

The Future of ATI: An Open Discussion Among Members at the Association of Travel Instruction Eighth Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN, August 17, 2008

ATI president Terry Moakley opened the discussion by stating that the organization needs to determine the initiatives that it will focus on in the future to grow and strengthen ATI. He then opened the floor to comments from members.

One member stated that we are growing slowly and working together as a unit. Every year our conference gets better. We do need to improve our fund raising to keep ATI going. Another member remarked that ATI is a membership organization, and the Board needs to know what members want to do, where do we want to go, and how do we get there.

Other members added that ATI has been in existence for eight years now, and it has established a name and a history; and, that for a small organization, we have managed to put on a conference every year.

Another member noted that it is time to put our house in order. We need to be involved in other organizations. As members, we need to let transit properties know that we exist. This member added that she speaks at transit events and lets them know about ATI. Moakley said that ATI will be represented at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) conference this year.

School systems have transition planning, and we need to reach out to OMRDD agencies and groups for persons with autism to include travel training too, added another member. And yet another member suggested advocating to make travel training mandatory.

One other member said we need to do the work and have the ability to make things happen in the fund raising field so we can send people to present at transit and travel training-related conferences. Moakley added that some current ADA regulations may be weakened, and this may have an impact on travel training.

Another member stated that ATI should have three areas of focus: expanding work with seniors, fundraising, and accessible taxis. He charged the Board to select a focus. Yet another member noted that the strength of ATI is the people in it, so we should become an APTA member.

A founding ATI member noted that how it works is that there are idea people and a few worker bees. This member continued that ATI must narrow its focus to raising funds. The board needs to give specific tasks and assignments to people. Also, this member met a person from an organization willing to donate, and the member had no ATI presentation packet to give to the potential donor. Another member agreed that we need to go out and educate people about ATI but we need materials to do so.

The idea of making a short ATI DVD was discussed. One member said that we need a concrete project with research and a product, and we need to be more active by sending out media releases once a month. Still another member suggested putting together a packet for members to distribute about ATI. Other topics raised included distributing video clips, news articles, conference agendas, etc., to members.

The discussion ended with enthusiasm about the future of ATI, and general agreement that we must focus on educating travel training-related groups and the general public about our organization, and on improving our fund raising.