

SAGETM NEWS

COMPUTER

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Faire '84
Special Edition



It was standing room only for the opening address of SAGE Faire '84 at the MGM Hotel/Casino in Reno.

Reno Show Is A Success

"It reminded me of some of the early micro conventions, the fun ones before they got so large." That was the feeling of BYTE columnist Jerry Pournelle, and it was echoed by most of the other attendees at SAGE Faire '84 last month in Reno.

Over 700 guests registered for the three-day technical show. SAGE President Rod Coleman knew he had a hit on his hands when workers had to remove the meeting room walls to accommodate an overflow crowd for his opening remarks on Friday. However, the excitement had just begun.

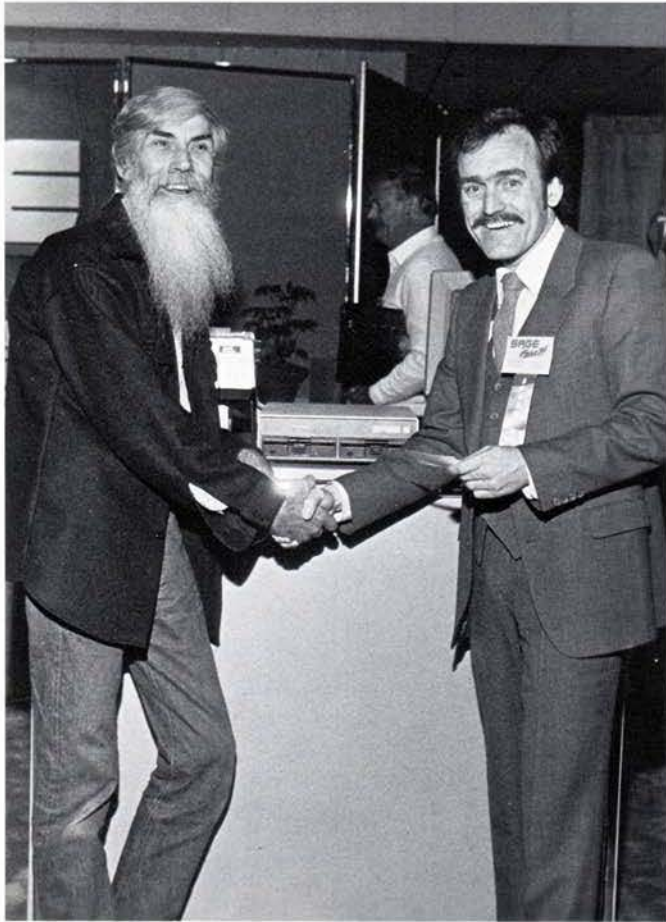
Three dozen vendors had their wares on display in a unique office environment that allowed for relaxed demonstrations. The format gave users a chance to closely examine the latest offerings and gave the developers an opportunity to discuss some of the newest ideas in operating system design and programming technique. While the show was not designed to be a sales event, most of the exhibitors remarked on the quality of the audience, the number of leads they secured, and the chance to meet the competition.

The seminars also allowed an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas. One example was two different talks on designing statistical packages. The first speaker explored the advantages of using Pascal while the other extolled the virtues of Modula-2 on a similar project.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of the Faire was that it offered something for almost every level of attendee. The advanced-types were excited by new concepts in Forth, LISP and so on; end-users discovered new features and potentials of the commercial applications; and dealers had a chance to talk product strategy with software designers, marketing managers and distributors.

It also provided the U.S. base of SAGE customers a rare look at some international market considerations. Over 50 representatives from as far away as Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Turkey, France, England and South Africa came to Reno to share their interests, ask their questions, and show their products. Among the more interesting "foreign" entries were the Micro APL running under Mirage, the LISP from Metacomco, a graphics systems from Robinson, a graphics editor from EduSoft and a statistical package from DeltaSoft.

That was one of Coleman's goals in organizing the event: allow the different interest groups working with the SAGE to see the overall picture of what is being done domestically and internationally. Even he was surprised, "I suspected that there was a great deal of varied interest in our machines, but I was astonished at the number of independent projects currently underway. This turnout was excellent and there's no doubt that we'll do this again, perhaps even on a regional basis throughout the world."



