



# 2026 CSD Board Planning Meeting January 11, 2026



Meeting started at 9:32 by Brett Randolph. Was conducted In-person and via Zoom.

### **Attendees**

Brett Randolph  
Dan Bodtke  
Allan Mebus  
Adam Keener  
Larry Hlavacek  
Carter Combs  
Stephen True

Duane Lawson  
Tim Link  
Chad Schuetz  
Corbin Donovan (guest)  
Don Fuson  
Doug Brott

On-line  
Rick Pape  
Mike Sheppard  
Jeff Arians  
JP Marshall

Brett: Thanks to everyone for:

- #1 your service to the Members in the chapters of the Central States
- #2 for being here this morning to kind of help us plan not only for the remainder of 2026, but we need to have some conversations about 2027 and 2028 looking strategically to those particular years if needed or setting some parameters that might trigger some decisions that we would need to have for those subsequent years.
- #3 just for the time and the talent that you give to not only this group, but to those, you know, our barbershop world to kind of help make their barbershop experience the best that it can possibly be.

So my goal for the end of today is to have kind of an actionable plan for 2026. Those might look similar to what we said last year. These are the things that we want to try to accomplish by the end of 2026 and then also having some indicators of what might bring us back together outside of a regularly scheduled board meeting to make some decisions about 2027 and 2028 going forward.

### **Introduction of each participant**

#### **Brett Randolph**, President

Joined the society in 2011 when six friends and I decided to start a barbershop chapter that is currently known as South Central Kansas SmorgasChorus.

#### **Dan Bodtke**, Executive Vice-President

Started singing in 2010 with the River City Chorus in Mason City. With that Jeff Arians guy. First quartet River City Reverb. Then moved to Kansas City, currently singing with Central Standard and quartet Well Played.

#### **Allan Mebus**, Iowa Vice-President

Started singing barbershop in high school on a dare. Been with the Old Capital Chorus for over a quarter century and currently the President.

#### **Adam Keener**, Registrar

Barbershopper since 2019. Sounds of Aloha Chorus, Central Standard Chorus manager. Baritone in Standard Deviation quartet.

#### **Larry Hlavacek**, Secretary

Started singing Barbershop in 1973, in 8th grade. A three-time barbershopper, in 10th consecutive year. Sing with Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, church choir and in quartet No White Socks. Music Vice-President for Cedar Rapids and Treasurer for Iowa City.

**Carter Combs**, Contest in Judging VP

Started back in 1980 with the Society, where I spent about 20 years, the last 10 years of that was directing the Pensacola Fiesta Chorus, then moved back here and joined Heart of America. Sung in a bunch of quartets, probably the longest lived was 18 years with the Chord Commanders in Pensacola. I'm up to 14 or 15 registered quartets.

**Stephen True**, Missouri-Arkansas Vice-President

Barbershop for a little over 10 years. Sings with Central Standard, and a small handful of quartets, currently in Fission.

**Duane Lawson**, Music and Performance Vice-President

Very first quartet with the Butler County Community College Barbershop Quartet, which became the Smorgas Chords. Joined the society a year later with a Wichita Air Capital Chorus. In the fall of 1991, sang with Central Standard and a member of the SmorgasChorus. Been in several choruses and quartets.

**Tim Link**, VP of Chapter Support and Leadership Training

Member of the SmorgasChorus since 2015 and in a quartet called Velvet Moon.

**Chad Schuetz** Marketing Vice-President

I have a very similar story to Brett. Our lives have been attached since then. Smorgas Chords at Butler. Then started the SmorgasChorus.

**Corbin Donovan**, guest

Barbershopping since 2019. First interaction was my college Glee club singing the Rapsallions' Please Mister Columbus. Went to a rehearsal in Oklahoma City on May 10th of 2014 and actually took five years for me to find barbershop again. Currently the President of the SmorgasChorus and I sing baritone in a quartet.

**Don Fuson**, Membership VP

Joined in 2000 after I hiatus us from seeing it all. I was an old madrigal singer when I lived in Saint Louis. Went to Overland Park chapter. And I can't keep my hand down. **My goal for this year is to find somebody that's a replacement. I don't care if they're suitable or not.**

**Doug Brott**, Events VP

Joined in 2000. It was because of my wife telling me I needed to do something other than work and I joined Overland Stage Chorus. Sang with them for a few years and then the Heart Of America and also joined Central Standard.

**Rick Pape**, Nebraska, VP

Started singing with the Society in 1993. Lincoln Continentals Chorus, moved to Denver and sang with Sound of the Rockies for one year and then moved back to Nebraska.

