

A man of motion

IDEA's new president, Bob Gaylord, is a man on the move—with plans to take the association to an entirely new level. by **A. Lee Chichester**

When Bob Gaylord took the IDEA helm in early December, he had some firm ideas about leadership. What else could be expected from a man who once led an organization called the Leader-to-Leader Institute? "All a leader is trying to do is enable a team to perform the mission of the organization," said Gaylord. "IDEA is blessed with people who are quite talented and dedicated to the electro-industry—from the way they look at the data to how they envision the products we offer to the extra sense of knowing what the customer really values."

Gaylord noted that IDEA has to cover a wide spectrum of expertise. "We need to work with people who speak in data-bytes and kilocharacters, all the way through to people who know business systems, and those who look 10 years into the future and plan for what's coming," he explained. "That's a large range of expertise to deal with, and we've got the talent here to handle it."



At left, Gaylord and granddaughter, Skyler, at a race. Above, Gaylord holds Nastasja (left) and Haley (right).



Gaylord honestly likes people, and is constantly amazed by IDEA's employees. While he finds himself tied up in more meetings than he'd like, he tries to set aside time in the afternoons to walk around and speak to staff.

Some of the greatest news Gaylord can hear on a typical day is that a staff member achieved something he or she didn't think could be accomplished. "I give people stretch tasks," he said.

"They might agonize over a goal, but to see a person achieve it is my greatest reward. It's about people realizing their own potential."

The two essentials that must be in place for Gaylord to be able to do his job are trust and teamwork. "Trust is fundamental in all human relationships and implies both character and competence," he said. "Then we have to have a sense of teamwork to get the job done—everyone must feel that his or her function is fundamental to the larger whole, and know where each fits in that dynamic. I'm finding that both elements are here."

When he does leave the office, Gaylord is greeted by a cacophony of youngsters at home. "I am blessed to have two granddaughters living with us, as well as my daughter Elisa and son-in-law Shawn. Skyler, who has always lived with us, is eight and a half and my best buddy. Nastasja is two and a half and has added great joy to the family."

Gaylord and his wife, Donna, will also be adopting their 24-month-old great niece, Haley, who has lived with them for nearly a year. "Every time I walk into the house all of the kids run up and jump on me," he said. "I look forward to that every night."

Gaylord reserves his weekends for running: He takes part in marathons and ultra-marathons and would rather run in rain and sleet than work out in a gym. "Running for me is a way of refocusing and recentering myself," he said.

But Gaylord's newest passion is IDEA. "When you talk about data synchronization and standardization," he said, "we're creating a movement—and I mean 'movement' in the same sense as if you were speaking of a social movement; it's on a higher plane than if you said we were starting a trend in e-commerce and synchronization. I think IDEA is positioned to become the e-commerce provider for the electrical industry." ■

Chichester can be reached online at falconer@swva.net.