SAGE President Rod Coleman congratulates drawing winner Don Allen.

Don Allen Wins SAGE II System

Donald Allen of Myrtle Point, Oregon came to SAGE Faire '84 looking for a bargain and found more than he expected. At the invitation of his neighbor, programmer Randy Bush, Don was attending the Faire to learn more about SAGE so that he could then purchase Randy's old double-height SAGE II (one of the first we ever made).

Instead, Don won the drawing for a brand new SAGE II complete with 512K of RAM, twin floppies, a new SAGE terminal, software updates and the full set of documentation.

Allen should enjoy the new system as he's a born-again programmer. He actually got out of the computer industry some 20 years ago with a self-proclaimed case of burn-out. This past year, however, Don returned with the purchase of a Timex 100. Since he'd never programmed in anything but machine language, Allen's first project was an Assembler for the 100.

He says his first project on the SAGE will be learning Modula-2, and he couldn't do it in a better setting. Don lives on a 40-acre farm in Myrtle Point where there are no phones and no hassles. This summer he plans on hauling the II out on the porch and writing code in the sunshine.

Even Randy Bush, who lost a sale, joined us in congratulating Don Allen.

Software Review

Word/7

by Buddy Frank

It's no accident that WORD/7 was one of the first word processing packages available for the SAGE. When Marv Donaldson and Dennis Graham from Micro Research and Development were shopping for a machine to code their planned line of office automation software, they took a gamble and bought a SAGE II. It was risky then because SAGE President Rod Coleman and his partners were still cleaning up the ashes from a fire that had gutted their workshop when Micro R&D stopped in and signed a purchase order. They became just the fifth customer of a completely unknown computer company.

One year later in June of '83, SAGE was selling a million dollars worth of computers each month and Version [2.1] of WORD/7 was unveiled. Graham, who did most of the program development, had three goals in mind. He wanted a fast, easy-to-use, integrated system. He has succeeded on the first two counts and is working on the third.

WORD/7 is almost unmatched in its ease of use. A rank beginner can begin pumping out letters and memos in 30 minutes and anyone can learn 90% of the features in an hour. (Try and match that with ASE or the p-System Editor.) There are few, if any, codes or key sequences to be memorized. (Eat your heart out WordStar.)

It's also fast. Document recall, screen scrolling, and the View feature rival most dedicated word processors. It's quite easy to jump from document to document or from place to place without having to wait (about twice the speed of the IBM Displaywriter).

The bad news is that the first version [2.1] had some annoying bugs. Printing was not selective, document size was restricted to seven pages, and the screen was somewhat slow. The good news is that Version [3.1c] fixes all those things. Also added are microspacing, superscript and subscript, better cut and paste options and quicker screen generation. They also added a W7SETUP program to make it easier to configure printers and terminals.

WORD/7 does have some shortcomings. It is NOT ideal as a document processor. If you're going to be doing big projects, you might shop around for a different system. Also, while WORD/7 can do cut and paste adequately, if you really value this option, we've seen it done better on a number of other systems which utilize windowing.

We mentioned that WORD/7 was originally designed to be part of an integrated system, and that's beginning to happen. A spelling checker (SPELL/7) and a mailing list program (MAIL/7) are now available from Micro R&D. They both interface with WORD/7. Still to come are MENU/7, FINANCE/7 and REPORT/7 to complete their business package. They are also at work on international character set conversions for different languages.

It's hard to fully describe any word processor in a short review, but suffice it to say that WORD/7 has most of the features that the average writer or stenographer would ever need, and that it does those things as well, or better, than any other package available. In our opinion, if you are shopping for a general text editor/word processor, this one's hard to beat.



New Product Mix Released

Beginning this month, all SAGE microcomputer systems will be offered in a new configuration, at a significantly reduced price. Effective March 1st, many of the software and documentation items formerly bundled with the system will be made optional.

According to President Rod Coleman, this move will give both customers and dealers greater flexibility in designing a system to meet their individual needs. The new package will consist of a SAGE II or IV, the p-System, the WORD/7 word processor, communications software, and a two-volume set of documentation.

Pascal, 68000 Assembler, the Timberline Spreadsheet, an introductory p-System book, and three technical volumes of documentation will continue to be offered by SAGE, but as optional items.

