



NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2025

www.azsae.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Patrick Farrey, CAE
2025 AzSAE President

Membership Matters... Right?!?!?!?

Our organizations—our associations, societies, and trade groups—are built on the concept of membership. For decades, it was the foundation. You joined because it meant something. Because it said something about your professionalism. Your commitment. Your sense of community.

But something's shifted. Nope—a lot has shifted.

Today, people don't "join" things the way they used to. They subscribe. They download. They attend. They show up for value—but not necessarily for belonging. And that leaves us, as association professionals, wrestling with a big question:

Is the membership model still sustainable?

And maybe even deeper than that: Should we still be focused on "members" at all? Or is it time to widen the lens and think differently about the people we serve?

The Membership Conundrum

The traditional membership model has been showing signs of strain for years now. Fewer people are joining. Renewal rates are slipping. Younger professionals aren't always seeing the value—or they're seeing it, but not in the same ways we used to present it.

Meanwhile, the pressure on associations to do more, provide more, prove more has only grown. The ROI questions are louder. The attention spans are shorter. And the competition for time and dollars? Brutal.

Here's the tough truth: **If dues are your main revenue stream, you are on shaky ground.**

Don't just take my word for it. According to ASAE data, only about 30% of revenue for professional associations now comes from membership dues. That means 70% must come from somewhere else—and we're all out here trying to figure out where that is.

So, what's our alternative? Non-dues revenue? Event registrations? Sponsorships? Certification programs? Yes, yes, and yes.

But here's where it gets interesting: the shift away from dues is also prompting a bigger rethink of who we're actually here for.

From Members to Stakeholders

Here's an idea that might feel a little uncomfortable at first: What if we stopped focusing so much on members, and started focusing more on stakeholders?

Think about it. The people who care about your work—who benefit from your programs, who show up to your events, who read your research, who support your mission—aren't always members. Some are customers. Some are partners. Some are contributors. People who will never pay dues but still play an important role in your ecosystem.



AzSAE is a Community for All Association Professionals and those who serve the association industry.

Join Us!

Learn | Grow | Connect

<https://www.azsae.org/join>

President's Message cont'd

They're stakeholders. And they matter.

When we limit our thinking to "members," we can unintentionally box ourselves in. We start thinking in historical terms—"what value do they get for the dues they pay"—instead of transformational ones. But when we think in terms of stakeholders, we start asking better questions:

- What value are we delivering, and to whom?
- How are we moving our industry forward?
- Where can we build stronger connections, even if they don't come with a membership card?

This isn't just theory. Many organizations are already doing this. They're focusing less on dues and more on value delivery. They're embracing customer journeys, content marketing, tiered access, and cause-based engagement. They're asking: "How do we serve people?" not "How do we get them to join?"

Revenue Reimagined

Of course, none of this works if we can't pay the bills. So, let's talk about money.

Shifting to a more stakeholder-focused model means finding smarter ways to generate revenue beyond dues. This might include:

- **Educational programs** that serve members and non-members.
- **Sponsored content** or **advertising** that aligns with your mission.
- **Digital products** or on-demand learning that meets people where they are.
- **Licensing, consulting, or public-private partnerships** that leverage your expertise.

And here's the key: these things aren't less mission-driven. In many cases, they're more impactful than ever. But they do require a mindset shift. You can't just tack on a webinar and call it diversification. You have to think about the full value exchange you're offering—and to whom. There are some great resources out there on this. I recommend looking at [Cadmium's guide on non-dues revenue strategies](#), and McKinley Advisors' ["Evaluating New Revenue Opportunities webinar,"](#) which includes a link to their [New Revenue Opportunities: Evaluation Rubric](#). Both offer actionable ideas that go beyond the basics.

The Risk (and the Reward)

All this begs the question, "If we stop focusing on members, aren't we just becoming... consultants?" Or vendors? Or content producers?

Legitimate concern.



INSIGHTS FROM THE RECENT ASAE LEGISLATIVE FLY-IN IN D.C

ASAE 2025 Legislative Fly-in on March 25-26, 2025, many of the delegates reported that the challenge facing nonprofit organizations and the tax-exempt status they receive seem to be tied to a general lack of education/understanding about the significant work that nonprofit organizations – particularly associations – do on behalf of the communities they serve.

When educated about the services, products and benefits associations provide to their various communities – the public, the food insecure, those seeking upskilling, professionals looking for advanced certifications – many of the lawmakers and their staff members appeared to better recognize the need for nonprofits to maintain their tax-exempt status. In fact, when it was pointed out that many organizations' efforts relieve the financial stresses on local, state and federal entities, many heads nodded in agreement, acknowledging the impactful work associations often do while operating on shoe-string budgets. What the Community Impact Coalition could use from our peers in the association community is more stories and testimonials highlighting the impact their organizations have on the communities and the lives of those they serve. Please take action today! Click below to complete the form sharing your experiences so lawmakers can be better educated about the lives you elevate through your association – lives that may not be elevated if you were to be stripped of your tax-exempt status.

