

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Policies and Procedures

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The central membership coordinator and chapter membership coordinator have the duty of maintaining a database of members, including updating personal information and membership history. The central membership coordinator handles memberships, and gathers all chapter data into one location.

Additionally, the central coordinator has a few unique responsibilities

- 1) Prepares mailing list/labels for the Prairie Promoter and other mailings to the entire membership.
- 2) Maintains an e-mail distribution list.
- 3) Maintains membership through renewal notices.
- 4) Produces an annual membership report to the board that includes a breakdown by chapter and membership level, number of new members, and inactive memberships.
- 5) Produces and distributes a quarterly membership report to the chapters

Chapter membership coordinators have clear duties common to all chapters. Chapter membership coordinators are expected to be more familiar with local members than the central coordinator.

- 1) Acknowledge new members and renewals with a thank you only if the chapter desires.
- 2) Provide materials to the chapter related to membership such as labels for chapter level mailings, membership levels, and lapsed memberships.
- 3) Coordinate membership data with central membership coordinator. Keeps member up-to-date and relays any changes to the central coordinator. When money and memberships are received by the chapter coordinator, this material is forwarded to central no less frequently than once a month.
- 4) Answers chapter member's question regarding membership status (problems with newsletter, etc...) or refers them to the central coordinator if they can't answer the question.

A number of issues regarding data structure and policies and procedures relating to information exchange, membership history, and materials remain unclear. The following policies and procedures are meant to delineate and standardize these issues.

Database Management

Structure

The central coordinator should maintain membership history for all members, past and present. This includes membership level. We recommend that Chapters do the same. The

central coordinator and the chapters should also maintain a minimal set of data fields that are in agreement with one another.

Membership Policies

Each chapter and the corporate board may maintain a number of complimentary memberships. \$10.00/year is deducted from the chapter requesting the complimentary memberships for purposes of mailings, etc.... This number needs to be tracked by the central coordinator and given to the chapter and central treasurers on a yearly basis for accounting purposes. Problems with these complimentary memberships (i.e. lapsed) need to be passed along to the chapter boards for action.

The central Membership Coordinator should receive a copy of the Corporate Board minutes at the same time as the Board.

Chapters should move toward using uniform membership literature. For those chapters receiving dues directly, this literature should differ only in the mail-to address.

Procedures

Data sharing

Membership data necessarily flow both ways between chapters and the central coordinator. Data sharing highlights the need for a minimum number of common data fields.

A monthly exchange of information is recommended. Central needs to communicate new or renewed chapter memberships sent to central to the appropriate chapter, and the chapters need to report chapter activity to central as well. Updated lists of chapter members should be sent to the chapters quarterly for review prior to the production of mailing labels for the newsletter

Membership dues received at the chapter level should be sent to central at least *once a month*. Chapters with their own checking need to forward membership information to central once a month.

Data needs to be formatted so that it can be exchanged between different applications and platforms. This may well be on a case by case basis, but should be done in such a way that re-keying is not necessary on either end.

New Members

It is preferred that new memberships should be sent to central. If new memberships are received at the chapter level, this information and the dues payment should be passed along to central as soon as possible.

The latest newsletter and field trip flier are sent to new members by central together with a membership acknowledgement letter.

Renewals

The central coordinator needs to pursue renewals for memberships and for pending or newly formed chapters to assist them in start-up. Overdue memberships should be sent two notices and one follow-up call. The central coordinator will notify chapters before any memberships are listed as dropped. All renewal notices must incorporate the member's current membership level and an encouragement to join at a higher level. All membership renewals receive an acknowledgement letter from central.

Renewals are sent directly to central, and the data shared out, rather than each chapter receiving their renewals and then forwarding the checks. This greatly expedites receipt of funds and acknowledgment of receipt through the cashing of the check. Some chapters may want to handle renewals themselves. Member information and dues still need to be sent to the central coordinator at least once a month.