

ANSI Annual Business Meeting 2007

Remarks from the Chairman

Robert W. Noth

Word count: 969 (8 minutes)

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Bob Noth and I am chairman of the ANSI Board.

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Institute's 2007 Annual Business Meeting and to call this meeting to order.

This is my second annual business meeting as ANSI chairman, but my 16th year of engagement with ANSI. The progress and importance are on a completely different plane. It's impressive how the world has changed . . . and how ANSI has changed with it.

As a sponsor of this meeting, Deere and Company is proud of ANSI and the work it undertakes.

(pause)

ANSI's status as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization incorporated in the State of New York requires us to report a summary of our financial outcomes and activities to our members. The Annual Business Meeting is a way for us to meet that legal obligation. But more importantly, it is an opportunity to come together as a community to discuss where the Institute has been, where we are today, and where we are going.

(pause)

As ANSI's chairman, I recognize many of you as members of the Institute. And as a representative of Deere and Company, I also recognize many of you as business partners and colleagues in the U.S. industrial sector.

ANSI and its members are leaders and influencers. We often become proactively engaged in important standards and conformity assessment initiatives that have global impact. But every day there are new issues that require our attention.

Examining — and sometimes anticipating — these issues is of critical importance as we work to define priority focus areas for the Institute.

Sometimes, domestic concerns are at the top of that list, but increasingly, I've seen that our scope is broader. Our responsibility in a global marketplace is to make it possible for products, people, and services to cross borders.

That's why I've been focusing my attention on the international aspects of ANSI.

Collectively, U.S. industry employs more than 14.3 million people at more than 200,000 locations across the country. The value of the goods and services we produce each year is nearly \$6 trillion dollars.

Of this, we export nearly 17% – roughly \$1 trillion dollars. . . and that number is growing larger every day.

(pause)

Today's marketplace is global. All of us understand that. When it comes to standards and conformity assessment, we have a responsibility to design, implement, and support systems and programs that meet the world's needs.

ANSI is working to make American businesses even more competitive on the global stage. Joe Bhatia was elected vice chair of ITAC 16, the Industry Trade Advisory Committee that advises the Department of Commerce and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on standards and technical trade barriers. Wayne Morris, the chair of ITAC 16, is here with us as well this afternoon, as are the many other ANSI members who are part of this advisory committee.

In North America, we're collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Americas to encourage NAFTA countries to rely more heavily on private-sector standards.

As you'll hear from Joe in a few minutes, we're also working with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency to build a reliance on market-driven standards in Southeast Asia.

Our relationship with China also keeps growing stronger and stronger. This summer, I traveled as part of a 60-person U.S. delegation that went to an ANSI-sponsored symposium in Beijing. We are building networks – both in person and online – that facilitate the exchange of market access information between the U.S. and China.

(pause)

Most of you have heard the concept of “One Standard – One Test – Accepted Everywhere.” This is the primary message that ANSI carries forward to China . . . and also to many regional and international organizations where we represent U.S. interests.

But global standard-setting and compliance activities don't just happen in organizations like ISO and IEC . . . Lots of different forums are moving quickly to develop solutions to market needs — many without ANSI's knowledge or participation.

That's why the Board and I have made it a priority to reach out to new and different standard-setting organizations. We're making good progress. This year's Open Forum for Standards Developers was attended by more consortia representatives than ever before.

We need to do more outreach – and we will. New organizations are being formed every day to develop standards to meet some market need. But we must avoid non-value-added duplication and overlap.

(pause)

To ensure our future and the continued competitiveness of the U.S. standardization system, we need to focus on the benefits and end results of what we do rather than on ANSI's features and functions. Our ability to act quickly and bring all stakeholders together makes us unique, and we need to be more aggressive in promoting this essential component of the Institute.

The ANSI standards panel program has grown substantially and has proven to be a very successful, results-focused model. These panels have brought many new participants to the ANSI table. They are an important part of our effort to get ahead of the curve and become better at anticipating and embracing new opportunities to coordinate and harmonize U.S. standards and compliance activities.

But it is important that we make intelligent choices about our degree of involvement and dedication to certain issues.

You are the driving force behind the Institute and its many programs. It is only through the expertise and efforts of our members that we are able to focus on the critical needs facing consumers, governments and the business community.

I thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Now, it is my great pleasure to introduce ANSI's president and CEO, Joe Bhatia. I look forward to hearing his perspective on what's next for the Institute.

Joe