

Executive Director Mike Chrisley



Stay Positive! We Are On The Right Track!

As a result of the cancellation of our 2021 National Convention, the Board met in December to determine the right course of action for 2021. The board determined that all National Board of Directors will serve in the same capacity in 2021 as they did in 2020, as will the National President,

National President-Elect, National Secretary, and National Treasurer. Any National Board member who is unable to continue through 2021 may submit a resignation and be replaced. The replacement will be confirmed by a vote of the entire board.

One National Director, Larry Bowman, was unable to serve another year on his term and did submit his resignation. At their January meeting the board members voted to fill his seat for the remainder of this year with Past National Director Susan Greisz.

All candidates seeking office will continue campaigning until the next National Convention in January 2022 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, when an election will be held.

As President Linward mentioned in his article, it is easy to look at the year of the pandemic in a negative light. Like Linward, and everyone else, I am not happy about the pandemic and its effect on our entire world, our country, or on Ruritan. But, in the grand scheme of things it did force us to do things differently and think about ways to remain relevant in a highly unusual year.

We had to learn to meet differently. Ruritan committees met mostly using Microsoft Teams. Once we figured out that we could meet that way and be highly productive in the process, we proceeded to meet. In fact, the Executive Committee has had more meetings this year than any year I am aware of in the past 40 years. This is also true of the special Restructuring Committee, Bylaws Committee and Leadership Development Committee. All three of these committees completed an enormous amount of work meeting virtually.

It was more than just meeting though. The pandemic forced us to look at technology in a whole different way. As an example, the Leadership Development Committee planned and completed 17 training and educational videos that were mailed to members on zip drives, added to the training modules in MMS, and posted on our website. After completing that, the committee continued to work to build training materials so that members could access training in their own homes, at their own pace, in their own time. I have never been prouder of a group of people or what they were able to produce as a part of committee work, almost all done virtually.

Our board met for the first time completely virtually in January.

Like everyone else, I missed the fellowship of coming together. However, we were able to complete the board meeting in just over six hours and executed 17 pieces of business. The number of motions addressed at this meeting was one of the largest in the last five years. The board was able to complete all the business on the agenda in record time at a cost saving of nearly \$10,000 in travel expenses.

The circumstances of the year have also helped our clubs do things in new ways. One member I spoke to said that one of the major fundraisers for his club is a steak supper. The supper was always held in the club building and produced a large crowd. The members of the club decided to have the supper but have it as a drive thru event. Many were worried that the club would not do well. When all was said and done the club raised more money as a drive thru than they did with the in-person event.

Finally, because of the pandemic, and the cancellation of many of our live meetings, we are exploring the possibilities of virtual conferences. Hopefully, we will soon be able to resume live meetings and conferences. However, the pandemic did make us think about those members who even in normal circumstances are not able to attend our conferences and meetings. Many may not be able to attend because of poor health or mobility. Some may not be able to attend because of the cost of the meeting. Whatever the reason, we would like to provide a virtual meeting experience for our members that cannot attend in person. We are working to make that a reality.

Many times, problem situations create just the opportunity that we need to think differently and improve on what we are doing. We try to always operate in a way that makes things better for our members and clubs.

One of the greatest opportunities that we always have is to bring new members and clubs into the Ruritan family. With clubs not meeting, it is difficult to maintain the relationships that you have with your club members and the community. Make sure that you maintain those relationships. Not meeting makes it easy to not meet. Your club is as important to the community as it has always been. Your membership is as important to your club as it has always been.

The Board of Directors is always looking for ways to add value to your membership. In their last meeting they approved an incentive program for Ruritan Forever. If you buy a Ruritan Forever for yourself or someone else, the purchaser will receive a \$25 gift certificate to Ruritan Supply. See information in this issue. President Elect Glen Broadwater and Second Lady Linda are promoting Ruritan Forever this year.

