

The Necessity of Recruiting

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Recruiting New Members Essential for Chapter Survival

Below is a list of Texas SAR chapters that have closed their doors over the past ten or twenty years. There are many reasons a chapter or even an organization shuts down, but the primary reason, in my opinion, is the lack of recruiting new members. Review the list below and I hope you come away with the same discouraging feeling I had when assembling this data.

Closed Chapters	Location
Texarkana	Texarkana
Temple	Temple
Arlington*	Arlington
Jesse Watkins	Henderson
Lt. Mordecia Baldwin	Longview
Rio Grande Valley	McAllen
Houston	Houston
Lt. Abraham Cantine	Bandara
Mineral Wells	Mineral Wells
Mineral Wells	Irving
Brazos Valley	Grandbury
Mesquite	Mesquite
Canadian River Valley	Canadian
Brenham	Brenham
Uvalde	Uvalde
Samuel Marcom	Kingsland
Fredonia*	Nacogdoches
Peters Colony	Carrollton
Liberty*	Browsville

Resurrected*

Newly added chapters

McKinney	McKinney
Red River Valley	Paris
Alexander Hamilton	Georgetown

Alarming Data

On reviewing the 2009 Texas SAR Registrar's Reports, the following data reveals that 33% of all Texas SAR Chapters recruited no new members in 2009. There are 17% additional chapters that recruited only one new member for 2009. That's almost half of all Texas SAR chapters that recruited one or no new members for 2009. If you reviewed the statistics for the past several years, they would be fairly consistent year after year.

What is just as alarming is that fourteen (14) of all Texas SAR Chapters have twenty (20) or less members. Approximately nine (9) of those fourteen chapters have fifteen or less members. Keep in mind that there are a percentage of those small chapters whose members live out of town or out of state and cannot attend or support their chapters by taking offices, etc. So, the number of actual attending members is even lower. All of these small chapters, we have to say, are on the bubble. That is close to half the chapters in the Texas Society! A chapter can lose members due to death, illness, or relocation. Any or all of these can happen during a short time frame.

Just as critical as recruitment is retention. Recruitment takes focus and a lot of shoe leather. Keeping your members interested in the chapter and willing to take offices or support the chapter in other ways takes a lot of effort as well. In 2009, the Texas Society lost two hundred and sixty four (264) members. I don't know how many of those have reinstated, but retention is something our Society needs to focus on as well as recruitment of new members.

Chapters That Consistently Fail to Recruit

1. The chapter eventually goes into the declining mode. You don't see it at first but eventually it starts to show, especially the small chapters.
2. Membership starts to drop due to the following reasons:
 - A. Health issues
 - B. Deaths
 - C. Relocation
 - D. Loses interest-quits the chapter
3. Results in fewer members willing to take an office or chairmanships.
4. Same officers have to take offices over and over, experience burnout, and either quits the job or quits the chapter.

5. Chapter shuts down due to no volunteers to take critical offices such as chapter president, etc.
6. SAR and community are both big losers. Community loses an organization that offers Youth Scholarships and Public Service recognition. SAR loses a base of operation to spread patriotism and to recruit new members.

Chapters That Make Recruiting a Priority Consistently Year After Year

1. Recruiting new members, at the least, replaces those members you will lose each year through attrition.
2. Recruitment of new members hopefully brings to the chapter new ideas, enthusiasm, and energy.
3. New members bring a pool of future officers, committee chairmen, Color Guard members, and those who just volunteer to help with projects, meetings, recruitment, etc.
4. Recruitment brings continuous growth in membership which is the foundation for chapter stability and long term survival!

Keeping our chapters strong, stable, energetic, and following the SAR mission statement is hard work. However, the fruits of our labor are the satisfaction of keeping the sacrifices of our forefathers fresh in the minds of our communities, of touching the lives of those who have excelled in their professions, and of working with the youth who participate in the many youth scholarship programs the SAR offers. All that is hard work but is most certainly worthwhile!