

**Ron Palmerick  
SMACNA President  
Partners in Progress – Closing Session  
April 5, 2008**

**This has been an exceptional conference thanks to each of you. I would like to thank our labor partners, especially my counterpart, Mike Sullivan.**

**Not only did we receive your full cooperation, but you and your people shouldered much of the responsibility for this great program. In fact, everyone here today, both labor and management, has played important roles in making this program successful.**

**Remember, all of you in this room are leaders. As leaders, we are counting on you take the word back home and make a real difference. As Mark Breslin and Robert Wendover said, we have our work cut out for us.**

**Our challenge, when we leave here today, is to take the spirit of cooperation and the great ideas we've discovered back to some people who may not want to hear what you have to say. It's always easier to preach to the choir.**

**I've said many times this year as SMACNA president that the real work is done locally in the trenches. And now more than ever that is so true. Locally, YOU must face your challenges and create your solutions. The regional breakouts were a start. Unfortunately, to accomplish the work that lies ahead, we can't dictate change. To be effective whether in business or in life in general, I've learned that you must inspire change.**

**When I look for inspiration I think back to Thursday night at the Apprentice Contest banquet. I remember the look on the faces of this year's young apprentices, faces full of hope and enthusiasm. These kids are as smart and as bright as we were when we were their age. In fact, they may be smarter. It's up to us to become THEIR mentors and THEIR partners.**

**I am inspired because I want to leave these young people a vibrant and competitive industry. I want to know that my years of hard work are paying off for others. These are young people who've got families to raise, buildings to build and things to achieve.**

**They are MY inspiration. And I hope they are yours.**

**Remember 42 percent of the sheet metal workforce will be eligible to retire during the next ten years. Like Mark said this morning, we have no time to waste. The changes we have to make will guarantee the survival of our industry.**

**In closing, I think the words of our late friend, Bernie Flaherty, sum it all up.  
“Partnering is a process and not a destination.”**

**Whether you are just starting the partnership process or building on what has already been started, I am confident that you will take what you’ve learned here this week and address the changes that will make a real difference for your union members and contractors. Remember our survival depends upon you. Thank you.**