

MEMO

DATE: 7 October 2015

TO: Members of SER Staff

RE: Travel Policy update

Southeast Region Headquarters ended FY '15 over \$6,000 "in the red." Three main factors contributed to this deficit situation:

1. Over the past several years, the amount of income SER HQ would receive on a yearly basis has been overestimated, with no "mid-course" budget corrections put in place when the overestimation was discovered. NHQ requires we operate on a "zero balance" budget where income must always equal expenses. In order to prevent a deficit situation, income estimates, **along with expense estimates**, should have been lowered to realistic levels. A major income/expense correction has been made in the FY 2016-17 SER HQ budget. For the first time in many years, the estimated income for SER HQ is less than \$100,000.
2. The 2015 SER Conference overran the approved budget by several thousand dollars. Traditionally, the Conference has broken even or had a positive balance. Several factors led to the overrun in 2015.
3. Several SER staff members overran their travel allowances. Since at the time, there was no published travel policy in effect, and personal funds had been expended by these staff members, the SER/FM committee felt compelled to reimburse the staff members.

For FY '16, two major changes have been instituted by the SER/FM committee and command staff that will help correct the issue:

1. The 2016 SER Conference will simply be an "add-on" to the GAWG Conference scheduled for 3-5 June 2016 at the U. of Ga Conference Center in Athens, GA. This decision will drastically reduce SER's financial liability connected with the Conference.
2. Beginning 01 October, ALL travel expenses for which the staff member expects to be reimbursed must receive approval from the SER/FM committee at least 30 days in advance of the travel dates. The approval process will be facilitated by a travel request form which will ask for exact cost (or good faith estimates) of each type of reimbursable expense the staff member expects to incur, the name of the event, and the justification (reason) for the travel. Simply "to attend _____"

will not be considered a proper justification. The SER staff member MUST make a contribution to the event in some manner.

I realize the travel approval process appears rather severe in its requirements, but we MUST get our financial house in order. The SER/FM committee will spearhead this effort, but it will require the understanding and cooperation of each SER staff member who is impacted by this situation.

Thank you for your volunteer service, and the professional manner in which you deliver it the 8,500+ members in the Southeast Region.

Sincerely,

GBM