

2013 ASTSWMO President's Letter

February 21, 2013

Dear ASTSWMO Members:

Once again, a new President assumes the responsibilities of leading the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO), a true national treasure. As your President, I want to discuss our shared goals, challenges, and future endeavors for our Association.

I've been fortunate to work in State service for over thirty years and see the work that each of our programs and staff do in protecting the environment, even as our mission is questioned and challenged. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the EPA national program office directors. A common theme that I heard is the value that EPA places on ASTSWMO and the excellent working relationship between our federal partners and our Focus Groups, Task Forces and Subcommittees.

As you may often experience in your own States, from time to time it is necessary to effectively message the fact that our mission is ongoing and not complete. The nexus between environmental protection and the economy is as strongly linked as it has ever been. The work that we do as regulators every day has the potential to have a positive impact on economic development while protecting natural resources. The fact that these two ideas are not mutually exclusive is something that EPA and ASTSWMO share in common.

For many years, ASTSWMO was not part of the budget challenges we States and Territories faced. Unfortunately, this challenge is now part of the dialogue that the Board of Directors and Staff must address as we continue to provide and meet our members' needs.

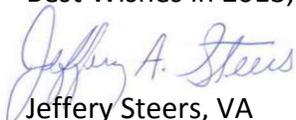
One of our members' needs is the training that our Conferences, Symposia, Annual, and Mid-Year Meetings provide. Obviously, these face-to-face meetings present the networking opportunities that establish the framework for "getting things done", but we know that with travel and funding restrictions other avenues must be pursued. One such way we will continue to provide training to our members is by organizing live training webinars, such as the "Civil vs. Criminal Enforcement" webinar presented by the Hazardous Waste Subcommittee's Training and Enforcement Task Forces on January 8, 2013. We hope to showcase other GoToMeeting trainings throughout the year that will be developed by one of the other five Programmatic Subcommittees and their respective Task Forces/Focus Groups/Workgroups.

ASTSWMO will once again start its initial Strategic Planning efforts as we move to update the 2009 Strategic Plan. A workgroup has been organized by the Board of Directors to review the past Strategic Plans as well as the last membership survey in order to garner the work that has been completed and to identify the common threads from plan to plan. We are projecting to distribute a survey to all of the membership sometime this fall.

The success of our programs at ASTSWMO is only achieved through the collective good of each of you who support this wonderful organization. The work products created by the 28 Task Forces/Focus Groups/Workgroups within the six Programmatic Subcommittees are extremely useful resources that are available on the ASTSWMO publications page of the website: <http://astswmo.org>

As I embark on the second quarter of my Presidency, I welcome you to reach out to myself, Vice-President Ryan Benefield (AR), Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Marker (DE), Past-President Ed Thamke (MT), the Regional Board of Directors, or Staff. You will find contact information on the ASTSWMO website. We know much work needs to be done and by continuing to work together, communicate, and move the dialogue forward we will strive to protect human health and the environment.

Best Wishes in 2013,

  
Jeffery Steers, VA  
President