**Mike Shepard**, Kansas VP

Involved in barbershop about 31 years. Emporia, KS, Topeka, Manhattan, Des Moines and back to Manhattan. Couple of quartets.

**Jeff Arians, Treasurer**

Third generation barbershopper, which means I've been Barber shopping since I was born. Officially with the Society, I believe 15, maybe 16 years. First quartet was with Dan called River City Reverb, Super Novice champs in 2000. Currently seeing tenor with the quartet Tapestry. And finally, some news for everybody. My wife and I just found out that we're having a baby, so we're having a fourth generation barbershopper because it's a baby boy.

**J.P. Marshall, Chorus Director Development**

Barbershop quite a long time. Like Jeff, I'm a Barber brat and have been doing this since I could sing. Sing with the Iowa City chapter, on their chapter board as well.

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Brett displayed the Mission and Vision statements and the Strategic Plan Pillars and spoke briefly about them.

2025 Year in Review

**Jeff review 2025 financial statements**

- Jeff presented preliminary financials for the year 2025.
- Think everything is on there that should be on there. We still are waiting for a check from the ACSC for some name badges which would improve bottom line by about \$600.
- Snapshot of where we're at for assets, liabilities and equity. We don't have any liabilities, which is a good thing.
- Liquid cash is just over \$77,000 at the end of the year and last year you can see that it was \$79,600.
- It's definitely the smallest decrease in cash that Jeff's seen as a Treasurer
- The net income or loss was a loss of just over \$3000
- Almost all of our income numbers are better than they were in 2024
- We did receive an anonymous donation for \$1000
- Push Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), and Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCDs)
- Finally did break 6 figures again Our total income was just about \$104,000 in 2025
- Big expenses, like always, are judges: \$27,000
- Fixed labor is \$5,400 this year. This is for live stream and Lied Center staffing
- Iowa Harmony Clinic expenses were \$8,496
- Perry White or Christina may have some input into ways to get more RMD monies
- Fall Convention is the reason we had a smaller loss for the year.

**Doug Events update**

- Not advertised yet for a venue for spring convention because until very recently we were unable to find the venue
- Radisson in Lenexa KS
- We would be in a ballroom, but they have a ballroom with a very high ceiling
- Very reasonable with their first quote
- Doug presented a budget with 2025 rates and with a \$5 increase
- Budget based on 247 registrants
- Revenue would be \$20,900 or \$22,000 with the \$5 increase
- Giving us pretty good room rates
- Would do live stream again
- Dan stated that we should be conservative when projecting revenue
- We will have to provide our own lighting and our own audio

- There's probably no way we're going to be able to hide the quartet entering into and and getting off/on the platform
- Found venue possibilities for 2027
- Doug talked about using six rooms plus ballroom for classes
- Radisson did not have an F&B minimum. Will investigate whether having one would reduce costs
- Board meeting and House of Delegates will be ZOOM meetings
- Discussed whether changing the date of the Spring Convention would give us other options for venues, such as schools.
  - Can be as early as the second week of March.
  - March is light in the number of contests
  - Can we bring in a whole CSD panel of judges?
- May come close to breaking even
- What are markers to hold a Spring Convention in 2027?
  - Thought was that anything less than a \$10,000 loss is acceptable. Previous years were \$17,000 and \$19,000.
  - We've budgeted \$9,500 loss for 2026 Spring Convention
  - Make a decision on 2027 convention following Spring 2026 Convention
- How do we manage conventions when Ambassadors of Harmony are not competing?
- Increase revenue by getting sponsorships, whether that is individual members who have businesses or businesses in the community
- Convention chair will not be at the Fall Convention
- Doug will not be at Fall Convention either
- Look at registration fees, charge for live stream
  - Don't want to increase the non-competitor and the competitor registrations
  - Are we cutting too much off for bundles, coaching, Harmony Platoon?
  - We want the registration to be commensurate with what the value is
- Are grants available in KC area or Convention and Visitors Bureaus?
- What choruses are coming to Spring?
  - CS no
  - SmorgasChorus no
  - Ozark Overtones are
  - Down to 170 attendees
- Riser space is an issues in the ballroom. Limit might be 5.
- Doug will look to get the lowest costs for Spring Convention
- Stephen asked if we have tried to appeal to the choruses that are closer to CSD to come to CSD conventions instead of their own? Was told that would be frowned upon, and it may not be closer to come to Kansas City.
- Stephen also asked about planting chapters in areas where there are none, but would have a draw from other states/districts?

