

# 2018 Action Items



Based on committee comments and discussions with key members the Membership Committee proposes the following courses of action for 2018.

For 2018 we have a goal to maintain a high ranking compared to other Sections and continue efforts to grow. The Membership Committee will be responsible for tracking this activity, encouraging participation and reporting to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis. The activity includes gaining participation by member firms, vendors or utilities to make face to face contact with selected non-member utilities to educate them on the benefits of being an AWWA member. This contact was made throughout 2016 with the initial push during April-July when most communities were preparing budgets for FY2018-19. This type of effort will continue. Informational packets including membership applications and AWWA information will be provided to each person making contact.

In addition to contacting non-members, in late 2017 we used the vendor list from our Annual Conference and made contact with numerous vendors, utilities and consulting firms. We did recruit several of these people and in 2018 will try this once again. It continues to be a promising venture to recruit these people as members and several new members have resulted from this effort.

- Contact Non-Members
- Upgrade New Member Information Packet
- Wise Water Words Publications of New Member Incentive Coupons and Recruiting Contests
- Provide Membership Display at Other Events, Meetings and Conferences
- Participate in National AWWA Membership Recruitment Campaign
- Invite New Members to Fall Conference
- Provide Display at Annual Conference (Include map with Utility Members)

## Contact Non-Members

All of 2018

## Upgrade New Member Information Packet

On-going

## Wise Water Words Publications of New Member Incentive Coupons and Recruiting Contests

On-going

## Provide Membership Display at Other Events, Meetings and Conferences

All of 2018

## Participate in National AWWA Membership Recruitment Campaign

April 2018

## Invite New Members to Fall Conference

October 2018

## Provide Display at Annual Conference (Include map with Utility Members)

November 2018

## ▶ RETENTION PROGRAM ACTION PLAN

### Wise Water Words Publication of New Members

On-going

### Recognition of New Members at Annual Meeting

November 2018

### Recognition of Utility Members at Annual Meeting

November 2018

### Recruiting Awards for Member Recognition at Annual Meeting

November 2018



## TASK 1: INTRODUCTION

The Membership Development Plan shall guide the Membership Engagement and Development Committee (MEDC) and Section Officer's efforts to best achieve Nebraska Section membership objectives. The Plan summarizes local membership characteristics, identifies potential Section membership targets and discusses current recruitment and retention activities. The Plan proposes a program of activities that will promote effective membership recruiting and retention. The Plan also provides a process for assessing the performance of the Membership Plan in meeting key objectives. Finally, the Plan identifies the membership functions and responsibilities of the key units and individuals within the Nebraska Section and how to use the Standard Operating Procedures.

The Section MEDC is responsible for implementing this Plan, and monitoring its progress. In addition, the Plan should be communicated to every member of our Section to be successful. It is the responsibility and obligation of our members to help the Section reach out to the drinking water industry and encourage them to join our organization.

## TASK 2: PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP PLAN

The AWWA Nebraska Section Membership Development Plan guides the efforts of the MEDC and Board of Trustees to best achieve Section membership objectives. This Plan is by Committee members and Section Officers to prioritize efforts and budget activities for the upcoming year.

Effective recruitment and retention of Section members will benefit the Section in the following areas:

- **ENHANCE SECTION PROGRAMS.** Membership growth allows leadership to diversify volunteer efforts and involve more people in Section activities.
- **OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.** AWWA membership is the best tool for professional growth. AWWA members have access to the best technical information in the water industry.
- **FINANCIAL ADVANTAGES FOR THE SECTION.** Eighteen percent of individual and utility membership dues, with a minimum of \$15,000 annually, are reimbursed back to the Section to provide assistance for sponsoring new events and training programs.
- **IMPROVED ADVOCACY.** Whether it's a local quality issue or a new regulation, there is strength in numbers and grass-roots support.

## TASK 3: NEBRASKA SECTION CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

The following describes the Nebraska Sections current status relative to membership objectives, member characteristics and current activities and programs.



### MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The Nebraska Section promotes activities to retain current members and recruit new members to the AWWA. Committee objectives include the following:

- Increasing the longevity and involvement of existing Section membership and improving the Section's responsiveness to member needs.
- Recruitment of new members that represent the diverse cross section of persons employed in the water industry.
- Facilitating communication to help new members feel welcome and engaging in the Section.
- Linking new members with the existing membership and Section activities within the new member's areas of interest.

