

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2021 Virtual Finance Summit Breaks New Ground for NEFA

Conference Chair Kristian Dolan and the Finance Summit Committee broke new ground leading the first NEFA Virtual Conference – bringing together NEFA members for face-to-face events to network and participate in NEFA’s signature educational sessions. In the following interview, Dolan shares insights into the rewards of volunteering for this important role.



Kristian Dolan, CLFP
CEO and Founder
Northteq

A key to NEFA’s success has been the work of those who volunteer their time and expertise to the association. This is especially true of those who volunteer to lead the annual conferences. And in 2021, the pandemic has made those efforts even more challenging and important.

Kristian Dolan, CLFP, is serving as Conference Chair of the 2021 Virtual Finance Summit, which is the first virtual conference for NEFA.

Dolan is CEO and founder of Northteq. He started in the equipment finance industry roughly 18 years ago when he was a software engineer, building out the lease pricing solution for CapitalStream. Prior to founding Northteq, he was the former co-owner and founder of the Salesforce.com practice at Tamarack. Prior to Tamarack, Dolan was the CEO and founder of E2E Systems, which built and implemented commercial lending and equipment finance loan origination software.

“I have been a NEFA member for about seven years. I was encouraged to join by Daryn Lecy, currently NEFA Immediate Past President,” Dolan said. “I went to my first conference and immediately felt welcome.”

Dolan and the Finance Summit Committee faced a unique challenge in 2021: Helping to create a virtual NEFA conference. They worked closely together to create a top-notch virtual conference for the association and its members. The committee members tapped their own experiences of attending other virtual conferences to shape the NEFA event.

“We’re excited about the committee we put together. We have many different demographics of the association covered, not only by subject area expertise, but age as well. We brought in a couple of younger members to try to get a different perspective,” Dolan said.

In addition to Dolan, the Virtual Finance Summit Committee includes:

- Anne Dalgaard, Dynamic Rentals
- Dennis Dressler, Dressler & Peters LLC
- Chris Maudlin, Wintrust Specialty Finance
- Beth McLean, Northland Capital Equipment Finance
- Kim Riggs, Orion First
- Peter Van Dyke, Northteq
- James Wilson, TimeValue Software

“Fortunately, many of us have been through a few virtual conferences so far. We have made note of what worked and what didn’t,” Dolan said. “We are trying to find a balance between minimizing the Zoom fatigue while also providing sessions and engagement opportunities that our members desire. One driving theme for all the sessions is to give members something tangible they can take action on after each session.”

In addition to educational opportunities, the conference provides a great deal of time for networking – a hallmark of NEFA conferences.

“Personally, I’m most excited about the social opportunities. The conferences are always a great opportunity to get caught up on both a personal and business level with everyone. Although nothing beats the in-person engagement, I’m excited to see people’s faces and hear their voices virtually. I am also excited about our content. We have some amazing keynotes, one of whom is leading an educational session,” Dolan said.

Dolan enjoyed the experience as Conference Chair and would encourage others to volunteer to chair a future conference.

“Everyone I asked to help organize this conference said yes. Every speaker we asked to participate said yes as well. NEFA is such a powerful association because of the members’ willingness to share and contribute to the community. When you chair a conference, you get to experience this firsthand.”