10:45 (Break to 11:00)

- Convention registration will open when the hotel stuff is locked down
- Need to look at the classes and layout so that marketing can begin

2026-2027 Goals and Initiatives

**Brett started a review of 2025 goals**

- Recruitment and Retainment: Don't know that that was 100% taken care of. A lot of that stuff already exists on BHS's website. And so all we really, really would be doing is pointing that to them.
- Coaching cadre: Get list of people in the district and investigated how to make it available.
- Help pay for learning tracks: Said it was decided to house on website that points to them. Not sure if that happened.
- Getting one contact per chapter for marketing and media purposes: did get some of stories and things that were happening to publish in the Serenade, but I don't know that that two way communication is quite to the level that we were hoping it to be.
- Develop chorus director workshops: We had an event in Iowa. We are planning an event in South Dakota for 2026 and are looking to maybe hopefully do something in either Nebraska or Kansas maybe going further.

**Brett started a discussion on what do we want to continue into 2026**

- What do we want to keep and what, if any of these do we want to make sure that we get done?
  - Don stated that the BHS website has come a long way. Continue sending chapter notes saying that Don and Larry can help, but they should to to the websites first. We need to have Tim add functionality or find volunteers who could do it. Tim is compensated hourly for his work. Volunteers would need to be qualified to do it. Outside people may have merit on projects. Develop a process to get projects done, including cost estimates, design, timelines.
  - Project could be when someone contact us, it would go to marketing AND the State VP of the person contacting us.
  - Develop a timeline for the year when we want certain things to turn over on the website.
  - Chad said we need to look at the chapter communication piece, in particular who is doing what and what does it look like. GOOD ONE TO KEEP.
  - Carter on coaching: what hung us up was not wanting contact information public facing.
  - Carter is putting together something for music and learning tracks and has started putting together a resource list of both arrangers and track producers that is going on the DRCJ page that can be accessible any time anybody's looking. Also is putting together a general resource page. Could look at putting a link on our district website to get to Carter's stuff.
  - Rick brought up director development is key. Smaller chapters in Nebraska have had same directors for many years doing the same things. Without change their isn't a lot of growth and not attractive to recruitment and audiences. Larger chapters have younger directors and are infusing energy and new ideas. Is helpful with membership down the road. Proposing communicating with directors and getting assistant directors. Dan mentioned putting together success plans. Don't need to add to the goals, but use the director development workshops to address these, and Dan suggested a sub-bullet for success planning and membership class at the events going forward.
  - SUMMARY
    - Recruitment retainment resources on the website, are we keeping that? Yes. And point to the BHS stuff.
    - Marketing resources made available on the website are we keeping that? Dan stated that we could combine those and point to BHS stuff. Dan says looks like we need a resource page with leading questions and other thoughts. Discussed having marketing resources, print vs digital media, have they done training on topics at their local level, knowing your chapter before marketing
    - Chad stated that if we wanted to really support our chapters in the ways in which they're wanting to be supported, it would need to be someone that had time to sit and work with an individual one-on-one and help them build those things and help

them learn how to maintain and help them build a network like but that's a lot of time.

- Put coaching cadre on the website. Can't put emails directly on page so what can be done? Reach out to Duane or Carter to get their contact information. Would be district people due to feasibility and logistics.

2026 Goals document created by Brett

#### **Dan ideas on sponsorship**

- Pulled up a document with his thoughts
- Tiers can be anything but his idea: bronze, silver, gold, platinum
- Advertising size, Serenade ad, convention ad, and complimentary tickets vary based on level. Rates would be different if the ads are placed in both Spring and Fal conventions.
- Could look to get 10 or more people to donate \$500, \$1000, etc on a yearly basis.
- If we get donations, we could send a quartet to their Christmas party or some other event.
- Could reach out to Harmony STL to see their template for fundraising.
- Make proposals to local Chamber of Commerce to reach core businesses.
- We might need to bring someone else on board to handle the fundraising.
- Don't want to compete with Harmony Foundation. They are building a turnkey package for chapters, not districts.
- Reach out to local restaurants to do advertising/discounts
- **Below is the document Dan introduced**

### Bronze Sponsor

One convention - \$100 Both conventions - \$150

#### Perks

- 1 quarter page ad in convention program
- 1 convention big screen/livestream ad 15 seconds
- A spot on our new CSD sponsors page

### Silver Sponsor

One convention - \$150 Both conventions - \$250

#### Perks

- 1 half page ad in convention program
- 1 convention big screen/livestream ad 15 seconds
- A spot on our new CSD sponsors page
- 1 quarter page Serenade ad (with both conventions only)

### Gold Sponsor

One convention - \$250 Both conventions - \$400

#### Perks

- 1 comp non-competitor registration per convention
  - Reserve the first two rows for gold/platinum sponsors?
- 1 half page ad in convention program
- 1 convention big screen/livestream ad 15 seconds
- A spot on our new CSD sponsors page
- 1 half page Serenade ad (with both conventions only)

