

State of the Chapter 2008
Chapter President 2007–2008, John T. Bigham, AIA RRC CCS

Membership in the Memphis Chapter stands at about 131. That is down a little from a few years ago, but most chapters are declining slightly in membership. There are more professional organizations in the construction industry, competing for members than there used to be. Nevertheless Memphis Chapter is financially sound. There is money in the bank, and bills are paid on time. After two years of work, we have completed reviewing and revising our Operating Guide. Last winter we had our CDT study course. Although pass rates have fallen nationwide since the implementation of Master Format 2004 and the new Project Resource Manual, we are happy to report 100% of our students who took the CDT exam passed it. While it is true that of the 7 students who took the course, only 2 took the exam, we are nevertheless proud of Randall Haynes and Rachel Gardner. While other chapters have dropped product display shows, ours continues to be a success and a significant source of income due to a dedicated staff of volunteers. As a matter of fact, the Memphis Chapter Product Display Show is the fourth largest in the nation, edging out shows in cities much larger than Memphis. The Dempsey B. Morrison Scholarship Fund, which is now a 501 (c) (3) charitable corporation, continues to provide 2 half scholarships each year to University of Memphis students, which the university matches. While other chapters have dropped their paper newsletters in favor of e-mail news, we continue to mail out a 16 page magazine each month. And a stunning magazine it is! Scott Guidry continues to amaze us with the things he has packed into the chapter website. If you have not perused it in awhile, you need to do so. Our annual golf tournament continues to be successful; at least that is what I am told. The next one is in July. I, personally, cannot understand why anyone would want to knock around a little white ball around in a cow pasture when he could, for instance, go ride a bicycle for 50 miles in the hot sun. In August we are honored to host the Gulf States Region Leadership Conference. We have a chance to shine and show the good things that Memphis offers. We also need to sign up to help with the various functions.

While at the helm and watching for reefs this past year, it is been hard for me to look too far into the future. Now, however, I would like to address what I want to see CSI Memphis doing. We need to attract new members. A few of us have been corresponding about the benefits of CSI. I would like to see these reasons written down and categorized by profession, i.e. benefits for the architect or engineer, benefits for the product rep, and benefits for the contractor. Then when any of us has the chance to talk with a perspective member, we can say, "You will benefit from CSI for these reasons," and offer the reasons for the particular profession.

We need to nurture new members. That may mean a new member orientation class, or it may mean the Membership Committee each month distributing a list of new members to officers and committee chairs so that we can greet and invite new members to participate in committees and other activities.

We need to be encouraging participation by all members and especially calling those who have become inactive.

We need to fill co-chairs and committees. That does not mean telling a chairman, "Now go find a co-chair," but we need to have the Membership Committee maintain a list of likely candidates. When we have a co-chairman and committee members, the chairman does not get burned out doing all the work himself and when the chairman is ready to step down, they is someone who knows what to do ready to take his place. By attracting new members, nurturing new members, encouraging participation by all members, we will have a strong chapter – a benefit to all and burden to none.