

**THE PGA OF AMERICA'S
GOLF INDUSTRY SUPPLIER DIVERSITY INITIATIVE
SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT**



"The biggest misconception about what we do is that people think they just call us up, order a bus, the driver shows up exactly when and where he's supposed to and he actually knows where he's going," laughs Elaine Curl, President and CEO of The Convention Store. For over 27 years her company has done much more than that, providing expertise in design and management of shuttle bus systems for customers throughout the United States and Canada.

While working planning parties, tours and special events for a friend's destination management company in Washington, D.C., Curl got the idea to do something different. "I was interested in the logistics of what we were doing and wanted to follow our customers around the country handling their shuttle needs," notes Curl. Her friend didn't care for the ground transportation business and Curl was "tired of putting together parties, wine selections and menus."

With the American Society of Microbiology as her first customer, The Convention Store began by handling the shuttle needs for their annual events. "That was just



enough to keep us going that first year," says Curl. Similar contracts soon followed with Kiwanis International, the National Education Association and the American Psychiatric Association. The company has

become a nationally recognized expert on airport ground transportation services, counting the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority's Dulles International and Ronald Reagan Washington National airports, as well as the Baltimore/Washington International Airport, as customers. The Convention Store also has contracts with Arlington and Fairfax counties in Virginia to operate retail, online and call center outlets for dispensing information and providing a means to purchase all types of commuter ticket options.

Acting as an extension of customers' conventions and special events, The Convention Store's team will go onsite, sometimes months in advance, to make an initial assessment and design and manage a complete shuttle and transportation system. Work areas are checked for



Elaine Curl
President/CEO,
The Convention Store

safety, insurance is reviewed to determine if coverage is sufficient, equipment is inspected, drivers are trained, lots are designed and crowd control and safety issues are addressed with local police and safety officials. The company also designs event signage and shuttle bus brochures, then delivers and posts the material at local hotels and stops. The Convention Store does not maintain its own fleet of vehicles, preferring to subcontract to bussing and other companies local to the event itself. "We always keep as much business in the city of the convention as possible," stresses Curl, "and we allow them to keep their own branding and identity while doing so."

Now a PGA of America Qualified Diverse Supplier, Curl began wanting to work with The PGA soon after forming her company. "I kept calling and sending information until I got the opportunity to bid," she says. Her perseverance paid off when The Convention Store was awarded the corporate shuttle terminal for the 1991 Ryder Cup. The company's next award with The PGA of America came with the 1997 PGA Championship. The Convention Store has handled the ground transportation needs for every PGA Championship since and will also be doing so for the 2010 Senior PGA Championship.

While her company had a small opportunity with the 1994 FIFA World Cup Soccer Championships, "The PGA of America was really the only sporting organization that let us in and allowed us, as an M/WBE, to show what we could do," notes Curl. "In fact, in my 27 year history as a business owner, I have never experienced a corporation with a DBE outreach program as extensive and committed as The PGA of America. They truly exemplify a corporate culture that makes inclusion a reality rather than a philosophy."



The PGA of America's Golf Industry Supplier Diversity Initiative has been designed to give buyers the confidence and information needed to develop long-term business relationships with qualified minority and women-owned suppliers that have passed a qualification program as detailed by The PGA of America. Through this unique program, the goal of The PGA of America is to increase spending with minority and women-owned business while, at the same time, growing participation from these same consumer segments in the game of golf. For more information on the Initiative, please visit WWW.PGA.COM/PGASUPPLIERDIVERSITY.