"This will allow a customer to build his or her own package, without paying a premium for software which is unneeded", said Coleman. "Our dropping of the Timberline Spreadsheet from the mix, for example, may actually result in us selling more spreadsheets. A customer could now have it, but at a lower cost, since a typical spreadsheet user would most likely not need 68000 Assembler or a Pascal compiler."

The new product line will result in retail price reductions on typical systems of between \$600 to \$800. These changes became effective March 1st, however SAGE will honor the February price list through April 1st to allow dealers an opportunity to purchase the "old bundle" to meet current obligations.

Software from USUS Library

Here's the latest procedure to obtain all or part of the USUS Software Library. USUS is the p-System User group and their library is full of handy utilities and games.

To obtain all or part of the Library, please contact Jon Bondy, Box 148, Ardmore, PA 19003 (215-642-1057). Tele-mail: JBondy. Chuck Butler had been handling the distribution, but he's now studying for PhD orals and no longer has enough free time.

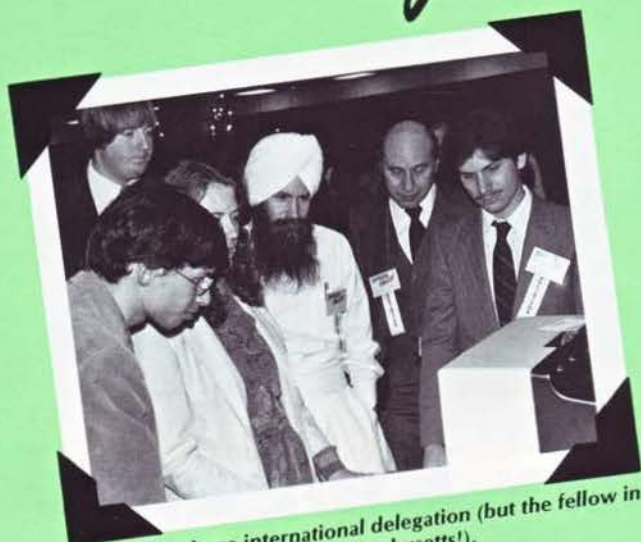
The library material is free, but you must be a member in good standing of USUS and the following handling costs apply: standard 8-inch diskettes — \$5.00; SAGE 80-track diskettes — \$6 for 1 volume, \$7 for 2 volumes, or \$8 for 3 volumes/disk. (Subtract \$4 per diskette if you supply the diskettes.)

For more information about the library or USUS, please contact: USUS, P.O. Box 1148, La Jolla, CA 92038.

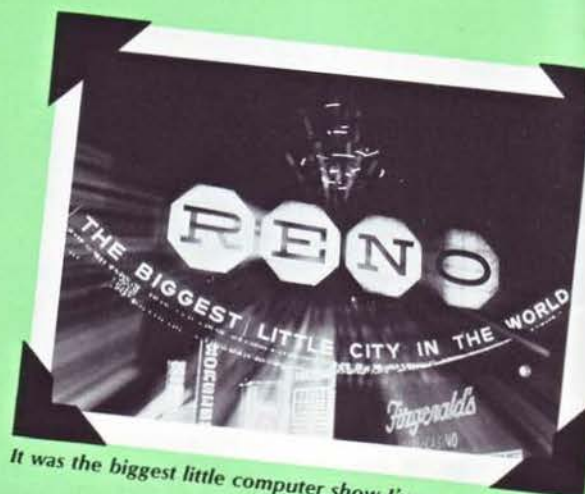


Feb. 2-5
Reno, Nevada

Scrapbook



There was a large international delegation (but the fellow in the turban was only from Massachusetts!).



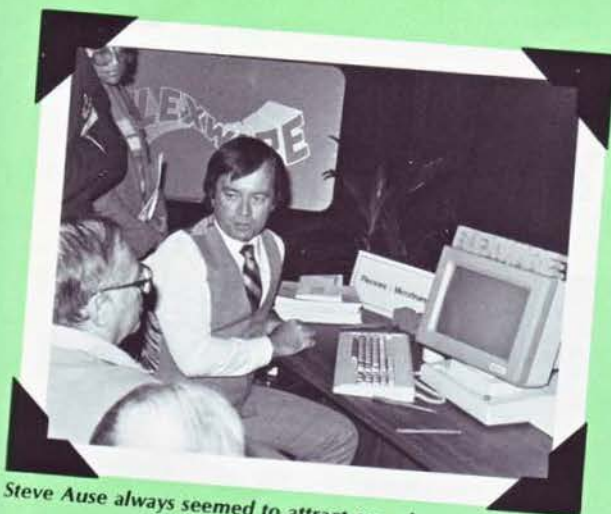
It was the biggest little computer show I've ever attended!!



