John Mitchell is putting his money where his mouth is.

As the new IPC president, installed just this spring, had made clear in multiple conversations we've had, he takes adding value for customers seriously, and he looks for ways various associations can coalesce.

That vision became reality yesterday when Mitchell took to the dais at the **SMTA** International trade show to announce the two groups would colocate their respective fall shows starting in 2013
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Under terms of the agreement, which remains to be signed, IPC will hold its semiannual standards committee meetings at the SMTAI show in Ft. Worth, TX, next October. IPC will retain its IPC Midwest brand, but the decision effectively tables, for now at least, the Chicago area trade show IPC has sponsored for the past several years.

It's a welcome change from the past decade, during which something of a Cold War formed between the two dominant North American industry electronics trade groups as each competed for the minds (and bodies) of assembly engineers.

While acknowledging that some wrinkles could still remain, most of the folks we spoke with in Orlando this week are supportive of the move. Many IPC committee members are also regular presenters at the much-lauded SMTAI technical conference, and this allows them to reduce their fall travel. Moreover, it will cut costs for some exhibitors that have tried to pull double duty in the past.

It says here SMTA, which has been burned by colocation arrangements in the past, deserves a mountain of credit for putting aside any bad feelings for the good of its members. And IPC, in particular Mitchell, should be lauded for recognizing that success is not a zero-sum game, and that win-win relationships are possible even among trade associations.

On Oct. 22, chat with Mike Buetow about PCB West and SMTAI at PCB Chat .