

TO ALL LOCAL RTA PRESIDENTS & LOCAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSONS:

Greetings from the IRTA State Membership committee! As we approach the start of a new membership year – one that will certainly present an ever-changing set of challenges – we want to reach out to you and urge you to continue to advocate for the IRTA and encouraging your local retired educators to join the IRTA.

We all know that membership in the IRTA has many benefits – but do non-members know what they are missing? Insurance at a reasonable price, Retirement Planning information, Travel Options and Opportunities, and Advocacy in the State Legislature – another set of meanings for IRTA that come from a half-sheet developed by the membership committee two years ago. How about the “13th check” that will shortly arrive for all retirees – a benefit that is constantly monitored by the IRTA lobbying group – a benefit that could be in serious jeopardy in next year’s legislative session. And of course, the opportunity to maintain seasoned friendships and develop new ones in your local association! Membership in IRTA is well worth the \$35 dues for retirees (and only \$15 for an associate member).

There are so many ways to “connect” with potential IRTA members, but the first thing you will need is a list of those individuals. The IRTA office staff can provide that, or it can be accessed on the IRTA website – [www.retiredteachers.org](http://www.retiredteachers.org). Once you have that list, share it with others. You may be surprised to see who is (or is not) a state member! I know I was, when our local did this two years ago.

Perhaps someone in the local will work to receive the IRTA School Bell Award. The grand prize, as well as monthly drawings, will again be sponsored by AMBA. An individual or a local RTA can receive these awards.

How can we reach out to potential members in the time of COVID-19? You may have some ideas and are ready to get to work. Read though the attached list of ideas. You may wish to talk via ZOOM with other leaders around the state. IRTA will set up two ZOOM conference calls (during the week of September 14-18); invitations for the ZOOM call will be sent to those that express interest.

In 2020, we have been forced to rethink the way we do things...or, as a wise family friend (and former teacher) told me, “I’ve learned to accept, adjust, and adapt”. Let us work together to keep our organization, the IRTA, strong and committed to serving all of Indiana’s retired educators.

“JUST KEEP AFTER THEM”

Bud King, a former member of the IRTA state membership committee, could be called “IRTA’s King of Membership Development.” Last year, his local RTA – Rush County – had 85% membership in the IRTA. He brings members into the fold with passion and compassion, diligence, and conviction. He does it all without using a computer or email.

Recently Bud shared some stories and tips that might work in your local. His first resource is the “unpaid” list of retirees living in Rush County. He shares that list with other members of his local, and partners with the local president in the recruitment effort. Bud makes lots of phone calls, spending some time with everyone, talking about the ways to join. Apparently, there is something to be said for the “personal touch”. He emphasizes that dues deductions make it easy on them and their families. Bud also uses the printed membership brochures that are available from the IRTA state office.

In previous years, he and his local president have arranged with local schools to deliver the membership brochures to active teachers so they can join as Associate members. Once a year the local draws three names and pays their dues for a year. Bud has also given new members an IRTA lapel pin as a thank you.

Bud says that sometimes he has used good-natured ribbing, stating, “You will get the pension enhancement whether you join IRTA or not, but if you don’t join you are letting other retirees carry your water.” Just keep after them....

As Bud King has proven, the most important thing in growing membership is to develop a system that works for you and do not be afraid to partner with people. If you do that, you will be successful.