

TO: SSA Board of Directors
FROM: Denise Layton
DATE: January 21, 2018
RE: Report from Chief Operating Officer

I hope each of you have enjoyed the SSA Convention. As soon as it is complete and we have figures together, I will send those out to each of you. We will begin looking for a venue to host the 2020 SSA Convention soon. There has already been an inquiry from Texas Soaring Association to host the 2022 Convention, so we need to look east for 2020. As soon as a club and venue have been identified, I will submit a report for your approval.

If any of you are a member of a club who would be interested in having a convention in your city, please let Gaynell Williams or myself know and we will provide you with the requirements needed to host one.

Office staff in Hobbs are busy but keeping up. After the Convention everyone will settle back into their daily routine again. Some of you may know Kayla Eicher, our membership manager extraordinaire, is expecting her first child, which is due in April. She will be out of the office for several weeks after the baby is born so we will be stretched a little thin again during that time.

We have been experiencing problems with our old server, plus it could no longer be supported or updated. We now have a new mail server which holds all of our e-mail in the cloud. Also, a new server was installed at headquarters which will hold all of our in-house data as well as back up of all materials. We are up and running again.

Last summer I met with the new President of the NAA and other air sports organizations. Attending the meeting were the Executive Directors from the AMA, USPA, the balloon organization and the hang glider and paraglider organizations.

We discussed various programs, what has worked, what hasn't, as well as membership retention problems, etc. During the meeting fund raising was discussed and the Executive Director of USPA advised they had a successful program in place, which he sent to several of us after the meeting. Their program was passed on to the SSA Foundation.

Because everyone who attended felt the initial meeting was such a success, another meeting has been scheduled for June 27 in Denver, which I will be attending. I feel this is a great way to communicate with other organizations as well as staying in touch with the NAA.

I have been trying to assist Directors responsible for committees by contacting committee chairmen and helping them in keeping their committees engaged. Right now we need a new committee chairman for Affiliates and Divisions and a new person to take over the sailplane tracking committee. I have spoken with Pedja Bogdonovich and he doesn't have any suggestions for someone to take this over. If any of you are interested, or know someone who would be, please let me know.

I noticed the SSA's Strategic Plan has expired so I took it upon myself to come up with a draft of a new plan for you to review. I reviewed plans dating back many years and found the same recurring theme in every Plan. "Grow the membership." One plan wanted to grow the membership to 25,000 and have a retention rate of 86%. One plan wanted to reduce all fatalities (a lofty goal).

Some plans were quite lengthy, and had long lists of what the SSA should be doing. Unfortunately, most of the past strategic plans had these long lists, but no guidance as to how these lofty goals would be accomplished.

The 2012-2016 Plan seemed to combine many of the objectives from previous plans and provided a concise plan for SSA to follow. Many of the items mentioned in this Strategic Plan are already in practice, and some have been discussed by different committees. I don't see the point in reinventing the wheel, and think the 2012-2016 Plan is the most comprehensive plan and could be used for the next several years as our guide, with only a few small changes. I tried to make this Strategic Plan informative and within reach of goals. If you have comments or suggestions concerning this draft Plan, please let me know.

In attracting youth to the sport, which also drives membership numbers up, I think a good way to accomplish this is in hiring a person to keep the website, Facebook, Twitter, and all other social media venues fresh and up to date. To accomplish this, I propose hiring someone to maintain the social media functions of the SSA website. A job description is attached for this position.

I am presenting the proposed new employee to the Board for approval because I propose salary be paid from the funds we have in the Kunda fund, which were originally earmarked for a move of SSA from Hobbs. Since this is not being done, I feel spending money on this project would be money well spent. I therefore ask for your approval of this position.

I have discussed the part time person with Doug Easton and Frank Whiteley. Doug Easton would like this person to have access to the SSA website where they can add youth information pages, etc., so the person we are looking for will need to be a little more versed in computers than just being able to find and post information on the front page.

The new person will also work with the Growth & Retention Committee and implement their suggestions throughout our various media platforms. Promoting the sport and attracting youth should be the number one objective for this person, along with assistance from Growth & Retention Committee members. If you approve the new position, we will start searching right away.

Under growing the sport, mention is made of starting this initiative with chapters and clubs. This has already been started by Chairman Sorenson through the outreach program he has started to promote the growth of existing clubs and commercial operations. Keeping this initiative going will be a key to growth.

Also mentioned in the draft Strategic Plan is strengthening the channels of communications among SSA members. Again, I think the new person would be instrumental in accomplishing these goals.

Under Financial Management we already have mechanisms in place to accomplish these goals, but this is something very important to the well-being of our organization that it was included again in the Strategic Plan. The only item changed in this section was the statement of providing "quarterly" financial statements to the membership to providing "monthly" financial statements to the membership. This is something I post every month on the SSA website as soon as financial statements have been approved.

I appreciate all of the efforts put into our finances by previous Treasurers that we now have strong guidelines in place. We have many facets of our organization to keep up with. Not only

does Kathey Pope do financial statements for SSA operations, she keeps up with the U.S. Team, the Soaring Safety Foundation and the SSA Foundation. There are many pieces to the financial management of this organization, and Kathey does a good job in keeping up with all of the entities. We have come a long way in our financial structure and management from years past.