

7/18/2009

Southwest District Members:

Yesterday (June 30<sup>th</sup>) was the close of the 2008-2009 IAAP year. What an exciting and extraordinary year this has been. It seems like just yesterday we were gearing up and now here we are bringing closure. First I would like to thank ALL of you for the opportunity to serve as your Southwest District Director. I've had the opportunity to meet many of you, particularly over the past couple of months during some of the Division Annual Meetings. I also want to thank you for keeping me informed of your ACTIONS via the many newsletters I received from you. They were EXCELLENT! Throughout the year we've shared good news, events, and challenges unique to our district, yet similar throughout the association. Below are some highlights of the year.

**Pathways to Excellence** – We began our year with the introduction of a new recognition program, Pathways to Excellence (P2E). I had the opportunity to serve on the P2E sub-committee where we answered and gathered frequently asked questions and had them posted to the IAAP Website. I am thrilled to say that Southwest District members are VERY strong participants in this program. Many of our members have met their goal this year and some have been checking off their list, and putting plans in place to achieve excellence in the near future. The numbers keep going up daily and a final report will be provided after the submittal deadlines (members of excellence deadline was yesterday, June 30<sup>th</sup> -- Chapters and Divisions have until July 10<sup>th</sup>). This has been a very successful program, and a list of achievers thus far is posted on our Website.

**Communications and Member Engagement** – Throughout the year (monthly) I met with the Division Presidents where we shared progress reports, good news, and sometimes challenges and brainstormed issues. Beginning in March the incoming Division Presidents were invited to join in on the calls for succession planning, so we are already gearing up for the new year. Some of you have asked what happened to the District Newsletters and formal updates. Well, this year for communication consistency, all formal communications to members were sent directly from the International President on behalf of the entire board, so I hope you all have been keeping up with the *Action < Direction* and other communications from Barb in addition to my quarterly informal district communications that were flowed through the Division and Chapter Presidents. These district quarterly communications were an effort to stay connected with all of you and to give everyone an opportunity to learn about some of the ACTIONS going on across the district.

I received many of your wonderful newsletters that were filled with information on EXCELLENT programs, special events, and community service activities. I think it was absolutely fantastic that every division and most of our chapters held leadership workshops or some form of leadership training for the members, and many were also heavily focused on strategic and succession planning. I was particularly pleased to read about the many quality programs that met our certification requirements and were aligned with our new IAAP Mission. I am so proud of how our members are doing their part towards meeting the Association's aggressive goal of turning IAAP into a remarkable association by 2010!

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The Division Presidents and I worked together on a project to review every Website in the district to ensure our sites represented the Association well and were good resources for our members. This was a very tedious task, particularly for some of our larger divisions, but we got through them all and our sites really are excellent resources for members, visiting guests, prospects, and employers -- Many thanks to all the Division Presidents for their support in this effort and to all our Webmasters and members who helped in producing some really awesome Websites.

New Web Community – If you haven't logged into our new Website yet, I encourage you to do so. A new Southwest District e-Group has been created as an additional networking/communication and resource tool for our members. We will be using it more in the coming year to bridge communications across the district.

Challenges – We lost some chapters (a little more than usual) through disbandment this year. Several had been struggling for awhile. The good news is many of the members are transferring to other chapters or MAL, and we were able to charter a few new chapters. Today our membership count is 6,080. Final statistical reports will be coming out in a couple of weeks.

**Education Forum and Annual Meeting (EFAM)** – You will notice some changes to our annual meeting (EFAM), formerly called International Convention and Education Forum. Based on membership surveys the International Board and Headquarters Staff worked together to incorporate some changes. We shortened the business sessions to two days, increased time for educational workshops, and added an additional networking opportunity. Please join me on Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon for the Southwest District Caucus where we will be reviewing accomplishments, recognizing achievements, and spending some time discussing the proposed Amendments to the International Bylaws and Standing Rules. I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Minneapolis.

We've had a good year; a year that brought about many exciting changes, and I am so VERY proud of how the Southwest District members set high expectations and delivered results. Yes, we had some challenges no doubt about that, but Southwest is healthy and strong, and our programs and your support have been OUTSTANDING!

Again, it has been a privilege and honor to serve you. Thank you so much and many thanks for the opportunity. This has truly been an *Excellence in Action* year, and I'm looking forward to our continued journey together during “**The Power of Commitment!**”

Best regards... Toni

**Antoinette Smith CPS/CAP**  
**2008/2010 International Director, Southwest District - IAAP®**