On behalf of ASA, the Community Impact Coalition and the association community I serve, I thank you.

Warmest regards,
Jarrod A. Clabaugh, CAE
President, OSAP and the OSAP Foundation

[SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES](#)
[CLICK HERE](#)

President's Message cont'd

The risk here is real: **We can't lose our identity as community builders.** That's our superpower. But here's the thing—focusing on stakeholders doesn't exclude members. It just reframes them as one important segment of a broader audience. You still nurture them. You still serve them. But you don't treat membership as the only valid measure of engagement. Done well, this shift allows you to expand your reach, increase your impact, and yes—grow your revenue. Done poorly, it can lead to mission drift, confusing value propositions, and loss of trust. So, it's not a silver bullet. But it is a strategic choice that some associations are now making—and making work.

So... Now What?

This is the part where I tell you I have all the answers. Bad news...I don't!

What I do have are questions—questions we should all be asking ourselves, our teams, and our boards:

- Is our membership model helping us grow—or holding us back?
- Are we building community, or just managing transactions?
- Who are our stakeholders—and how do we serve them better?
- What's the real value we offer? And how do we deliver it—dues or no dues?

AzSAE exists to help you ask—and answer—those questions. We're not here to preserve an outdated model. We're here to help evolve it.

In the coming months, I want to open up more space for these conversations. Through events, panels, webinars, roundtables—whatever format sparks ideas and drives action. If you have a story to share about how your organization is navigating this, I want to hear it. If you're stuck and need help thinking it through, let's talk. Because yes—membership still matters. But maybe not in the way it used to. Maybe, today, it matters as one part of a broader ecosystem of impact, engagement, and value. And maybe that's not the end of associations.

Maybe it's just the beginning of a better way to build them. Comments? Reach me at pfarrey@4spe.org.

ASK CONGRESS TO SUPPORT NONPROFITS IN 2025 TAX REFORM



AzSAE, a member of ASAE's Community Impact Coalition, just received information on the first phase of a grassroots campaign asking Congress to protect associations and nonprofits.

As Congress debates tax reform in 2025, some Members of Congress are considering raising taxes on nonprofit organizations - including charities, associations, professional societies, and veterans' groups - to pay for the extension of expiring tax cuts. Increasing the tax burden on these organizations would leave less funding for your organization to drive toward your mission and result in negative consequences for the communities you serve.

Now is more important than ever for Congress to hear your voice. The tax legislation will develop over the next two weeks as the House of Representatives works toward finalizing the initial draft of the tax bill.

ACTION:

1. Two minutes or less.
2. Click the link below. Fill in your information and a letter will be created and sent to your member of Congress.

[PROTECT NONPROFITS](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS



June Webinar

→ Tuesday, June 10
10:00 am - 11:00 am

**MAKE USER-GENERATED VIDEO YOUR
ADVOCACY SUPERPOWER**



Michael Hoffman, Co-Founder & CEO
Gather Voices

REGISTER TODAY! Members - no fee
Nonmembers \$50

480-946-0119
www.azsae.org



[Register Now](#)



Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.



June Education & Mixer

Thursday, June 26
3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

AZSAE LEADERS OF THE INDUSTRY PANEL EVENT
Awards of Excellence Winners

Communication/Advocacy Award
Education Award
Creative Funding Award

REGISTER TODAY! Members - \$45
Nonmembers \$75

480-946-0119
www.azsae.org



[Register Now](#)



Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.

Mesa Convention Center
263 N Center St, Mesa, AZ 85201

Join us as we celebrate excellence, innovation, and impact in
Arizona's association community.

Program will be followed by a networking happy hour!

SAVE THE DATE
AzSAE's Exclusive
CAE Summit
Executive Challenge

ELEVATE YOUR EXPERTISE

Connect, Learn, and Grow
Oct. 6-7, 2025

Avion Center
1733 E. Northrop Blvd
Chandler, Az 85286

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**EXCLUSIVE
OPPORTUNITY FOR
SPONSORSHIPS!
ONLY 5 AVAILABLE**

[Learn More](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Register Now](#)



Approved for 1.0 hour CAE credit.



AzSAE
Arizona Society of
Association Executives

July Webinar

Thursday, July 17
9:00 am - 10:00

COMMUNICATING ACROSS FOUR WORKPLACE GENERATIONS



Dan Kaplan, Founder & Lead Trainer
Confident Communicators, LLC

REGISTER TODAY! Members - no fee
Nonmembers \$50



480-946-0119
www.azsae.org

[Register Now](#)



AzSAE
Arizona Society of
Association Executives

Annual Getaway

August 17-19, 2025
Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch Resort
5501 N Hacienda Del Sol Rd,
Tucson, AZ 85718

REGISTER TODAY!

