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August 2017

ASTA Mid-America Chapter



## 2014-2015-2016 CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

Dear ASTA Member,

When we began 4 years ago we felt that ASTA Chapter system COULD and SHOULD play an important role in communicating and delivering services to its members. As travel agents and business owners we had our own ideas, but we wanted to take advantage of the insights represented by the broader community of our member agents.

Many of you will recall our 4 state, 10 city "listening tour" and the survey we asked those attending to complete. We wanted to know what your priorities and hot buttons were so that we could reach out to you in ways that would keep your interest and give you a reason to identify with our chapter. Having you, the member, as the driving force behind what we did has made our role as chapter officers and advocates of the Mid-America ASTA chapter travel agent community very satisfying.

All through the last four years you have shared your thoughts and experiences to the betterment of our chapter. For that reason, it seemed logical that the final newsletter of the ASTA Mid-America Chapter be made up of the comments of some of our members and valued partners, who have played a part in making our Chapter, the ASTA "Chapter of the Year" for the last 3 years in a row! We give special thanks to those individuals who agreed to offer their perspectives for this newsletter.

I'll start, where we started, the "Listening Tour" and the survey that went along with it. Of the eight items on the questionnaire the two that were selected by the largest number of members as top priorities for our chapter and its leaders, were setting goals and holding ourselves accountable for achieving them and constantly seeking ways to tap into the resources of the National organization. Two other priorities that followed closely behind were utilizing chapter funds for the benefit of all chapter members and promoting the value of the value of the Travel Professional in the most creative ways we could.

We hope our financial support for the Travel Institute's CTA designation for 18 or our members, our Public radio and television campaigns in local Mid-America Chapter markets, our many vendor meetings across our four state region, our various scholarships that we offered to National events, and our four annual

TravelFests have fulfilled some of these objectives.

All through our time in office member have offered their support as well as suggesting things that we might do to improve our Association's impact.

Finally, we feel privileged to be able to include comments from a number of our members and valued partners. From our point of view as your board we could not think of a more fitting way to end our Chapter's newsletters than to give you the "last word."

*"I think the campaign promise of the current officers of Mid-America Chapter when they took office was to be out and visible amongst the members and support them in all facets of their profession and raise awareness with the traveling public about the benefits of using a travel agency. As a long standing member of this chapter and on various ASTA National Committees over the years, I believe the officers and committee members of ASTA Mid-America have done an outstanding job of leading this Chapter to the forefront of all of ASTA Chapters and listening to its members. Hats off to all, under Claudia Darling's leadership, who have spent a lot of their work and free time to do work for the Mid-America Chapter. We hope the new Chapter arrangement will serve the membership in a similar manner and continue to be a grassroots organization!"*

**Isaac (Ike) Reynolds, CTC – OH**

*"While my agency has been an ASTA member our entire existence, it wasn't until I answered your call to become involved with the Chapter that I truly understood all that ASTA and the Chapters do for its members and the travel agency community. The chapter has broadened my horizons with new friends and a new interest in being involved with OUR trade organization. Thank you and thanks to the rest of the board these past few years for your hard work to make Mid-America a great chapter!"*

**Ann Waters – IN**

*"Thank you, Claudia, Pam, and all those who have been active in our Mid-America ASTA chapter for making a difference in my professional experience with the organization. I have felt appreciated as a member and am grateful for all of the educational and political support you have given us. I do hope that the new structure will provide a similar or even better result!"*

**Bobbie Rae Murphy – OH**

*"I would like to thank Claudia Darling, the ASTA Mid-America Board, and all the Mid-America travel agents. Throughout the years, you have been great examples of what it means to be pro-active - reaching out to new client bases, embracing new agents, and actively spreading the word that there is a role for travel agents in the modern community. It's always been a pleasure to work with you. Thanks."*

**Debra Ruzbasan - Ed-Ventures, Inc.**

*"I am going to miss being a part of ASTA Mid-America. The passion and support this chapter has for ASTA has been evident. The chapter has shown me how important ASTA is for me and all of us in the travel business. I am going to miss all the educational events and fun times that I have had with the chapter. I have met some wonderful people that I am sure will be lifetime friends."*

**Sheila Bear – IN**

*"Working with ASTA Mid America for over 15 years, seemed like it all started yesterday. My experience as a Member, a supplier and as part of the Advisory Board have been one of great fulfillment! The ASTA Mid America Chapter provided a professional environment and the take away of good friends, among the best in the Travel Industry. Many Hallmark Moments within the evolution of TravelFest and the always thrilling Indy Pole day Event! ASTA Mid America you will be missed, but not forgotten!"*

**Narciso (Ciso) Moreno – Puerto Rico Tourism**

*"Thank you to Claudia, and all the ASTA Mid-America team, for the support and direction you have provided us throughout the years. Your hard work, on behalf of agents, agencies, and our industry is very much appreciated."*

**Pat Hollywood – OH**

*"The ASTA MID-AMERICA chapter opened many doors for me when I was the Business Development Manager covering Ohio & Indiana – attending the many well-attended agent functions – I grew my database and through this organization, I have established many friends. Thank you."*

**Mary Margaret Reuther**  
**Key Accounts Manager – Midwest AMAWATERWAYS**

*"My association with ASTA Mid-America has brought me so many rewarding friendships with other travel professionals and the competitive edge of being on the inside track of industry developments. I always come away from ASTA sponsored city events and regional and national conventions with a renewed enthusiasm for the wonderful industry I work in."*

**Bob Thomson – Ambassador Travel Service – PA**

*"I have been honored to be part of the board these past few years. The growth, the participation, the outreach and the teamwork are just a few reasons why ASTA Mid-America as garnered recognition and awards from ASTA and I am glad I was part of this amazing board. Until we meet again I wish you all fair winds and following seas (or rivers in my case)."*

**David B. Mackey - Business Development Manager: OH, MI, IN, KY**

*"Thank you for taking the time and effort to put together the last 2 All Chapter Meetings at the Greenbriar and Nemacolin, they were great experiences with training and interacting with other travel agents from our area. I hope the new regime can keep up the tradition."*

**Doug McMullen - McMullin Travel – PA**

Best Regards,

*Claudia*

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**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS**

ASTA National continues their exciting line-up of informative, educational and enjoyable events planned from August through November 2017. Hope you will join them for:

- [ASTA Global Convention](#), San Diego, CA - August 26-29, 2017
- [NACTA Annual Conference 2017](#), Anchorage, AK - September 13-16, 2017
- [ASTA China Summit 2017](#), Guiyang, China - November 8-12, 2017

**The global advocates for travel. Go with the pros.**