

Dear Fellow Members of WSSA:

In keeping with something Dennis started last year this is my first letter to all of you for the Website and I hope most of our members have an opportunity to view it. Where do I begin? I think it would be most appropriate to start by acknowledging and thanking everyone who made this past year's Conference a success. I am not going to list names for fear of omitting anyone, but each of you knows whom you are. To me a successful Conference is not just about the number of people in attendance. Don't get me wrong, a large number of attendees can also make for a successful Conference, but even more important is the amount of knowledge that we can offer to our members that they can take back to their offices and incorporate into the work that they do everyday.

I know that this will be another challenging year for WSSA and ask each of you for your support. I also ask that any questions, comments, or concerns that you may have be addressed to me or anyone else on the Executive Committee. If you are not sure whom you can contact on the Executive Committee send anything to me [bestul@excite.com](mailto:bestul@excite.com) (home) or [james.bestul@co.clark.wi.us](mailto:james.bestul@co.clark.wi.us) (work). I have already received numerous emails and have so far been successful in replying to all.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Conference Co-Chairs for this next year and they are (drum roll please) Holly Jackson and Fred Baewer. Joining Holly and Fred on the Conference Planning Committee will be Lorraine Beilke, Jayne Carroll, Christine Vincent-See, and Chris Hanten. I believe that everyone who attended the Organizational Meeting in July was as impressed with The Hotel Mead as I was when I toured it in March.

One topic that has been brought up by several members is WSSA's involvement with issues that affect our members and the work that they do. No matter if it is at the Local, State, or Federal level the only way to be a part of the issues is to let your/our voices be heard. The Executive Committee has acted upon two issues that were brought to the Executive Committee in July and letters have been sent to the appropriate individuals. We wanted to express our support of maintaining the Assistant Area Administrator positions, to the Governor, but with his veto of the Joint Committee on Finances proposal, this letter ended up being in support of the Governor's veto. Although positions will still need to be eliminated I agree that DHFS should decide what positions to cut within its Department. A letter expressing opposition to restricting the ways counties can use Community Options Program (COP) funds has also been sent to Secretary Helene Nelson. I realize that these are just two small steps in the process of making the voices of the members of the Wisconsin Social Services Association heard.

Thank You for your time and I hope several of you are able to join us for the Mid-Year training that will be offered at the December 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Hotel Mead. More details will be forthcoming as they become available.

Thanks for your time.

Jim Bestul, President  
Wisconsin Social Services Association