Early-bird (until 7/31): Member - \$150 | Non-member - \$350*
After 7/31: Member - \$175 | Nonmember - \$375*
*includes 1 year membership in AzSAE
Additional guest: \$100



480-946-0119
www.azsae.org

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Join us for our highly anticipated Annual Getaway. This is a must attend opportunity to learn, connect and grow with other industry professionals in a beautiful and relaxing setting.

Also accepting donations for gifts and raffle prizes for the Annual Getaway! It is a great way to gain further exposure within our community. If interested, please submit your donation today.

[DONATE](#)

[View More](#)

[AzSAE
Education
Events](#)

New & Renewed Members



Heather Bridges

American Association of Endodontists

Kayte Comes

Community Associations Institute

Arizona Chapter

Ryan Edmiston

Hilton Sedona

Suzanne Jones

Consultant

Thomas Killam

Lutifyah Kusy

Arizona Chapter of NAIOP, Inc

Douglas Laher

Arizona Medical Association

Abigal Norris

Ward Management Group

Deborah Rudd

AACM

Wendy Springborn

American Public Works Association

Kathy Startt

Arizona Crop Improvement Association

David Voepel

AHCA

STRATEGIC PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



From Boardroom to Trailhead: Why Flagstaff is Your Next Best Business (and Fun) Move

Are you looking for a meeting spot that actually gets people excited? Flagstaff, Arizona is the real deal. This high-altitude gem tucked into northern Arizona's pine forests is where crisp mountain air, stunning natural beauty, and modern meeting spaces come together for a truly unforgettable experience. Whether you're planning a board retreat, a corporate getaway, an annual conference, or you just want to escape the brutal summer heat in the Valley - Flagstaff delivers the wow factor. **See why below and look for an exciting bonus for the first 10 responders!**



1. Nature's Greatest Hits: Flagstaff's backyard includes the Grand Canyon, San Francisco Peaks, and seven natural wonders within an 80-mile radius. It's the kind of setting where post-meeting hikes, selfie-worthy views, and awe-inspiring side trips are automatically built in for your enjoyment.

2. Only-in-Flagstaff Experiences: You haven't really experienced Flagstaff until you've seen the stars from the world's first International Dark Sky City. Visit Lowell Observatory for world-renowned stargazing, see where Pluto was discovered. Need something more daring? Zip through treetops on high ropes, or visit Bearizona and drive amongst bears, wolves, elk, bison, and long horn sheep.

3. Big-Time Meetings, Small-Town Vibes: Sure, Flagstaff feels like a cozy mountain town—but don't let that fool you. You'll find high-tech venues and stylish spaces. Modern amenities plus rustic charm equals comfort and class.

4. Foodies Rejoice: Over 200 restaurants, from elevated Southwestern cuisine to global bites and everything in between. Work hard, eat well, sip responsibly.

5. Easy to Get to, Even Easier to Love: Flagstaff has its own airport and quick highway access, getting here is a breeze. Once you're in town you'll love how everything's walkable or a short drive.

6. A Town with Real Character: Historic downtown? Check. Vintage railroads? Check. Native American heritage and art around every corner? Absolutely. Flagstaff doesn't just host events—it adds depth and authenticity your attendees will remember and talk about.

7. Four Seasons, All Awesome: While the rest of Arizona is melting in the summer, Flagstaff is kicking back with cool breezes, scenic trails, and epic sunsets. Come fall, the leaves put on a show. Winter? Think snowball fights and ski trips. Spring? Wildflowers galore.

8. Wow-Worthy Without the Price Tag: Flagstaff gives you the five-star experience without the five-figure invoice. Think affordable venues, competitive hotel rates, and even a 3% rebate for qualifying events. It's like getting rewarded for picking the ideal place.

9. Rockstar Local Support: Planning your event here? The Discover Flagstaff team is ready to roll with tools, advice, and customized support to make your gathering smooth and unforgettable. They've got your back from RFP to standing ovation - so be ready to take a bow.

10. Crave a fascinating museum? We have you covered. The Museum of Northern Arizona is a cultural and scientific institution that showcases the natural and human history of the Colorado Plateau. Enjoy exhibits on Native American cultures—including Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, and Pai tribes—regional geology, paleontology, fine art, and more.

11. A Flagstaff best kept secret: Shhhh....Locals love it, visitors are just discovering it. Buffalo Park serves up jaw-dropping sunrise and sunset views, It's the perfect pre-meeting walk or post-meeting moment of Zen.



Jessica Young
Sales and Marketing Manager:
Meetings and Events
Email: jyoung@flagstaffaz.gov

BONUS - FOR THE FIRST TEN (10) MEETING PLANNERS TO RESPOND: Email: "I love Discover Flagstaff" to [Jessica Young jyoung@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:Jessica.Young@flagstaffaz.gov)

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



This newsletter is made possible by these fine partners

Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Bronze Partners



Interested in becoming a strategic partner? Click on the button for more information



4300 N. Miller Rd. #141
Scottsdale, Az 85251
Ph: 480-946-0119
Em: info@azsae.org

