

The Value of Membership in the Local Section

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I have been a member of the Tennessee Valley Section of American Industrial Hygiene Association (TVS-AIHA) since the early 1990s. It's difficult for me to image that nearly 20 years have past since I first joined. So much has happened in this time, although in some respects it seems it was only yesterday that I was applying for membership. December 2009 is my month to write an article for the newsletter and I thought what better subject than defining the value of what membership has meant to me (and hopefully the reader as well).

You can't get a better professional value for the \$25 annual membership fee anywhere. In fact, if you attend the fall conference your subsequent year's dues are included in the registration. What a seamless, simple way to cover this minimal expense. The registration fee for most individuals attending the fall conference is covered by their employer. So, in essence many members have no out-of-pocket expenses for membership.

Another benefit of members is reduced fees for professional development courses (PDC). In the past few years the local section has sponsored two PDC; one during the spring and one that is connected to the fall conference. Registration fees for members are less than those for non-members. Generally the difference in cost for one PDC is approximately the same amount as the annual dues.

Although the local section has not actively developed an employment program, I periodically see industrial hygiene positions posted to the e-mail distribution list. In addition, if you are hunting for a job, it's nice to be able to list membership in a professional organization. I have listed membership in TVS-AIHA for years on my résumé.

I suspect that we have one of the most technically competent and diverse membership of any local AIHA chapter in the country. This level of expertise and range of backgrounds provides an outstanding networking opportunity. There are subject matter experts in so many fields in the east Tennessee section and I have drawn upon their wisdom on numerous occasions. This is an outstanding value.

I don't have time to read the Federal Register each day, but Harry Pullum does a wonderful job of summarizing health and safety activities at the state and federal level with the Government Affairs page on the web site. If you want a quick summary of issues related to safety and industrial hygiene, you need to see this page.

Staying current and/or maintaining certification maintenance points has become challenging as budgets tighten. I have heard this concern from various members, especially with respect to travel. TVS-AIHA has offered pre-recorded webinars on a variety of subjects during the past year in Oak Ridge. For \$35 a member can obtain 0.5 points, which is a bargain. The fall conference and associated PDC are generally worth two and a one-half points. The spring PDC historically has been worth one point. In total the local section offers at least five certification maintenance points per year. The price for all programs is very reasonable.

There are more benefits to being a member, but these are a few that come to mind without much in-depth review.