

**Air Force Association
Region Presidents Meeting Summary
Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
May 6, 2016
By Bill Yucuis, AFA Florida Region President**



Here is a Summary of what was discussed at the Regions Presidents Meeting in Dallas on May, 2016. Many of these items will be up for discussion at both the Telecom scheduled for June 6 and the State Convention on July.

Scott Van Cleef, Chairman of the Board, initial remarks: For those who attended the National Convention, the AFA Budget was #1 on the discussion list. For 2015, AFA had budgeted for a \$1M deficit, but at the Convention, it appeared it might climb to \$2M or more. Due to numerous efforts, the 2015 budget met its \$1M deficit, which was not ideal but better than expected. For 2016, the Budget called for a \$300K deficit, primarily due to the Mitchell Institute underperforming. It appears that will stay the same. For 2017, AFA has an increase in \$1.3M to cover past benefits plans (“retirement plan”). Those plans have been cancelled but AFA still has a requirement to keep reserves to cover the costs for AFA members who have those plans. The AFA was given a 3-year grace period to have less reserves to cover those plans but in 2017, the \$1.3M requirement must be met. Expect the 2017 Budget discussion at the National Convention to be the #1 priority again because some highly desired line items will need to be cancelled to achieve a balanced budget, which is Larry Spencer’s number one goal.

For the AFA elections in September for National Officers, the only contested election is for Director-At-Large, where there are three candidates for two positions. The goal is to have choices for National Offices, so Region Presidents were asked to review for potential National Officer candidates. The idea is to develop a leadership plan which identifies potential, Chapter, State, and National leaders for the next 2-3 years.

AFA has procured new video equipment which allows AFA to record and edit events, which could be placed on the Website. AFA National has hired a new IT Director and he believes AFA is currently very outdated in IT capabilities (probably true). One aspect they hope to have soon is video conferencing capability. This would greatly reduce the travel costs for face-to-face meetings (i.e. Budget savings).

Membership Update by Chuck Heflebower (who was calling in from Maxwell AFB): At the 2015 National Convention, Membership was #2 on the discussion priorities. Chuck mentioned AFA had started a Membership Community where AFA National and the field can share information about how to improve Membership. ALL Region, State, and Chapter Presidents, plus Chapter Membership Chairmen were invited to become a member and only 42 of 80 have joined. On the AFA Website, at the very top of the page, select Communities. Go to Membership Committee and join. You do have to have an AFA Website Sign In and Password. **My expectations are that EVERY Chapter President and Chapter Membership Chairman should join the AFA Membership Community, if you have not yet done so.**

This past year, AFA actually signed up over 10,000 new members, but due to people not renewing (or dying), AFA lost membership this past year. Membership renewal must become a priority and only sending out a renewal letter notice is not sufficient. This will be a discussion item at the State Convention.

Dave Dietsch, Vice Chairman for Field Operations, initial remarks: Expect to see technology (Telecon/Video Conference) to be the primary way for AFA entities to meet. It was voted to keep the October face-to-face meeting for State and Region Presidents and to cancel the September and May meetings but to have more frequent meetings via Telecon or Video Conference.

IRS Non-Profit Revocation status, by Nia Reeves (AFA staffer): If a Chapter (or State) which falls under the AFA National umbrella fails to submit a Form 990 for three consecutive years, their non-profit status is automatically revoked. Currently there are 33 Chapters and one State in the Revoked Status. If revoked, it requires the entity to submit a Form 1023 (at \$850 cost) and lots of paperwork. Currently, one Chapter is doing this as a test case. On the plus side, three Florida Chapters are not really a problem. The Evenson Chapter is unlikely to be restarted. The Miami-Homestead has their own 501(c)(3) status (please confirm) and the Sarasota Chapter is getting a new name

and 501(c)(3) status. The filing of the Form 990 has become an AFA priority so Chapters are asked to show on their Activity Reports that they have filed the Form 990 but are also requested to send a copy to AFA National (at field@AFA.ORG). Chapters have seen a flurry of emails requesting this information.

Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Update, by Peter Jones (via Telecon): The SPC plans to propose a change to the AFA Mission Statement. They want it to be shorter and say WHAT AFA wants to do. Some of the current verbiage says HOW we intend to accomplish the mission. I'm not going into the details but expect Chapters to receive the proposal in the next few weeks for review. Be sure to pass out to Chapter members. This will be a discussion item at the State Convention.

Ten years ago, AFA changed its basic structure under a program called AFA21, where the AFA Field (and other entities, such as Magazine, Insurance, etc.) merged with the AFA Education Foundation to become the current 501(c)(3) non-profit structure. It has been suggested it might be time to relook at the current AF structure to see if there is a better way to business. One discussion at the RP Meeting was how to get the younger folk involved and this might require a more "virtual" organization. That is not to say the current structure would be replaced but maybe both structures could coexist. This was just a bunch of RPs (i.e. old men and women) talking around a table and it won't even be presented at the Convention unless the field feels there is a need. AFA21 was a multi-year, contentious endeavor so this is another item for discussion for the State Convention. Expect to see more from me prior to then.

Training Modules, by Ross Lambert (via Telecon): Ross Lambert, in my opinion, has done a superb job of developing a series of Training Modules which are helpful for field members to learn how to accomplish the AFA mission more efficiently. The problem is that almost no AFA field people are using them. At the State Winter Meeting, I "made" you watch one module and expect the same at the State Convention. Some of AFA's biggest problems in the field are Membership Recruitment and Retention and Leadership Development. There are six modules covering these topics and almost no one has watched them.

What I tried to demonstrate at the Winter Meeting is how to show a module at a Chapter event. Right now, you can only identify three individuals watching the module at one time, but Ross said if you finish the module, there is a short Survey and a Remarks section. You could either just say how many total people watch the module or list their names.

Air Power Advocate Program, by Mark Tarpley and Chet Curtis: If your Chapter wants to get current information about Air Force issues, I would recommend a Chapter representative join the Air Power Advocate Program. On the AFA Website, at the very top of the page, select Communities. Go to Air Power Advocate and join. You can receive daily updates and have access to a number of documents related to Air Power advocacy.

They also talked about writing Op Ed pieces for local newspapers. One of the first things to do is contact the local newspaper and find out what their requirements are for submitting Op Ed pieces. Different papers has a different criteria. AFA already has plenty of pieces written (APA Community) but typically local papers want something written by someone local, not reprint an article from DC.

Due to budget constraints, there will be no Congressional "Fly In", which was done the past two years. Instead, Mark and Chet propose a local "Drive In", where local Chapters (or States) meet with local congressional offices. They are preparing slides which could be used as Talking Papers for these visits.

The Chief of Staff holds a monthly breakfast and AFA plans to begin taping them so they could be a source of information at Chapter or State meetings. Expect to see one in July.

Emerging Leaders Program by Mac MacAloon: Mac said States should have a plan for AFA members who could benefit from the Emerging Leaders Program. What that really means is Chapters (and States) should have a leadership development plan where up and coming leaders could be identified for the Emerging Leaders program for next couple of years.

AFA Aerospace Education Programs, by Bill Croom and Bill Yucuis: Bill Croom gave an overview of CyberPatriot and the CAP ACE program and Bill Yucuis gave an overview of StellarXplorers.

Wounded Airman Program, by Kari Hahn: The Wounded Airman Program has been well received due to the AFA policy of spending 100% of donations on Wounded Airmen, especially given the concerns of other organizations which have spent considerable funds to cover administrative costs. At the meeting, I talked with Kari at length about the outstanding support given by the Eglin and Hurlburt Chapters in support of Adaptive Training Camps held the past two years in their area. We especially talked about how to improve the communications between the Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2) people, who actually coordinate all these types of event, the Air Force Wounded Airman staff at AFA National, and local Chapters. A major discussion item both during the upcoming Telecom and State Convention is how to develop an AFA Florida plan for supporting Wounded Airman, wherever it occurs in the State. I do not believe local Chapters should bear the entire financial (and manpower) burden to support these events just because they occur in their areas.
