



Gene M. Seibert, National Commodore

SUBJECT:

Simplified Reporting

The AuxAR Program:

One of the projects I hoped to see delivered during my term as National Commodore is the Auxiliary Activity Report (AuxAR) program. This electronic reporting process will allow members to report hours into AUXDATA simply, quickly and online. I mistakenly thought implementation of this new process would be a slam-dunk. Unfortunately, I underestimated the complexity of the connection to the AUXDATA system and so we are still waiting for this ball, now circling the rim, to fall through the hoop. Here's some background and the current status of this important project.

It's critical for Auxiliary decision making, planning and funding that we have a more realistic picture of our overall activity and service. That requires accurate and complete member reporting.

Easier Reporting:

During the last two years I have been encouraging the "I" department (Auxiliary Department of Information Technology) to work towards simplifying our member hours and missions reporting system. We know that, for a variety of reasons, too many members do not report their hours. It's critical for Auxiliary decision making, planning and funding that we have a more realistic picture of our overall activity and service. That requires accurate and complete member reporting. So it is vital that we deliver a system of member hours reporting that is simple, easy, quick and web-based. The new AuxAR program will reduce the mission categories, while providing the necessary information. AuxAR will provide a simplified form and allow for direct, on-line submission by the member.

Internet Based reporting:

The key to AuxAR's efficiency is a web-based, Internet accessible system that will deliver the submitted data automatically into our AUXDATA database within the Coast Guard Intranet (an **Intranet** is an internal-only website). Members will simply log into a secure site and enter their hours in electronic forms similar to our current 7029 and 7030 forms. Since AuxAR is web-based it is accessed through a simple web-browser (IE Internet Explorer) found on all computers. There is no requirement for special software to be installed on member computers. Key information (member name, etc.) is pre-populated into the on-line form so members will need only enter the pertinent mission hours and click 'submit.' The member's appropriate IS officer (Information Services) will review the submissions and the data is then automatically streamed into AUXDATA.

This highly efficient system will make reporting much simpler for all of us. By eliminating errors made during re-keying all data a second time as is done now, on-line member entry also makes the IS Officer job much easier and quicker,

Implementation Expectations:

In several reports and speeches, we have discussed these plans and projected the completion of the Auxiliary Activity Report (AuxAR) form for 2006. The form itself has been designed, the programming work is done and the process has been beta tested.

Our momentum on the AuxAR program has been slowed by the special requirements to be able to connect with AUXDATA. AUXDATA is a Coast Guard system so the Auxiliary has limited control over its processes. AUXDATA, like all Coast Guard systems, is very secure and protected by advanced firewalls. In order to interact with AUXDATA, AuxAR must cross through the Coast Guard secure zones and penetrate through the firewalls. Once 'inside' the AUXDATA system, AuxAR MUST connect and speak to AUXDATA in a secure and compatible manner. The AuxAR process must meet Coast Guard criteria as determined by several different and independent Coast Guard offices.

The Auxiliary Chief Director's office at Coast Guard headquarters has helped guide the AuxAR program through the development and acceptance process. The program is still going through final concurrences and tests for interoperability, and at this point, there is no definite timeframe for acceptance.

The Auxiliary I department has done the preliminary work to get this process in place. The Coast Guard has completed initial tests of the system but they still need to resolve some of the security access and interoperability issues.

Implementation of the new AuxAR member reporting system is now waiting for final authorization from the Coast Guard.

Summary:

Although I would have been very pleased to have this system finalized on my watch, I know that the process is now in the capable hands of the Coast Guard who must protect the security of their systems while enabling our input.

Watch the horizon for AuxAR to enable Internet based member input!

Semper Paratus,



Gene M. Seibert

National Commodore