### Platinum Sponsor

One convention - \$350 Both conventions - \$600

#### Perks

- 2 comp non-competitor registrations per convention
  - Reserve the first two rows for gold/platinum sponsors?
- 1 full page ad in convention program
- 1 convention big screen/livestream ad 30 seconds
- A spot on our new CSD sponsors page
- 1 full page Serenade ad (with both conventions only)

### Ideas

- Quartet sing at holiday party or small event?
- Increase prices a bit,
- Talk to harmony stl fundraising folks/marketing folks about how they approach their stuff
- Can we reach out chamber of commerce?
- Who is responsible for this? Fair bit of this is marketing related. Do we need a person in the marketing space to take this on?
- What other groups can we contact with to take ideas from?
- Need a donation option instead of
- Can we add a fundraising host chair position?
- Donations for a quartet to come to spring/fall 2027?

### **Brett introduced creating promotional materials celebrating 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CSD**

- Speak with Heather at [quartetstuff.com](http://quartetstuff.com)
- Pre-ordered and shipped to customer.
- T-shirts, coffee mugs, apparel, puzzles, anything people might be interested in.
- Would like to have something at Fall Convention
- Mason Eubank has done several logos that looked good

### **Stephen suggested to connect every/most chapters to university or college music programs**

- They could turn into a pipeline for recruitment or community engagement. Stephen has already started doing that.
- Don said that he would have somebody at BHS tell him what they've already done that worked and what they've done that didn't quite work. He doesn't want to rework the not worked.
- Could reach out to Jim Henry or St Charles to see how they have done it.
- State VPs could identify colleges and universities and work with the local chapters to develop the relationships.
- Don stated that small goals are better than a global approach.

Topher from Colombia and Lauren Kilgore from Saint Charles are going to help a lot at the Missouri Music Educators Association meeting booth. Will have a chapter contact sheet for all the surrounding chapters in Missouri. Don questioned whether we get an email list so we can reach out to the attendees. May be able to plant a new chapter in areas where there are no chapters currently. We would need to have someone who is qualified to have those types of conversations for new chapters. We have had a presence at the Nebraska Music Educators Association events. Have presented Barbershop 101 and tag singing. The Elkhorn North High School has 45 girls in their barbershop club that are singing in quartets and learning barbershop music. The goal is community engagement with the hopeful side effect of membership. Can use Robert Rund's idea of belonging, and how that would translate to engagement or retention.

Brett and Dan are going to collaborate and determine what kind of timeline we want for these types of things to happen. It is somewhat of a living document.

Brett asked if we want to apply for an AIC grant for quartet for Spring 2027 convention. No responses.

We have a looming dark cloud of going out of business in 3-5 years. Is there a goal? Trying to chip away at that or those embedded in a lot of these because I know there are some kind of revenue streams that are associated with some of these.

- Donations and sponsorships and things on those lines obviously are revenue generating type of a deal.
- To limit some of our controlled costs, for instance, we're not having an in person board meeting at spring convention.
- Probably PAT meeting will be virtual as well.

Fall Convention is budgeted to lose \$10,645. Spring Convention budgeted to lose \$9,500. Steve suggested pursuing an AIC grant for a quartet for Spring 2027. This would be a draw for members and we would have an outreach event, such as a youth outreach. We didn't get a grant the last time we applied.

Begin working on contract for KU hosting conventions beyond 2027

- Dependent on the availability of the Lied Center
- Doug will reach out to Lied Center
- Don't anticipate issues with the hotel

12:30 lunch break

#### **Don Fuson**

- January 1, 2025
  - 1,151 members

- 53 choruses, 47, 48 chapters.
- 392 people who were age 73 or more
- Average age 61.2
- In 2026
  - 1,166 members
  - 53 choruses, but we're down a chapter
  - 8 or 10 chapters on the downward spiral
  - 388 people, age greater than 73 years old. (424 over 72 years old)
  - Average age declined
- Don requested changes to help track paperless members.
  - Finally have something
  - 200 of the 1,100 members are paperless
  - Sent reports to chapters informing them of their paperless members
  - Paperless members do not get renewal cards
- Changes to 50+ member pins
  - If a member is inactive, they get a letter and requested his pin get sent to his house.
  - Don requested that the pin get sent to the chapter so they can be recognized by the chapter.
- ZOOM calls
  - 3-month/6-month calls
  - Discuss what's happening, how to reach out, new member orientations, what is their renewal tracking process, chapter culture, and anything else that deals with members, director search/assistant directors. Don feels the
- Chapters don't respond to Chad's request or the State requests. best thing to do with that is you write the summary for them, call up and say, hey, I heard something was going on. Ask what are you doing? You develop that into a little written story and just send it in to Rick as an e-mail and get a picture from someplace. So the state VPs, and when you talk to somebody at the chapter level, you can turn each of those calls into a short two-paragraph, three-paragraph article for the Senate if you really wanted to.

