



## Chapter Connection

### What makes the Chattanooga, TN Chapter Work?

#### Contributed by: **Mary W. Haider, MBA, CRM**

Our members and board of directors are so honored to receive the Chapter of The Year Award for 10 straight years! Do you wonder how we got here? There are several reasons, and one important reason is that we've been very strategic in the planning of our yearly events.

Our members told us in a recent survey why they keep coming back, month after month, year after year:

- Meeting topics are good
- Chapter is willing to try new things
- Chapter members are involved in ARMA at a regional/national level
- New members each year
- Board members are a good mix of long-term and new
- Steady improvements to benefit the membership
- Great people with good experience
- Leadership **and** members are active
- Learning opportunities
- Career development
- Community focused projects

And two ideas that pull it all together:

- Set specific goals based on our members' needs
- Overcome obstacles to meet these goals

It is through survey results like this that we listen to what our members say they want and need from our chapter. This helps our board provide fresh, updated, interesting, and necessary ideas, like:

- Provide at a reduced price a webinar of the meetings in real time to those members who cannot physically attend.
- Introduce visitors at the beginning of the meeting and follow up with them to encourage future membership
- Provide an "Education Minute" topic for each meeting.
- Secure private meeting rooms for lunches and presentations.



## Chapter Connection

- Provide options for electronic payment and receipt (Pay Pal on the website and an electronic payment dongle for credit cards at meetings) to assist our members in easier reimbursement of the meeting cost from their employers.
- Provide experienced, knowledgeable speakers who can deliver current and interesting topics, and allow time at the end for questions and discussion of shared challenges.
- Partner with our member organizations to provide a SHRED DAY that is open to the public.

Community involvement is a key chapter focus as well. We have partnerships with the following agencies:

- Candlelighter's Organization
- Ronald McDonald House
- Keep America Beautiful in Bradley County with the ERG group
- Newcomers of Cleveland
- United Way annual giver
- Ronald McDonald House
- St. Jude Children's Hospital
- Charity Drive for Vanderbilt Children's Hospital

A primary benefit of ARMA membership is to offer an opportunity to learn about records and information management. Our member comments confirm this:

- "It can take a person who knew nothing about records to someone who can manage the records for my employer."
- "I joined to learn; now I want to support the chapter."
- "To keep up to date with the industry."
- "Cutting edge topics."
- "Speakers are very informative/share interesting information."

Maintaining our focus on member needs, technology, education, and community to simplify work and extend our outreach, the Greater Chattanooga Area Chapter continues to excel at the local, regional, and international levels.