Chuck Milden told us everything we wanted to know about computer accounting.



The folks from Eyring Research did everything to grab customers. (Ha! Ha!)



Steve Ause always seemed to attract crowds.



SAGE Software guru Bill Bonham held court throughout the weekend explaining either the BIOS or his latest game.



Tom DeMarco is the only guy in the world who can explain an operating system and get a standing ovation.



Tom Woteki shed some light on the dark subject of large scale software development. (I also learned something about statistics)



They actually had to remove some walls to make room for us on Friday. The crowd was great!!

*This is where
we stayed*

**MGM
GRAND HOTEL
RENO**

Marketing Chief Looks Ahead

After serving a brief stint as a SAGE consultant, William R. Delaney officially joined us as Vice President of Marketing in October of 1983. He has an impressive background in microcomputer marketing having served with Regis McKenna; Chiat/Day; Dancer, Fitzgerald, Sample; and Abert, Newhoff and Burr. As an advertising, marketing and public relations executive, he supervised the accounts of Apple Computer, Intel, Televideo, Hyperion, Grid, Businessland and others.

The following interview was recorded shortly after he addressed SAGE Faire on the company's marketing future.

SAGE News: Where do you see SAGE fitting into the microcomputer arena?

DELANEY: I see SAGE fitting best at the high-end sophisticated level of the microcomputers, meaning applications that require a great deal of capacity and a lot of speed. We're going to be addressing strong vertical markets and trying to set the standards in those segments, by utilizing leading-edge technology. We'll try to do it all at a reasonable price. That's a lot, but it really just comes down to being responsive to market needs.

Currently, no large company is supporting this higher-end category, choosing instead to go the safer route with the general purpose market. We think that the high-end segment will respond well to an innovative company like SAGE because we can be responsive and offer excellent technical support.

SAGE News: How do you see SAGE changing in the next year?

DELANEY: First of all, I see the changes that will occur being very positive, and I see that, maybe for the first time, the market place will begin to catch up to our technology. Because of that, I think they will be more receptive to things like our 68000 chip and our advanced system capabilities; thus our sales effort may well be easier. So, I think our growth will continue to increase rapidly while our marketing efforts will become better defined.

SAGE News: What specific marketing moves have you planned for the future within the next year or 12 months?

DELANEY: I'll do my best to increase the marketing budget for one thing; to surround myself and this company with marketing-oriented people; and, to better define where our markets are, what their needs are, and to compare those to our product capabilities. Then, we must try to find the right distribution resources to sell those capabilities.

SAGE News: Sales in the past have been largely to software developers. Do you see SAGE adding markets in the future, or will they remain the same?

DELANEY: No, they will not stay the same, they'll certainly have to increase. Software developers have already allowed us to move into many markets where we wouldn't have been able to get to ourselves. But there are other segments out there that are very strong and that are looking for products like ours. There is government, education, and training. We do know there are some packages out there and some very strong Value Added Resellers in the legal, medical, and garment industries who could take our product and do some very good things for us.



SAGE Vice President of Marketing William Delaney.

Developers are still a priority. For example, Apple's Macintosh isn't directly competitive to us because it is low-priced and has limited capabilities, but it certainly is a product that software developers are going to want to write around. They can't do it with the slow Lisa, and the Mac itself just doesn't have enough capacity. SAGE, because of its Pascal base, is a perfect solution for those guys with the exception of a few minor tweaks here and there.

