

# Kiwanis

Louisiana – Mississippi – West Tennessee District

CHANGING THE WORLD ... ONE CHILD AT A TIME



**David A. Pickler**  
Governor 2007-2008

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**Governor's Letter May 26th, 2008**

## **District Board Ignores Commitment to “Revenue Neutral” Votes to Recommend Dues Increase**

One of the most significant concerns raised when our District Delegate Assembly voted to approve the District Reorganization plan four years ago was the financial impact on District budgets of adding an additional layer of District officers. The “Pennsylvania Plan,” adopted in August, 2004, elevated District Secretary Charlie Ford to the position of District Executive Director while creating 7 District Trustee positions. These Trustee positions were declared to be “Revenue Neutral” positions, meaning no additional financial resources would be needed to pay for the incremental layer of District governance. Unfortunately, expenses related to subsidizing Trustee travel costs now appear to be the primary justification for the District Board voting Saturday, May 10 to recommend to the District Delegate Assembly a 20% Dues increase effective October 1, 2008.

As your District Governor, I serve as a non-voting member of the District Board of Trustees. As a member of such Board, my primary responsibility is to represent your interests and advocate for your rights. After careful consideration, I cannot support this recommendation for a dues increase because the District Board has produced no rational argument, no definitive study, not even a projected budget to justify a dues increase. When the item was brought to the Board by Executive Director Charlie Ford at the May 10 Board meeting, no prior notification had been provided to any Board members or any research distributed to justify such action. The primary issue addressed was a need to provide additional funds to future Lt. Governors, Trustees, and Governors as a means for travel reimbursement over current funding levels. As your Governor, I have repeatedly asked our Executive Director to provide a detailed analysis of costs associated with maintaining our District Office at the current location as part of a review of all District budget expenses. Unfortunately, this information has not been provided to date.

Our District has been tremendously impacted by natural disasters, economic uncertainty, and rising costs of living. Many of our members are on fixed incomes requiring difficult decisions just to maintain a reasonable lifestyle. Our District has experienced declining membership due to age, infirmity, and increasing competition for our time and volunteerism. Now is not the time for a reckless request for a dues increase unsupported by facts or justification. We are already competing for members in a world where people do not have to join a service club to engage in meaningful and significant service.

As your Governor, I called a Special Board Conference Call on May 20, 2008 requesting reconsideration of the dues increase recommendation. Unfortunately, this effort was unsuccessful. During this meeting I was asked by Board members not to express my concerns regarding this action. While I have great respect for each member of our District Board of

Trustees, my ultimate responsibility must be to represent each club and club member. Therefore, due to the failure of the Board to meet any legitimate burden of proof that a dues increase is the only means available to address our District financial concerns, I must actively, vocally, and publicly OPPOSE this recommendation. If avoiding a dues increase is a priority to you or your club, I encourage you to be fully represented at our District Delegate Assembly at this year's District Convention in Memphis.

The ultimate solution to our District's financial concern is simple. We must grow in membership or we must engage in a meaningful dialogue about what level of service we will demand from a District Office. I remain a strong believer that we can grow in service, in membership, and in financial strength. There is an old saying that you cannot tax your way to prosperity. I believe imposing dues increase, without strong justification and careful consideration, would bring greater harm to our District by subjecting financially-strapped clubs and members to an additional dues burden. I believe that our members may well vote with their feet by choosing not to continue their Kiwanis membership.

Let your voices be heard.

Together we cannot fail!

Yours in Kiwanis,

David A. Pickler  
Governor