By Lorne Lavine, DMD

Most of us tuned in to see President Obama’s de facto State of the Union address to the nation a number of weeks ago. These speeches are meant to give the public a sense of where things are at and where things are going. While we don’t have anything like that in the dental world, I think it is beneficial to take a step back each year and get an overview of what’s exciting in the industry and where I see things going. I travel to most of the major dental shows and have an opportunity to see what products are out there and which ones are generating the most “buzz.”

Digital impressions

Who would have thought that the age-old system of taking impressions would become passe in 2009, but the new systems from Cadent, called the iTero and the 3M Lava, aim to do just that. According to Cadent, the iTero is designed to replace the uncomfortable and imprecise method of conventional impression taking. iTero, powered by proprietary imaging technology, enables the dentist to take a digital scan of the patient’s teeth and bite, make any necessary adjustments in real-time and then transmit the file via a wireless Internet connection to a Cadent-partnering laboratory for further processing. From there, the digital file is transmitted to Cadent where a model is milled. The physical model is then sent to the laboratory where a highly precise physical restoration is created.

There are significant benefits from these systems such as increased patient satisfaction, improved clinical outcomes and enhanced office efficiencies. I had the opportunity to see these systems in action at the Yankee Dental Congress and Chicago Midwinter meeting and they are everything they are cracked up to be.

Dr. Lorne Lavine, founder and president of Dental Technology Consultants, has more than 20 years invested in the dental and dental technology fields. A graduate of USC, he earned his DMD from Boston University and completed his residency at the Eastman Dental Center in Rochester, N.Y. He received his specialty training at the University of Washington and went into private practice in Vermont until moving to California in 2002 to establish DTC, a company that focuses on the specialized technological needs of the dental community.

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