

FAQ about



Q. What are PSNE's goals?

A. Our Bylaws state: The purpose of the Pennsylvania Society of News Editors shall be to encourage the full and free dissemination of information of public interest without fear or favor, to strive to improve the standards of professional activity, to promote acquaintance among its members, to develop a stronger professional esprit de corps, to exchange ideas for the more effective application of professional labors, and to work collectively for the solution of common problems, in harmony with the precepts of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association (PNA) and the American Society of News Editors.

Q. What are the minimum expectations for a board member?

A. Board members are expected to attend four meetings per year. Meetings are typically held in July (summer retreat-to plan for the upcoming year), September, January, March/April (in conjunction with America East) and May (in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Press Conference).

Q. I want to roll up my sleeves and make a difference. How do I get started?

A. The heart of PSNE's work takes place in committees. The board president typically appoints committees and their chairs before the September meeting and provides ideas of projects for the year. The committee chair, working with his/her committee, can add projects to the agenda. In addition, projects might come to the committee's attention during the year. Of course, many meaningful and fun tasks are available outside of committee. Board members can judge contests, moderate convention panels, testify before the Legislature, represent PSNE on Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association boards—there is really no limit.

Q. How do committees work?

A. Committee chairs should choose an apprentice or co-chair, who would be the potential committee chair the next year. Committee chairs can serve more than one term; it's at the discretion of the president. The president may appoint committee members or delegate that task to committee chairs. Board members may head more than one committee.

Q. If I have a colleague at my news organization or know someone at another news organization who wants to get involved, can I invite him or her?

A. Yes, non-board members who are PSNE members can serve on committees. In fact, this is encouraged as a membership builder and to identify future board members.

Q. How do I get on the officer track, if that becomes a goal?

A. No magic formula exists to do so. One rule of thumb is that the more active you are in serving on or chairing important committees or handling key projects, the more likely you'll be in catching the nominating committee's attention. In other words, PSNE's leadership typically looks to "move up" those most active, interested and involved in helping the society meet its goals.

Q. How are the officers organized?

A. Our ByLaws call for four officers: president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary/treasurer. In addition, immediate past presidents serve as ex officio board members for two years following their presidency.

Q. What is the relationship between PSNE and the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association (PNA) and PNA Foundation?

A. PSNE operates independently of PNA and the PNA Foundation, but PNA Foundation employees provide vital staff support to PSNE. Connections between the two organizations, which have been strong for many years, continue to develop. Committee chairs and members are increasingly serving on counterpart PNA committees. Many PNA committees undertake projects that overlap with PSNE projects and vice versa. One developing function of PSNE committee chairs is to appoint a liaison to work with appropriate PNA committees.

Q. What is the relationship between PSNE and the Pennsylvania Associated Press Managing Editors (PAPME)?

A. The two groups have separate boards, but the relationship between the two groups continues to grow. PAPME has a special goal: to work with the state AP to improve its news report. In 1999, PAPME became responsible for a day of programming at the Pennsylvania Press Conference. PAPME's membership consists of the state's daily news organizations. PSNE's membership consists of members from both multi-day publications and weekly publications.

Q. Practically speaking, what's my first step?

A. First, if you're not a member of PSNE, become a member. Then tell PSNE's president about your goals for improving newspapering in Pennsylvania. Let him or her know your interests. The president will factor in this information when making committee assignments. Come to each meeting prepared to participate. One observation is that the most successful board members come ready to report on substantial progress on at least one project or their integral involvement in at least one PSNE event since the last meeting.