

Simplified billing process gets positive reviews from club leaders

The single-page invoice that Rotary clubs received in January, which replaces a complex document they'd previously had to complete, is being cheered by many club officers.

In the past, club secretaries had to fill out an eight-part semiannual report to calculate the amount their club owed Rotary International for membership dues, subscriptions, and outstanding balances. New members were written in, old members were crossed out, and many calculations were required before the club treasurer could pay the invoice.

"Nobody wanted to do the semiannual report; it was confusing," says Gail Winterstella, president of the Rotary Club of Spring Lake-Brielle, in New Jersey, USA. "Now, the invoice comes, it's done, it's right, and you just print it out and pay the bill. It's much easier." And all membership changes are now managed online. The club invoice is calculated from the number of members in Rotary's database as of 1 January and again as of 1 July.

John Neighbors, president of the Rotary Club of West U (Houston), is also happy with the change.

"The new club invoice has simplified the dues-payment system by billing for a stated amount rather than an estimated billing subject to club adjustment, thus allowing club and RI records to be consistent," Neighbors says. "I also like the detail that includes members by name and admission date, and keeps track of the additional Rotarian subscriptions for our honorary members and special persons."

Ann Wright, who is membership committee co-chair for District 5890 (Texas), points out another benefit: current and accurate membership information. Wright says that, in the past, clubs in her district tended to wait to update their membership data until they received the bill from RI showing a member total different from the number of members they knew they had. As a result, the district had accurate numbers for all of its 63 clubs only twice a year, two or three months after each billing was sent out. This made it difficult to gauge membership gains and losses, and therefore difficult to fine-tune membership strategies.

"Under the new system, we find that clubs are more diligent in maintaining accurate and current numbers on Rotary.org, and this is a great help to our governor and membership committee," Wright says.

Winterstella notes that Rotary staff provides excellent support for those using Rotary.org to manage club membership data. "If you have any problems, you make a phone call and they tell you how to do it. It's simple."

Here are a few things you need to know about the invoice:

- If you're a club leader, register new and terminated members within 30 days. Any changes for the July invoice must be entered by 1 July. You can update your membership data by signing in to Rotary.org and, under the Manage tab, navigating to Club administration, then add/edit/remove member.
- Encourage club members to immediately report changes in their membership status so that club officers can update the information.
- If your club uses an integrated local database to manage its membership information, check with your database vendor and allow plenty of time for Rotary to receive the changes. Consult the Frequently Asked Questions for more information about synching changes using an integrated local database.
- Changes in publication subscription preference should be made before each billing cycle. Subscriptions will be in effect for the entire billing cycle.
- Clubs are required to pay all outstanding dues within 120 days of the due date.