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# **USATF Southeast Region Newsletter**

**Marlene Atwood, USATF Southeast Region Representative**  
**October 29, 2011**

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Dear Southeast Region Officers and Members,

October has come and gone, leaving us with cooler nights, a panorama of fall colors, and the start of a wonderful cross country season! There is nothing more exhilarating than hearing the sound of hundreds of runners breaking the silence of a woody trail with the crackle of leaves underfoot.

November is here, bringing us one month closer to the Annual Meeting in St. Louis. The Annual Meeting provides a perfect opportunity for association leaders to meet with their regions to share ideas and discuss common issues. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you there and welcome any suggestions on topics that you want to discuss.

November is also important since the 2010 Association Accreditation statistics have now been published. For some, it means submitting solid plans for improvement to the national office. These are due by November 15, 2011. For others, it is the basis for continued improvement for the coming year.

- In the Southeast region, areas needing most improvement in the required (10) standards are: members per 100,000 and member organizations per 100,000.
- For the "Other" (9) standards, in which 6 of 9 must be met, the Southeast Region needed improvement in these areas: Hosting Championships, Website, and Newsletters.

I recently reviewed the standards that USATF publishes for awarding the Gold, Silver or Bronze Annual Association awards. I have adopted a new motto for the Southeast Region: "Go for the Gold!" Take a look at the criteria below. You just may be closer to one of these awards than you think...even if you're not, it's certainly something to strive for each year.

Standard	Members/ 100,000	Clubs/ 100,000	Sanctions/ 100,000
Gold	55	1.5	3.3
Silver	45	1.2	2.5
Bronze	30	1.0	1.0

Reference Links: [10 Required Standards](#), ["Other" Standards](#)

Please read on for information that will help you. If you are an association who must file a plan for improvement by November 15, 2011, please feel free to contact me with your ideas for improvement. Let's brainstorm together to refine your plan.

Please ensure that your entire board is engaged in developing your plan for improvement. A plan only works if you have the full support of your officers, committee chairs, and dedicated volunteers.

Stay tuned for additional communications regarding the regional meetings in St. Louis!

Marlene Atwood
USATF Southeast Region Representative
usatfsoutheastrep@gmail.com
770-497-4208 h
770-883-4208 c

Required Standards

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**Members/100,000:**

Increasing these numbers is not an easy task, and it doesn't happen overnight. You have to have a strategic plan and you have to have a target market.

One of the biggest target markets in our sport is the LDR community. As an active LDR athlete, I will tell you that there is a whole world of runners out there that love to compete. They don't want to organize into clubs with dues, bylaws, and elections - all they want to do is run. They want quality events that are measured accurately, that produce accurate race results and that are well organized. They also love competition and enjoy running with the best athletes. What does USATF have to offer these runners? On all counts - everything!

How does USATF compete in this community? We need to offer events that are measured accurately, produce accurate race results and are well organized. In addition, we have to offer events that are unique and stand out from the hundreds of races runners have to choose from every weekend, and events that attract the best. Finally, if you can roll USATF membership into the event fees, it's a win win!

- Consider developing an Association Club Grand Prix Series; sponsor or host a marathon relay competition or Ekiden; develop a great cross country meet, or my favorite idea - a 100 x 1 mile relay - (100 athletes running one mile at their best speed. Set an Association mark to challenge each year. Provide team awards.)! All of these events embrace the team concept. One of our eastern clubs used to put on a "Festival of 5K's" - a Friday night 5K on the beach, a Saturday morning cross country 5K on a golf course, and an afternoon 5K road race - unique and very popular with runners. Awards were given at the end of the series.
- Market the services we provide! Our national website is filled with information the LDR community can use: how to find a certified course/how to certify a course, how to apply for a record, searchable event calendar, event sanctions, coaching education, merchandise, America's Running Routes (map a running route/search for a running route), Phidippides Awards for Master Runners, research on stretching and hydration. This is the information we should be marketing on a regular basis.
- Tap into the resources within your Association. Provide opportunities at your Association annual meeting, at pre-event clinics, at event expos - to feature members of your association that can offer their expertise on performance, training, nutrition, etc. Offer guest speakers for monthly club meetings. Work with local companies to develop a joint flyer or coupon - discounts from them, visibility for USATF - to place in race packets at key races. All this is visibility! And cost is minimal!
- Market LDR Official Certification to running club race directors, offer Level I Coaching to volunteer club coaches, offer support to first time event directors that sanction their events.

## **Member Organizations/100,000:**

- Work with event directors who sanction their events. If they sanction one event, chances are they will consider sanctioning all their events. If they liked the experience, chances are they will refer other event directors. It's all about customer

service.

- Make an appearance at event expos. It's a great opportunity to network, pick up business cards, pick up ideas. Provide support in exchange for booth space at an expo - host a water stop, work the finish line, help with race packet stuffing, host a clinic at the expo. If you offer volunteer officials at a starting line or finish line, it gives the race validity. I've used volunteer USATF starters to start a race and it makes quite an impression!
- Approach other related organizations within your association to become members. (Refer to the next bullet for marketing.)
- Sell the organization. We are the governing body. When an event is sanctioned by USATF, the participating event is signing off that they will follow USATF rules and regulations and that they will have safety precautions in place. If the course is certified, the event is guaranteeing that the distance that is advertised is the distance that is being run. If there are cash awards, the event organizer is signing off that they will award all cash awards as advertised. All very important to runners.

**Reference:**

USATF publishes an **"Association Plan for Improvement"** guideline. I have attached it here for additional ideas you can use. [PFI-Plans for Improvement](#).

***"Other" Standards - Championships, Websites and Newsletter***

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Championships:

- Consider collaborating with other sports committees within your association to produce combined championships. For instance, consider an open track & field event partnered with masters track & field event; an LDR 5000m/10000m, and a race walk championship. Look for opportunities to collaborate and share resources.
- If you cannot produce an Association-owned Championship, consider partnering with existing events. Select well established events with certified courses, good track records, and runner appeal. Provide them with an opportunity to bid for an Association championship. Offer distances in 1 mile, 5K, 10K, 5 mile, 15K, 10 mile, Half Marathon, Marathon, 50K.
- For ideas on developing championship bids, click [HERE](#). This can give you the basis for creating an Association level bid package.

Websites:

USATF has developed a template that Associations can use. They have also published website guidelines to help you ensure you are meeting the standards set forth by USATF. Whether you take advantage of their template or decide to improve your existing site, make sure that you follow these [USATF WEBSITE GUIDELINES](#). Your website should always link to the appropriate areas of the national site for the most up-to-date information.

Newsletters:

One of the most costly communication vehicles for any organization is a paper newsletter - there are costs to print it and mail it. USATF will be offering the Associations an opportunity to use an email communication service that will give us the ability to send out email communications to our members. With e-newsletters you eliminate the costs to print and mail. Your communications can be timely (no bulk mail wait), and offer you the opportunity to drive traffic back to the website. You can include pictures, links to documents, events, and information on your website.

The links below are e-newsletters I sent out for our association using Constant Contact. This is just an example of what you can do with e-newsletters.

[USATF Georgia News & Notes - 9/30/11](#)

Contact Information

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**Marlene Atwood**

[usatfsoutheastrep@gmail.com](mailto:usatfsoutheastrep@gmail.com)

770-497-4208 h, 770-883-4208 c, 770-209-8020 w



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Marlene Atwood | 3284 Roundfield Circle | Duluth | GA | 30096