



**NATIONAL
DRUG ENFORCEMENT
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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A Letter from the NDEOA President to all Members:

We have reached a crossroad in NDEOA's future. For 39 years we have shared a close and mutually beneficial relationship with DEA. As you know, DEA created the NDEOA while the DEA was still the BNDD. For years NDEOA has acted as an ambassador for DEA, promoting the agency while providing training to thousands of federal, state and local narcotic investigators.

We have promoted DEA primarily through our annual training conference, as well as specialized training sponsored by the NDEOA at various locations within the US. We have provided thousands of dollars in scholarship monies for the children of our members, given away at our annual training conference. We actively assisted in the cleanup and rebuilding of the Gulfport, MS area, and paid out thousands of dollars in the form of cash & equipment to our members down there suffering from the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. We have provided training conferences that have promoted a family friendly atmosphere and encouraged networking amongst all our members. We have also recognized dozens of members over the years, through our awards program.

Funding has gotten tighter over the past few years. The economy has made some major changes in the ways departments train and the ability to allow their people to travel to training. As I wrote this, the NC state Narc Association Conference was going on at the same hotel. Usually, they get 300 Narcs in attendance. This year they had 125. I was advised that CLEOA currently has about 25 people registered for their summer conference, and are contemplating canceling. Last year, the DTCs were pulled out of the NDEOA conference a few months prior to the conference, due to funding concerns. Their absence made the difference in the number of rooms used at the conference hotel, causing great financial difficulties for the NDEOA.

The SAC of DEA's Office of Training in Quantico came to last year's conference as our guest speaker and apologized for the DTCs absence. He pledged a greater commitment to the NDEOA's future conferences, and offered many avenues of support to promote and assist the NDEOA. A few months later that SAC announced his retirement. A new President was elected, and DEA's budget was slow to come out of congress. Promotions, transfers and reassignments within Quantico resulted in a breakdown of communications. This was not some intentional ignorance of the NDEOA, or a calculated withdrawal from the NDEOA. It was just a combination of undesirable consequences that came together at just the wrong time for the NDEOA.

I have recently been in communication with ASAC Robin Dinlocker in Quantico. While she was completely unaware of the NDEOA, its mission, and its benefits, she was a quick study, and is a supporter of our organization. Earlier this week ASAC Dinlocker met with DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart to discuss the NDEOA. ASAC Dinlocker went to that meeting with a conviction that DEA should continue its support of the NDEOA. The Administrator agreed with her. ASAC Dinlocker is strongly committed to assist the NDEOA in any way she can.

Sadly, I believe it is too late. The inability of the NDEOA executive board to confirm any type of agenda for our annual conference has prohibited a strong promotion of the conference. It has been difficult to promote a national conference with no set agenda. We had a proposed agenda, and I have asked all prospective instructors to be available. My fear is, even with DEA completely funding all speakers, there will be minimal attendance, in part due to the struggling economy. The NDEOA could have all our speakers present, but only a handful of attendees to lecture to.

I know this will not be convenient for all. It's not for me either. While ASAC Dinlocker and I agreed that a cancelled conference could mean the beginning of the end. A conference in July, of only twenty or so attendees would also mean the beginning of the end. I cannot in good conscious request DEA pour money into a conference, knowing that minimal attendance would be a huge waste of money.

The NDEOA Executive Board is negotiating with the hotel in Philadelphia to allow us to move the conference to the last week in September, but that has not been confirmed. As soon as arrangements are completed, notice will be posted. Please check back to our website for any updated information.

Steven R. Peterson

NDEOA President