest reasons people leave a job or are unhappy with their current employer is that they don't feel challenged or feel like they are experiencing personal growth. Not only do people want to be led, but they also want to feel that you believe in them and want the best of them.

## DELEGATE

Giving responsibility to those within your organization shows that you trust your employees. The goal is to replicate your own

leadership qualities in your organization, and that will not happen without giving responsibility and showing your trust so that they can take themselves, your route and you to the next level.

## BENCHMARKS & ACCOUNTABILITY

It's important to hold your employees accountable, but it's also important to be accountable to them. Spend time with each employee to ensure that things are going well personally and professionally in their role within the company. This is a great opportunity to work out any problems or issues and, most importantly, a great time to brainstorm ways that the company could be doing things better. Hold weekly route meetings with your route staff. As things start to grow and scale, spend time with your leaders and developers so that they know they are being measured..

**“It is important to hold employees accountable, but it is also important to be accountable to them. Spend time with each employee...”**

## BE PATIENT & FLEXIBLE

Hold your employees accountable, but also be flexible to their needs, learning curve and initial performance. By creating a flexible environment and culture, you can really empower your employees to embrace failure and learn from their mistakes instead of constantly walking on eggshells. Additionally, if you are spending more and more time correcting mistakes, letting people go, and hiring new employees, it will stunt your business' growth — no matter how well the company is doing.

## TRAINING

Invest in training as if your new employee is an asset, not a liability. If you look at it as a cost, then you will have a negative attitude towards results. Your expectations may also be too high, thus both parties will be frustrated. Your most important asset as well as your highest line item in your P&L is labor.

Route developers need the proper tools to learn, grow, succeed and stay positive to be a long-term contributor to your business. Don't have the exiting driver train the incoming hire.

The bottom line is that many of us look at employees and staff members and money going out without analyzing how much they have and still bring in. Employee turnover is costly, time consuming and involves a risk of customer turnover as well.



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## NEFA Participates in DLI Partnership Summit



ONCE A YEAR, DLI AND ITS PARTNERING ASSOCIATIONS COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR PARTNERSHIP AND TO STRENGTHEN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR THE MEMBER.

NEFA Executive Vice President Peter Blake took part in the annual JSA Conference, as well as participating in the Cleaning and Launderers Association Executives (CLAE) meeting at the same location. “These meetings are a great benefit,” commented Blake, “and it is a unique opportunity to discuss new programs, services,

and new ways of doing things. It is our once a year opportunity to sit down together and share ideas. To learn from each other ways to make all our associations stronger.”

“I am able to lean on the experiences of people running similar fabricare associations from around the country -- and internationally. With Chris Tebbs from IDC and Canada it is a prime opportunity to see what is being done globally and to see early trends and how it can affect our industry here in the states,” continued Blake.

Representatives from across the country took part in the meeting and discussions focused on membership retention and sales as well as educational programming. There was also an in-depth discussion on industry trends, threats, and opportunities.

The group as a whole believes we need to study and explore the technology now in use like the prevalent laundry apps like Washio and the new home technology like Swash.

We also need to really explore use of new technology for our members, and to communicate with our members. This is both in association management as well as industry advancement. DLI shared some exciting new advancements and programs that will be unveiled at the Clean Show!

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# Connecticut DRS Seeking To Require Drycleaning Registration



THE CT DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SERVICES HAVE PROPOSED HB 6996, AAC REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO THE

DRY CLEANING ESTABLISHMENT SURCHARGE.

This measure is designed to capture drycleaning establishments that are operating in the state, but are not paying into the Dry Cleaning Remediation Fund as required by law.

NEFA has been working with drycleaners in the state and the Hartford County Laundry and Drycleaners Association (HCLDA) to fix long standing troubles with the CT clean-up fund.

“It is a very simple problem,” explained Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President, “the program is over-subscribed, and under-funded. There simply is not enough money going in to do the job the fund was created for. The industry has been working closely with the DRS and DECD to try and fix the problem. Throughout all the discussions, there is one very glaring problem that stands out: there should be more companies paying into the fund. There are some valid concerns, and there are some probable explanations as to why companies haven’t paid in, but the fact is clear -- this is not voluntary, this is a mandated surcharge and steps have to be taken to make sure people are contributing as they should.


## THE REQUIREMENTS

This bill would require all drycleaning establishments to register with the DRS commissioner in October of every year. It further explicitly states that no drycleaning establishment may conduct business as a drycleaning establishment unless it is registered with the the commissioner.

Once enacted, this will give the DRS a definitive list of companies that are required to contribute. Under the current landscape, there is no registration process, so the DRS does not have a simple way to determine who is actually operating a business that provides drycleaning services.

“This is an important step,” concluded Blake, “and one that the industry has been looking for. A definitive way for the DRS to enforce the regulation on all outlets including tailors, laundromats,

laundries who sell drycleaning, but have the work done elsewhere. The rules are not changing, just the requirement to register with the DRS. If you have questions, or if you are concerned about your filing history -- you are urged to contact NEFA.”



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