

Report to the District – The First Six Months

Rotarians and Family of Rotary,

It is a privilege to serve as your District Governor. Suzanne and I have completed the Official Visits and we have seen the energy in our clubs – and the incredible good works.

We have also found communities hurting from the economy – and towns where the banks have failed, the car dealers are gone, and clubs have lost some good Rotarians. We are sensitive to stresses of the economy and the strain on some clubs and individual Rotarians.

The economy is difficult– yet you have responded – with membership growth and financial support beyond expectations. This is a “wow” district. You continue to make me say, “wow” as you exhibit your Rotarian spirit. I am proud to be a Rotarian – and especially proud to be a District 6900 Rotarian.

I am pleased to share with you a partial recap of the first six months of the 2009-2010 Rotary year. We began the year with the economy in deep recession. Membership on July 1, was 4,585- lowest in a number of years. Our Conference site was in immediate jeopardy and, at District Assembly, the club presidents authorized me to move the Conference to new location.

Following a highly successful Projects Fair in August, in which many of our clubs partnered for international service, we were informed on September 1 that Matching Grants funding was fully committed for the year and there could be no consideration for new projects. Then, disaster struck the District with the floods on September 21. All in all, it has been a challenging first six months.

But, you know what? You recognized that *The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands* and because of that, we are doing just fine. You have taken the bold steps to ensure our District's service continues and that our leadership position remains intact.

It actually began at 2008 PETS, when our then presidents-nominee attended in such numbers that we overtaxed the facilities. These future club presidents were getting ready to lead. In January 2009, at International Assembly, John Kenny introduced our theme, *The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands*, and senior Rotary leaders encouraged me to champion our District's participation in the Foundation's Future Vision project. I am pleased that the District submitted for and was accepted as a pilot district. District 6900 will help shape the Rotary Foundation of the future.

At Leadership Training, our team came together with one of the best attended sessions in district history. At PETS, we were honored to hear from then President-Elect John Kenny and Director Eric Adamson. Our presidents-elect were charged to Dream Big, Have Fun, and Serve Meaningfully. They have done so. What a great start!

In the first days of the Rotary year, our clubs set a new international standard for Foundation giving- with an Annual Programs Fund gift from every club in D6900. Our fine Annual Giving Co-Chairs Carol and Hector Colon, traveled to Evanston to present your early gifts. It was our best-ever start in Foundation giving – and Rotary took notice! This first-ever achievement was featured on the front page of the Rotary International website, in Rotarian Magazine and in Rotary World. A few weeks later, our Projects Fair was also touted on the front page of the RI website and, as a result, the District received international interest – and participation – in its inaugural Projects Fair.

The Official Visits began in July, with our first stop, the 92-year old Rotary Club of Albany. I met for the first time, PDG Charlie Heinemann, our district's first Paul Harris Fellow. At this time, early discussions were taking place for Atlanta's bid for the 2017 International Convention. Atlanta Rotarians Spurgeon Richardson and Dick Stormont guided our District's efforts and the bid team they assembled prepared an outstanding bid proposal for Rotary International.

Just before District Assembly, we learned that Chairman of the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation and Past Rotary International President Glenn Estess will be President John Kenny's Representative to the District 6900

SuperConference. We are so pleased - and honored – that Glenn and Mary will be here representing President John and June.

449 Rotarians attended District Assembly in Columbus, making ready for their leadership roles. 449 Rotarians pledged that day to bring in a new member this year. Dedicated club leaders traveled from around the District and filled the Columbus Iron Works on a day of tornadoes and heavy rain- and endured a leaky roof!

And the District Conference site? We will convene the 2010 SuperConference inside our District, for the first time, at the Cobb Galleria Centre. We anticipate record attendance and participation for the biggest and best Conference in all of Rotary.

Our Foundation and Membership Seminars and Projects Fair drew record numbers of participants – as did the sold-out Foundation Dinner at the Waverly Hotel. At the dinner, PRIP Frank Devlyn reminded us of the good works of Our Rotary Foundation and recognized many new Paul Harris Society members and Major Donors. We are on pace to add more new PHF's and PHS and Major Donors than in any previous year.