### **Tim Link**

- Leadership Academy
  - 30 pre-registered, and 30 showed up
  - 3 additional walk-ups
  - 33 paid participants
  - High level of engagement
  - President session had 12, secretary had nine. Leadership had 15
  - In the afternoon, marketing had seven, membership had eight, and music team had seven. And then, leadership had just three in the afternoon.
  - Robert Rund gave keynote
  - Jim Bagby did woodshedding session
  - A follow-up survey will be send out

### **Duane Lawson**

- limited on budget, so limited on goals
- Have a booth at the Missouri Music Educators Association meeting
- Working with Cliff Hout, South Dakota VP, and his chapter in Viborg to hold a festival like the Iowa session. Bring in a coach. Each chorus would get coached on their repertoire for an hour or two. Sing a joint number and a gang sing at the end of the day.

### Carter Combs

- Spring panel is set. Ric Johnson is being swapped with Steve Scott due to a scheduling conflict.
- Steve could have exciting classes at convention, along with Clay Hine, Steve Armstrongj

### Doug Brott

- Convention Photography
  - Scott Sewell photography requested/offer to change how he charges and how the quartets/choruses get their pics
  - He suggested adding \$5 to the registration fee and he keeps it, not charging us for anything else
  - He would pick the best 20ish photos and the quartets would get a link and they could utilize them in any way
  - Currently he tweaks each photo when a quartet says they would like it/them.
  - The group discussed more details about how this change would affect pictures
  - Last spring he had \$80 in sales, and had \$530 at Fall Convention
  - We generally spend about \$400 for lodging.
  - Doug will discuss this further with the photographer
- Had issues with a couple of chapters
  - Backstage convention team getting harassed
  - A chapter took it upon themselves to move a sound wall. We were lucky it didn't break it entirely and get charged several thousands of dollars to fix it or the district get charged for it
  - Didn't put risers in any pattern rooms because they wouldn't fit in all of them
  - Allan Mebus offered to be in the circle having his work experience and his ability to, more times than not, remove or at least redirect any hostile efforts from those wonderful people that worked backstage last year.
  - Those chapters have been communicated with since the fall convention, and they have even had some phone conversations among the chapter leadership with either Doug or Carter or both.
  - May come up with a code of conduct and possibly have them sign off on it.
  - Need to determine how we will handle it moving forward

### Dan Bodtke

- Registration software alternative Zeffy
  - Zeffy used by Johnny Appleseed/Cardinal
  - Looking into email blasts, reports

<b>Tickera</b>	<b>Zeffy</b>
<b>COST TO USE</b>	
2.0% PayPal Fee	No Fees
	Buyers can choose to donate to Zeffy at checkout if they wish
<b>WAYS TO PAY</b>	
PayPal	Credit/Debit Card
	Google Pay
	Apple Pay
<b>ADMIN ACCESS</b>	
Webmaster	Can give multiple people various levels of access

Not sure how many others we can give access or how intuitive it is to make changes	Registrar would be able to make edits to tickets but not have access to bank info.
<b>CHORUS BULK PURCHASES</b>	
Not able to	Need to investigate
	Highly probable we can do this
<b>OTHER PROS</b>	
	Sponsorship Purchases
	Ad Purchases
	Update UI and Cart
	Discount codes
	Questions based on ticket purchased

End of Brett’s agenda. Grateful for what we do. Will get a summary, Brett, Dan and maybe Matt will review and set timelines.

Brett stated: “I just want the record to show that we finished 38 minutes earlier than what I had expected. So travel safe and we will see you when we see you.”

Meeting adjourned at 1:52.

**Action Items**

- Find a replacement for Don Fuson – **who?**
- Doug finalize contract for 2026 Spring Convention
- Dan make a concrete plan for 2026 goals and get it to everyone
- Develop a timeline for the year when we want certain things to turn over on the website – **who?**
- Someone to do a design for Fall 2026 to celebrate 80-year anniversary – **who?**
- Someone apply for AIC grant for quartet for Spring 2027 convention – **who?**
- Doug look into Lied Center for conventions beyond 2027
- Carter work on document to go to competitors about conduct
- Make decision on 2027 Spring Convention following 2026 Spring – **who?**