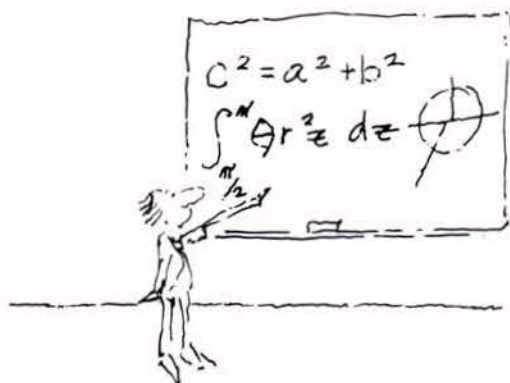
SAGE News: While SAGE has generally been praised for its technological excellence and its support, it has also been criticized for its documentation and its software availability. Do you see any changes in those two areas?

DELANEY: Yes, definitely, I think our documentation already has improved considerably and our objective from a marketing group standpoint is to keep it at or above the industry standards. When somebody opens our package, they shouldn't be turned off by the computer as a whole because they can't learn how to use it.

SAGE News: How about software availability?

DELANEY: Software availability will increase as the 68000 itself becomes more and more popular and people write more and more software around it. We have always targeted software developers as initial sales generators, and our success there almost guarantees a steady supply of software. What we will try to do is make sure that this development parallels our market segment requirements.

(See Marketing next page)



Hacker's Corner

(Editor's note: The information presented in Hacker's Corner is submitted by SAGEusers. SAGE Computer makes no claims or warranties for the accuracy or reliability of this information, but rather is making it available for those who wish to explore new techniques. Please note that some of the procedures included could possibly void your product warranty. Submissions to Hacker's Corner are welcome and should be addressed to SAGE News.)

by Tom Hoops

If you use RAMDISK as much as I do, it's nice to have some small precautionary system as a backup in the case of a power failure. This is by no means an engineered solution with guaranteed ratings, but it has been effective and is very low cost.

It's difficult to backup all the power systems on a SAGE, so I've concentrated only on logic, which means providing a +5 volts. This compromise will not protect material during a floppy disk "write", but it will protect RAMDISK.

All that is necessary is to construct a battery pack with eight AA nicad cells. Put two sets of four cells in series and then put the two sets in parallel. Charge the batteries at their rated current until fully charged.

Now open your SAGE II, remove the CPU board and connect the positive side of the battery pack to the +5 volts of the power supply. The +5 volts comes off the last two pins of the main connector adjacent to resistor R115. You can make the best connection by removing the power supply and soldering your lead to the large trace on the bottom of the board below these two pins. Connect the (minus) side of your battery pack to Ground. Ground is the next two pins in line, and, again, the best spot for a connection is on the bottom on the large trace next to the +5 area. Reinstall the power supply.

Being extremely cautious of the 300 volts present in the heat sinks of the power supply, hook up an amp meter in series between the +5 of the power supply and the + side of the battery pack. The easiest spot to tap the +5 is off the side of R115 closest to the edge of the board. Now locate the small white trimmer pot R116 on the power supply board. With the system fully powered (be careful), adjust the pot until there is about 10ma trickling into the battery pack.

Now insulate and seat the battery pack between the power supply and the floppy. Reassemble your SAGE. The backup should keep your logic intact for approximately 20 minutes. Since there's no supply to the drives, pray the power company comes back within that time. This method of charging the nicads is not ideal, and you will probably need to replace them every 12 months or so, but that's a cheap price to pay for data security.

Input

Dear SAGE News:

I would like to thank and congratulate everyone involved in preparing for, running, and taking part in the Faire. As a nosy computer user/enthusiast, I have never had as much fun; as a USUS member, I have never learned more or made more friends/attached faces to names and voices; and, as an editor of Computer Design and Computer Graphics World, I have never gotten so many good leads to interesting and publishable information. B R A V O ! ! [I'm very much looking forward to the next Faire, whenever it's held (hint hint)!]

Sam Bassett
Sunnyvale, CA

Marketing (cont.)

SAGE News: During SAGE's first year, it gained a lot of praise for being very open and very willing to share its developments. You are getting bigger now. Are things going to change?

DELANEY: Yes, they'll change because we are growing, and we'll have to be very conscious of our position and responsibility in the market place. We'll have to become very professional at what we do. But despite growth, we will make a conscious effort to continue to be an open, "grass-roots" company. We will continue to allow developers, customers, vendors and our dealers to have insight into what we are doing so that they can contribute and not be surprised. It's important for us to hold on to continuity. Apple Computer, for example, did a very good job utilizing that philosophy with their Apple II product. Yet when they introduced Apple III and Lisa, they got away from that philosophy and failed miserably. With Macintosh, they've gone back to that philosophy and the results are very apparent; sales are going through the roof. I guarantee you that philosophy will continue to make Macintosh and SAGE successful.

