

**Report from Region 11 Membership Committee Chairperson  
Mary Jo Tweedie**

**How to Get Prospective Members for MRTA and Local Organizations**

As the 2007-2008 school year comes to an end, there will be several thousand new public school retirees available to invite to join the Missouri Retired Teachers Association and Public School Personnel. Every local retired teachers unit will have a Membership Committee. However, it is the duty of every retired teacher to talk to the people they know and invite them to join MRTA.

According to the meeting in March, 2008, in Jefferson City, the most common recruitment techniques and estimated response rates for each recruitment tactic are as follows:

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| 1. In-Person One-to One Contact with a person the retirees knows.            | 40-50%   |
| 2. Attending event with a person the retirees knows.                         | 15-30%   |
| 3. Telephoning the retiree by a person the retiree knows.                    | 15-25%   |
| 4. Sending a personalized letter or e-mail to the retiree by some they know. | 10-25%   |
| 5. Sending a personalized letter to a cold prospect.                         | 2-6%     |
| 6. Sending bulk direct mail.   | 0.5-1.5% |
| 7. Lead generations.   | 0.1%     |
| 8. Display ad or website.  | 0.01%    |

It was also mentioned that we need an effective way to describe our respective organizations to a prospective member. This is sometimes referred to as an "elevator statement". The statement has to be short enough to be delivered during a ride up an elevator. It should focus on benefits to the prospective member. The word "you" should be used frequently. We only have about 20-seconds to share our "elevator statement" with a prospective member—so, we need to focus on the most important benefit (s).

Research shows that people join groups for a range of reasons. For example:  
• Someone ask them to join. • To Stay active and involved. • To accomplish something they can't do alone. • To meet new people. • For self-improvement. • Belief in the organizations cause. • To do something with a purpose. • To give something back to the community, etc.

Here are some ideas gleaned from MRTA pamphlets. When you invite those new retirees to join MRTA (Missouri Retired Teachers Association and Public School Personnel) what will you say?

● Will you tell them we are the only association in our state that works ONLY for retired school personnel and we boast strength in numbers?

● Will you tell them that now they have retired, they need an association working to protect their retirement benefits. We may be 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in teacher salaries, but there is no doubt we are NUMBER ONE in retirement benefits? Remember that the Legislature gives and the Legislature can take away.

● Will you tell them how MRTA was responsible for seeing that each retiree that is drawing a pension will receive a COLA of up to 80% of their initial retirement check?

● Will you tell them that MRTA is a monitor and a “watchdog” over the Public School Retirement System and our voice in the Legislature?

● Will you tell them that MRTA is working on allowing retirees to collect both their Social Security and the Missouri Teacher’s Pension?

● Will you tell them that last spring House Speaker, Rod Jetton, proposed Legislation to exempt Social Security Benefits from Missouri Income Tax and our pension was not included in that Legislation, but through the efforts of MRTA Legislative Leaders we were able to get our PSRS benefits added to that Legislation. On you 2007 Missouri State Income tax you were given a 20% reduction and this reduction will increase for 6 years until your PSRA Pension will be exempt from Missouri Taxes. It is estimated that the average retiree who has reached the age of 62 saved from \$300-\$400 in taxes for the 2007 tax year.

● Will you mention the \$5,000 death benefit?

● Will you tell them that MRTA members get discounts on Drury Hotels, Trave (Global Tours), Dental Insurance, Liability, Long Term Care, Medicare Supplements and Vision Insurance, Prepaid Legal Service & Identity Theft, and Hear in America Hearing Plans?

● Will you tell them that they will receive all these benefits for only \$30.00 a year? If they think that is too much, remind them that is only the cost of about 5-6 Lattes, two trips to the movies, about 4-5 paperback books, less than a tank of car gas, and you get so much for that \$30.00