

Health Care and Life Insurance as Member Benefits

Many of you are unaware that membership in your Society can provide you with access to many valuable, personal, permanent, and portable economic benefits and protections. Fewer still are aware that in the U.S. SMPTE participates with 32 other organizations in the Engineering, Scientific, and Technical Organizations Life Insurance Trust (ESTOLI). Through such participation, SMPTE can offer its members and their eligible dependents attractive group rates and benefits for a wide range of financial services.

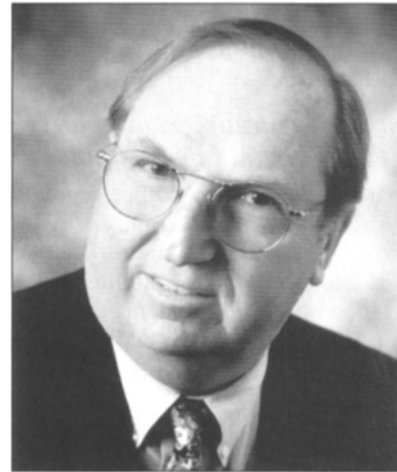
Reviewing the Current Plan

While the basic building blocks of this plan have been in place for some time with regard to the U.S. and have been competitively priced and featured, very few members have taken advantage of what has been available. To me, this indicated that either the plan was unattractive or unknown to the membership.

As a result, some time ago I undertook to have the offerings reviewed, improved upon to the furthest extent possible to provide better service to members, and expanded so that a superior and more complete range of insurance and affinity services could be offered as another advantage of membership in the Society. Also, in view of the international nature of our membership, I undertook to attempt to extend the geographic area over which services could be provided. As the review neared completion, I planned to make you aware of what would be made available and tell you about what we were still planning to introduce. And, as these offerings would not yet be finalized, to invite you to make comments and suggestions as to how the range and makeup of these new services could be configured to best help you.

Supporting the Members of Our Profession

In my mind, these are important issues because they help make it possible for individuals and small companies to participate more fully in this industry. They also support the changing nature of much of the professional participation in parts of this industry, with more emphasis than before being placed on entrepreneurial, personal, and small group initiatives. Typically, these smaller, if not individual, business units lack the commercial clout to provide their principals or few employees with affordable and adequate health, life, and insurance protection. Neither do they have ready access to the preferred rates for many common business expenditures such as courier services, hotels, automobile rental, and the like enjoyed by many larger groups and corporations. Now, however, through your individual membership in SMPTE you can



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address both issues and gain individual access to many preferential rates and portable services.

Have Control Over Your Health Care

The portability, permanence, and personal nature of the services membership in SMPTE will provide access to is also important in that group access and coverage will be made available that is not tied to a particular state of employment, specific employer, or single project. They are a function only of continued personal membership in the Society. And continued membership is a choice over which you have personal control. Through our efforts we have been successful in extending coverage availability for many of these offerings into several other SMPTE regions, though program availability is far from uniform and generally reflects the various levels of need and availability of such services worldwide.

Keeping You Informed of Our Progress

Our review is nearing completion. Several of the plans now in place and available to you as a member, and available and portable as long as you are a member, are listed and described in the Executive Director's comments that follow. Plan information will be available on our Web site and, as plans change rapidly, the site will also carry the latest on affinity programs as they develop. Access to group services such as these provide yet another reason to become, and remain, an active SMPTE member.

As always, your comments and suggestions would be welcome.

— David L. George

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