In September, Chairman Glenn Estess urged us to fund our international projects this year with District Designated Funds and with cash. He told us The Foundation match will be missing this year. We have done just that, and more clubs are participating in more projects than ever before – with many of our clubs partnering in service!

You responded generously and compassionately and made disaster relief funds available to the clubs in the communities affected by the flood – and you donated your time and labor to help the victims. We are indeed, a Family of Rotary.

All the while, you have served your local communities and the worldwide community. Our efforts in literacy, health and hunger, clean water and sanitation are significant.

We have delivered a new membership message this year. Making use of this message many of you are adding new members to your rosters. I am pleased to report that we are leading Zones 33 and 34 in growth with a net gain of 82 members. We welcome a new club this year, Emory-Druid Hills. Organization of yet another new club is in its infancy.

Our clubs are having a good year. Many have notable accomplishments. Smyrna Rotary began the year with a first day gift to TRF of more than \$71,000 – and the club repeated as a 100% Paul Harris Fellow Club. Smyrna is currently *Number Four in the World* in per capita giving to TRF. Did I mention how proud I am of my club?

The District's Annual Giving is on pace and total giving is ahead of last year at this time. I ask you to continue your generous support of Our Rotary Foundation.

To address the needs of Rotarians in our district we have introduced Career Networking resources. We have partnered with Georgia Libraries and are eager to see that partnership work to address literacy needs in Southwest Georgia.

Our Ethics message is being presented across the District and it is a message well received. Has PDG Claudia Mertl, District Ethics Chair, been to your club? In a time that many of our leaders in business and government are making bad choices and consciously doing wrong, we are reminded that more is expected from Rotarians.

We have worked to conserve the district's resources and protect its assets with conservative spending and reduction of expense where possible – with monies saved going to service. We will continue to serve. By combining our seminars we have introduced economies of scale and have required less travel and accommodations expense for our clubs.

I asked the Long Range Planning Committee this year to consider our district governance and make sure it reflects the will of the clubs and the Rotarians in the clubs and to ensure that it is consistent with the Manual of Procedure and Rotary's Code of Policies. I asked that same committee to consider our future positions respective to RLI and GRSP and how we can improve communications and implement a Strategic Leadership Plan.

There are exciting happenings. Rotary International has informed us they intend to pursue Atlanta's bid for the 2017 International Convention and the 100th Anniversary Celebration of The Rotary Foundation. D6900 Rotarians were at the forefront in attracting the International Convention.

We are organizing a Young Rotarians Group that will meet at the SuperConference in April. It is my hope that we will create new fellowship opportunities, identify emerging leaders and engage them in District service. For the first time, we will partner our clubs for fellowship at the District SuperConference – and we will introduce the District 6900 Choir, under the direction of Marietta Rotarian, Larry Freeman.

Now, we are at the halfway point of the 2009-2010 Rotary year. I ask that you help us close this year in a manner befitting this wonderful Rotary district – and I ask that we all celebrate a year of accomplishment at the SuperConference in April.

I asked our presidents to Dream Big. It is great to realize so many of the Big Dreams of our club presidents and their clubs. I encouraged you to Have Fun. Our service together and Family of Rotary has been special and the fun is just beginning - wait for the SuperConference! I asked you to Serve Meaningfully. You have done so beyond belief. You truly have made a difference for others. You continue to deliver Service Above Self and you astound me as I consider your good works and reflect upon the Goodness of Rotary.

Now, in the remaining months of the 2009-2010 Rotary year, I ask that each of you (1) Bring in a new member; (2) Make a special gift to the Annual Programs Fund; and (3) Register for and attend the District SuperConference.

Those of you who can, please become a Paul Harris Society member or a Major Donor. The Foundation's works must continue and we enable the good works through our gifts.

I am proud to serve the *Best Rotary District* in the world! I am proud to serve with you. Thanks for all you do!

The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands

Best Rotary Regards,
DG Roy