## ▶ CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The MEDC conducts a committee meeting at the Annual Conference, coordinates new member welcomes and existing member retention activities for the Nebraska Section of AWWA. Selected committee activities are summarized below:

- **Meetings:** The MEDC generally conducts a meeting during the Annual Section Conference and holds telephone conference calls during the year. Summaries of committee meetings and activities are provided in a written report at each Board meeting and the Annual Meeting to the Board of Trustees.
- **New Member Welcome Activities:** Information is emailed to new members as they join. The email contains a personal welcome note tailored to each member's interests using the AWWA Message Platforms, information regarding Section Officers and Committee activities and directs them to the Nebraska Section web site to find the Membership Directory, Committees and other relevant information.
- **Recruiting Incentive Programs:** Two new approaches that are ongoing were implemented during 1998 to recruit new members. One approach is a contest for Nebraska Section members to sponsor new members for referral bonuses. The second is a discount coupon for new members which can be found on the Section web site.
- **Annual Conference Activities:**
  - Annual Membership Report is provided at the Annual Business Meeting.
  - Membership information is provided at the a booth in the vendor hall. AWWA in a Box is available at this booth.
  - A committee meeting is typically conducted.
  - Recognition at the annual banquet of new members and their sponsors and a brief presentation of recruitment incentive programs.
- **Annual Membership Recognition Week:** This week, usually in November, recognizes existing membership. The Nebraska Section has participated and sponsored door prizes at the Annual Conference.
- **Student Membership:** The Nebraska Section sponsors student memberships at the university. Students are required to pay \$10 of the membership as approved by the Board of Trustees March 19, 2003. Several firms have participated in getting their student interns to join AWWA. Based on the 2018 Membership Summit we will use what we learned to encourage participation by YP's and students (GenY).
- **Retention Activities:** Past due members are notified by email or mail and urged to renew their membership on a monthly basis. Committee members follow up with personal telephone calls to past due members. In addition, new members are contacted quarterly in their first year of membership to learn if membership is meeting their needs and to create a relationship with new members.

## TASK 4: NEBRASKA SECTION MEMBERSHIP POTENTIAL/TARGETS

**STRATEGIC PLAN.** The Nebraska Section AWWA revised the Section Strategic Plan recently. As such, specific goals, objectives and strategies were developed. This plan includes those visions and activities. The Strategic Plan specifically identifies activities related to membership recruitment. Also, one of the plans' primary objectives is the projection of new membership growth. In past years The Section has identified a growth of 2% per year. AWWA has set goals of 2% and 3% in the annual growth challenge. The Section aligns with these growth needs.

As of January 31, 2017 the membership is 354. This is down 11 members from the same time last year. The 2017 plan identified 372 members as a goal. Goals are adjusted as follows.

December 2018 – 361

December 2019 – 368

December 2020 – 375



**TARGET MARKETS.** Based on the review of our member characteristics and comparison of our Section characteristics to those of AWWA nationally, the areas where we are under-represented are Nebraska utilities. We currently have 42 utility memberships and there are over 500 systems in Nebraska. Because of retirements of long standing members, the Section is under pressure to maintain numbers. There is a tendency of new members to drop out of AWWA within the first year of membership. As such, targeting new and enhancing our efforts to get them connected to Section activities early on should be a major focus of recruitment and retention efforts.

The following organizational or professional association sources within the Nebraska Section area are appropriate to pursue with recruiting strategies:

 American Water Works Association <b>Nebraska</b> Section
<b>American Public Works Association</b>
<b>Association of General Contractors</b>
<b>Rural Water Association</b>
<b>State Certified Operator Lists</b>
<b>Water Environment Federation</b>
<b>State Regulatory Agencies</b>
<b>American Society of Consulting Engineers</b>

Also a concerted effort will be conducted to review all registration lists of attendees for the AWWA Section Annual Meeting, video conferences and all training workshops. At least ten Nebraska utilities will be reviewed each year for potential membership.

## TASK 5: MEMBERSHIP PLAN STRATEGIES

Prior to establishing a specific action plan, general strategies should be identified. These strategies are categorized between recruiting and retention.

### ► RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- Use the non-member database that the national membership staff has developed for mailings or phone calls to non-member utilities, consulting firms, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers. This type of outreach can also be accomplished by searching the internet for engineering, design, consulting, construction, labs, water distribution equipment suppliers, etc. and inviting them to join AWWA.
- An AWWA Student Chapter is established at UNL. Student Chapters should be developed at other universities within our Section and encourage professors and students to participate and recruit students. Promote student and university staff membership in AWWA by sending membership information to universities civil and environmental departments.
- Work with utilities, consultants and suppliers to establish a presence on university campuses by offering after graduation job placement services, summer internships, cooperative education opportunities, thesis project opportunities, career information luncheons, senior design class, etc. to Section student members.
- Strengthen links between AWWA and other professional groups that attract water industry professionals, such as WEF. Increase efforts to display our membership exhibit at meetings and conferences sponsored by non-AWWA professional groups.
- Develop a process where young professionals can establish identity within our Section. A Young Professional Committee is organized within the Nebraska AWWA Section and is active.
- Promote and emphasize Section Recruitment Incentives Program. Recognize members who recruit new members. The existing program provides coupons to recruiters and/or new members for discounts on Section memberships.

## ▶ RETENTION STRATEGIES

Review of the national membership survey and our own Section information indicates that the greatest area of concern with respect to retention is the member who has been with the Section one year. These members are the most likely to let their membership lapse. Some ideas for improving retention in our Section are discussed below.

**MEMBERSHIP SURVEY.** The best way to provide services that are appealing to our Section members is to ask them what they want and then make sure we meet those needs. .

**RECOGNITION/AWARDS/INCENTIVES PROGRAMS.** New ideas for offering incentives to maintain membership include offering discount coupons for Section sponsored training or educational materials to past due members who choose to renew their memberships, establishing an award for the most involved new member, and preparing new member professional profiles for publication in the Section newsletter. In early 2017, metrics to measure the most involved member will be developed and implemented to award this at the Nebraska Section Annual Conference.

**NEW MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS DEVELOPMENT.** Ideas for improving communication with and participation of new members and young professionals within the Section are described below.

- Linking each new member who is interested in professional mentorship with an active member with similar professional interests. This should be done by personal selection and contact of each potential mentor and expectations of the volunteer mentor must be clearly communicated during initial contact.
- The Nebraska Section has established a new Young Professionals Committee (YPC) to work with the National YPC to design programs and offerings that meet their own needs. Involve young professionals in the planning and presentations at the Nebraska Section Annual Conference.
- Ensure that all local events are communicated to all new members via mailings and/or Section newsletter. Personal invitations by mentors or other active Section members are the best means of welcoming new members.

These strategies have and will continue to be implemented on an annual basis.

## ▶ EVALUATION/REPORTING

A means of evaluating impacts of actions undertaken and adjusting these actions to continually improve results used. The following paragraph describes ways in which the impacts of this membership development plan is measured.

**MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION ASSESSMENTS.** The section should conduct a member satisfaction assessment at least once every 3-5 years. This can be a short questionnaire mailed or e-mailed to all members, an ongoing questionnaire posted on the web page, a pullout questionnaire published in the newsletter, or a telephone survey of a selected random sample of the membership.

**TRACKING NEW MEMBER INVOLVEMENT.** It is useful to develop a systematic means of tracking the level of involvement of Section members who have been members for less than five years.

**WEB PAGE SUGGESTIONS BOX.** A place for members to e-mail suggestions for Section improvements should be added to the web page. Blanks for the members name and membership number should be included on the suggestion form, so we can use our Section database to assess characteristics of the members who are providing the suggestions.

## TASK 6: NEBRASKA SECTION MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility of implementing this Plan and monitoring its progress rests with the Section MEDC. It is paramount that the Section Officers and other Committee Chairs share a leadership role in the membership development function.

The following paragraphs demonstrate primary membership development responsibilities:

### SECTION OFFICERS

- ▶ • Provide leadership and budgetary support to MEDC and Development Plan.
- Provide active liaison member to MEDC.
- Provide program agenda, logistical and functional support for membership presentations and activities at Annual Meeting.
- Assist with the active recruitment and retaining organizational members.

### MEDC CHAIR

- ▶ • Develop and update Membership Development Plan on an annual basis for Board of Trustee approval.
- Provide effective leadership for MEDC.
- Attend Board of Trustee meetings and keep officers focused on Membership Program goals and activities.
- Responsible for continuous monitoring of Membership Development Plan.

### MEDC

- ▶ • Implement strategies and activities within the specific Annual Membership Development Plan.
- Follow-up personal telephone calls and/or email to all new members and past-due members.

## TASK 7: SUMMARY

The success of AWWA and specifically the Nebraska Section depends on its members. The strength of the educational and technical resources and benefits relates to the volunteer efforts of our members. Effective member leadership and activity and the full implementation of this Membership Development Plan will provide benefits and success well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.