



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Membership

1st Quarter Staff Report 2007

Overview

- Overview of Membership
 - Membership Recruitment
 - Books and Merchandise
 - Strategic Alliances
 - Database
-

Overview of Membership Revenue

Currently the ACA has 22,323 regular members. With the addition of 21,432 event members, ACA membership totals 43,755. Typically, the ACA experiences a decrease in membership during the first quarter of the fiscal year, then, as the paddling season approaches, membership numbers rise.

Renewals

Last year, our renewal revenue met the budget projections. This was encouraging because the dues increase would have had a significant impact on this revenue line if the membership had determined that the member benefits and the importance of the ACA mission were not worth the price of the dues. Our goal is to continue to offer full customer service to our members, to increase the value of member benefits, and to bring a greater awareness to the membership of the ACA's work in the areas of education, stewardship and recreation. Outside entities, such as the United States Coast Guard, realize the importance and value of our work in the area of boating safety. All paddlers benefit from this work; our job is to bring awareness of our efforts to our membership and to others.

Club

The 2007 Paddle America Packet was mailed to 147 clubs in January. Some changes have been made in the implementation of the insurance program for PACs that should be well received. We have listened and learned from the comments brought forth by the clubs and we responded in 2007 by making the administrative work easier for the volunteers. Safety guidelines and risk management requirements are being tailored with club activities in mind. The Paddle America Club program is about insurance, but most importantly, it is a relationship between grass roots paddlers and the national association that is working on behalf on these paddlers. We are building our rapport with this segment of the paddling public to create local arms of the national voice for paddlesports. In the last few years the largest growth in ACA membership numbers has been through the Paddle America Clubs. By building on the success of the program, we will

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increase ACA representation at the local level. To that end, we have mailed PAC information packets to 100 non member clubs. There are hundreds of clubs throughout the country and most of them are unfamiliar with the Paddle America Club program. This packet will educate these clubs on the value of the insurance coverage and other benefits to the club that would be realized by affiliating with the ACA.

New Membership

Most of our new memberships during the first quarter of the fiscal year are generated through the web site. It is our goal for the ACA's website to become a destination for paddlers and as this becomes reality, more and more memberships will be generated through this medium. The 2007 work plan calls for mailing 50,000 membership solicitations to participants in ACA events who are not ACA members. The new reporting mechanism that has been built into the 2007 Event Sanctioning packets will enable the staff to access the names of these participants in a timely fashion and to approach these individuals with a membership appeal soon after they have participated in ACA events. An enhanced data base and web site will allow for easier data collection and will enable direct membership solicitation via email. Our goal is to invite individuals who have participated in an ACA event within 14 days of receipt of an electronic report.

Event Memberships

Revenue from Event Memberships has been steady as we collect participation fees from events that occurred during late summer and fall 2006.

Membership Recruitment:

- In keeping with the FY07 Work Plan, 50,000 membership solicitations will be mailed to recent participants in ACA sanctioned activities and to those individuals whose membership had lapsed for a year. Paddle America Club membership will be promoted to several hundred non member clubs throughout the country.

Books and Merchandise:

The ACA eStore will be enhanced when the new web site is finished this winter. Special incentives are being offered to clubs, instructors and other entities to promote the sale of merchandise. New safety materials and other grant produced merchandise will be featured on the web site as well as logo merchandise. At this time, we have hats and fleece vests—watch for more! The new database and web site will allow the ACA to capture the interests of buyers and bring the capability to promote merchandise based on previous purchases made by individuals.

Strategic Alliances:

Pro Schools

There were five ACA Pro Schools in 2006. They are:

Canoe Kayak and Paddle Company

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Osprey Sea Kayak Adventures
Potomac Paddlesports
The River Connection
University of Minnesota Duluth – Recreational Sports Outdoor Program

Our goal is to increase that number to seven for 2007.

Membership Goals for 2007

Paddle America Members account for about 42% of the ACA membership. Our goal during FY2007 will be to improve communication with our clubs and to develop a strong relationship with these groups. Insurance is a significant component of the PAC and ACA relationship, but the ACA is also poised to help the clubs in areas of instruction and safety, events, conservation and stewardship. It is important that the ACA continue to recognize the role of clubs in introducing individuals to paddlesport and to assist these clubs in their efforts. We have improved the Paddle America insurance program so that the implementation for the clubs is more user-friendly. Our goal is to keep our members on the water and not bogged down with administrative paperwork. The new ACA web site and database will allow clubs greater access to ACA data and faster delivery of services.

The goal of the ACA is to improve the public's impression of the ACA and its administrative process. We are turning around renewals and new memberships within 14 days of receipt of the payment. The web site is being designed to meet the needs of the member and potential member. Individuals will have direct access to information about their membership, merchandise order, instructor status, etc. 24 hours a day. Enhanced communication to members and clubs via the *ACA eNews* and the *PAC Update* will keep individuals informed and aware of what the ACA is doing on their behalf. We expect to produce these updates monthly to bring the ACA to the membership.

The ACA will also invest staff time to develop and maintain new membership initiatives. The ACA Pro School program will be promoted with efforts to add several new schools. As with other programs, we are improving the implementation of the Pro School program. We want it to be easy to work with the ACA! Direct mail solicitation will be sent to those participants in ACA events. We have the ability to send information to these individuals closer to their dates of participation because of the new online reporting programs that will be in place after the first of the year. It is important to reach these folks when they have recently experienced an ACA event.

In summary, we will improve the services to clubs, organizations and individual members. This should translate into increased renewal rate, confidence in the ability of the ACA to meet the needs of paddlers, and a solid membership database as a basis for future program development.

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