SAGE News: Your group was very involved with Sage Faire. How do you see that event fitting into the marketing mix?

DELANEY: I think that's an extension of what I was just saying. I think it's important that we have the ability to interact and communicate with the outside world, and that is one attempt to get people to do that. It also builds credibility in the minds of our customers that tells them we are real, that we are professional, and that we are not going to sit back and take orders like many companies out there. We're going to drive the market place and SAGE Faire's an important element.

SAGE News: Speaking of driving the market place, what is ahead for SAGE Computer in the future as far as the product line?

DELANEY: Well, without going into detail, I think you can be assured that SAGE will continue to push that upper level and we will continue to look to expand our product line so that the users get more out of it. It will be important for us to increase our installed base, so we will be developing products that fit better into some of those vertical business segments that I defined earlier.

Questions and Answers

The WORD/7 Program stores all my letters as textfiles with the suffix /D. Is there an easy way to change these into standard textfiles with the .TEXT suffix?

Yes. You can use the = wildcard option of the p-System Filer. Select C(hange from the Filer.

When the machine prompts: "Change what file", type =\D

When the machine prompts: "Change to what?", type =.text

By reversing the procedure, you can simply change them back and forth, depending on which editor you will be using on your textfiles. The latest release of WORD/7 (Version 3.1c) includes a new option to set your own suffix as you choose so you can use it to create or read any suffix textfile.

Where can I find a list of software that runs on SAGE microcomputers?

The best single source is the SAGE Software Catalog. The latest printing is the Spring 1984 edition, and it is available from SAGE dealers for \$7.50.

Does the State of the Art accounting software run on the hard disk SAGE IV?

Yes it does, but you will need a special hard disk installation kit. The kit will organize the disk, but it will also transfer and rearrange files from floppies for those updating from a SAGE II. The Hard Disk Installation Kit is available from SAGE dealers or from *State of the Art*.



Ron Rinden



Rick McCabe

People

Ron Rinden has recently joined the Marketing Division as a Product Marketing Engineer as well as continuing his duties as a Sales Engineer. Ron's technical background will be invaluable in identifying markets and products that parallel each other so we can better define and address solutions. His first project is to target the key operating systems that SAGE will support and to work with the product managers to achieve better integration of software and hardware. In his spare time, he's an amateur racing driver competing with a Formula Vee.

As Southern Division Manager for our Regional Office in Dallas, **Rick McCabe** is responsible for sales to large volume resellers and providing technical assistance on a regional basis. Rick moved from Northern California to join our SAGE team in October of last year. Snow skiing is somewhat curtailed in the Dallas area, so Rick's favorite entertainments today are swimming, sailing and racquetball.

New Dealers

ASYST, INC.
Joseph H. Rodenberg
531 West 83rd Place
Indianapolis, IN 46268
(317) 298-4865

**METROPOLITAN
COMPUTER PRODUCTS**
Lee Kaplan
801 Ave. K, #4
Plano, TX 75074
(214) 578-8504

**VERSATILE SOFTWARE
PACKAGES**
Arlington McCrae
3033 Fannin #207
Houston, TX 77004
(713) 526-1450

CBM SYSTEMS
Richard Dale
7277 Hayvenhurst Ave. #B5
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(213) 904-0111

**HOWELL
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.**
John S. Howell IV
3450 W. Vickery Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
(817) 731-8194

**COMPUTER SYSTEM
ASSOCIATES**
Bill Hamilton
308 Glen Milner Blvd.
Rome, GA 30161
(404) 235-1056

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Editor: Buddy Frank.

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SAGE NEWS
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Southern Division
14755 Preston Road
Suite 600
Dallas, TX 75240
(214) 392-7070

Eastern Division
15 New England Executive Park
Suite 120
Burlington, MA 01803
(617) 229-6868

Reno Corporate Headquarters
4905 Energy Way
Reno, NV 89502
(702) 322-6868

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