

YARD VISIT

Ducky Johnson House Movers, Grand Ridge, FL



During the 2007 annual conference in Tucson, AZ, Ducky Johnson agreed to host the 2010 attendees to his yard in Grand Ridge when the conference was to be held in Sandestin, FL. Unfortunately, Ducky died unexpectedly in April 2008 from complications following heart surgery. Later that year, Ducky's son, Charlie, confirmed the invitation. In fact, Charlie and his wife Nicole, and his mother Caroline, promised association directors the "best yard visit ever." Two years later, they and the entire Ducky Johnson team delivered in spades.

The yard visit was scheduled for Friday, February 12th during the annual conference. The weather forecast for the week of the visit was questionable at best. A cold front was predicted. Rain "could" arrive toward the end of the week, but since there never is any certainty in what the weather will actually be, the schedule was honored.

Friday morning the rain had arrived all along the Northwest Florida panhandle. Attendees boarded busses and piled into their vehicles, departing the Hilton Hotel at 8:00 AM for the trip to Grand Ridge. During the 90-minute drive the rain never stopped. No one complained about the rain or chilly weather.

Turning off US Highway 90 into the Ducky Johnson House Movers yard attendees were greeted with a banner stretched between two trailers loaded with equipment and extended high into the air: "Welcome IASM 2010 Yard Tour" the sign cheerfully read.



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Months of effort by Johnson's crew had gone into preparing the facilities for the visit. Thousands upon thousands of dollars had been spent to enlarge the shop, construct new buildings, repair older ones, relocate steel and equipment,



The most popular people at the event, servers of lunch. (L-R) Jane Dykes, Dee Dee Danford, Nicole Johnson, Rebecca Wagner, Carolyn Johnson and Victoria Thompson



build a new corporate office and paint everything in sight the favorite blue color chosen by Nicole. Charlie liked a different blue color also but Nicole's choice won. Was there ever any doubt? Needless to say, the place looked great. The expanded shop was turned overnight into a restaurant

capable of feeding hundreds. Chief steak counter, Nicole Johnson, reported that 390 steaks were served. A new building that had been constructed served as the central meeting place for most of the activities safely out of the rain. Barrels containing fires were located throughout the building area to keep attendees warm. It was here members and guests visited, shared stories...some meeting for the first time...laughing and enjoying the atmosphere of the moment with not a complaint of God's weather for the event.

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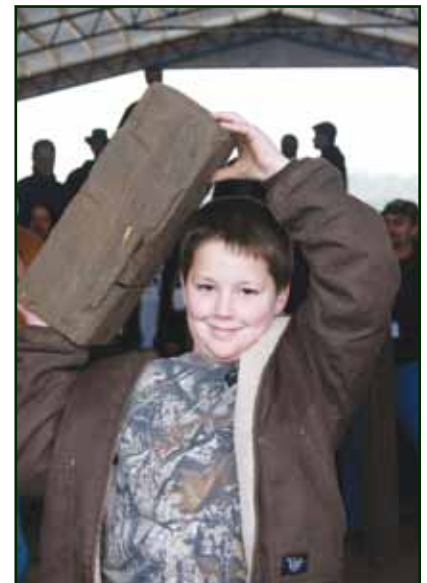
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Charlie addressing part of the crowd about the scheduled events



Warren Davie of Davie Shoring, Kenner, LA made a presentation on modifying previously used unified systems for use with Power Pack Systems. He also tested an ESCO jack, provided by Andy Mathys, on various types of cribbing timbers. Following, a crib throwing contest was held for men women and children.



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The crib throwing competition was succeeded by the driving and spotting competition. Approximately 12 teams volunteered to compete in the last event of the day. It was inspiring to see 75-100 individuals standing in a cold drizzling rain at 4:00 PM on a Friday afternoon cheering on drivers and spotters vying for prize money to be awarded the following night during the recognition dinner.

Returning to the hotel a light snow fell casting a white glow along the side of the highway. An unusual end to a rewarding day for structural movers who had gathered from Ireland, Great Britain, New Zealand, Sweden, The Netherlands, Canada and states from all corners of the United States. Florida, the sunshine state! Who cared? The night was young. The exhibition would be open until 8:00 PM and the hospitality rooms would see action until midnight.

