The 2013 Annual PSA Website Contest provides an opportunity for PSA Clubs and Councils to compare their websites with others of comparable size and receive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their sites as evaluated by a panel of knowledgeable judges. Award recognition will be given to those sites the judges rate most successful based on the categories and criteria below. All entrants will receive feedback in August 2013.

1. HOME PAGE

First impressions are everything. Research shows that a site visitor makes up his/her mind within the first 5-10 seconds whether to load a website or hit the back button. The home page is highly visible and should offer something new or original if you hope the first time or returning visitor will stick around. A good home page should convey professionalism, creativity and captivate interest. It should have a pleasing graphic feel. The home page must be useable with lots of navigational links and sections to direct access about your website. The menu or toolbar should let the reader know what the reader can expect from your site and be easy to understand. Overall, a good home page design should be appealing, polished, relevant and easily understood.

2. DESIGN

Overall design and appearances do matter. Good use of color (not too harsh on the eyes), easily readable font (which are found on most of today's computers), meaningful graphics that add meaning to your text, high quality images and uncluttered layouts that allow visitors to focus on your message should be utilized. Site map and navigation should be on the same place on each page. Your layout should be organized with consideration of the page width. Minimize your use of anything that is going to cause your site to take a long time to load. Don't over complicate things.

3. CONTENT

The most important element of your website is the content. When people come to your site, it is usually for a reason and they want to see credible and valuable information. Content is the substance of web pages and consists of the details and graphics that make up each page. The body of your website needs to be well organized. Define who you are, what you do, why you exist, where you are located and how you can be contacted. All Information should be up to date and professionally presented. Clearly label topics. Update your content regularly. Speak to your visitors using you rather than we and us. Have an "about" page as people are curious and usually want to know who/what is behind the organization. State the purpose and expected users of your website. Contact information must be accurate. Be clear, concise and compelling.

4. NAVIGATION / EASE OF USE

You should have prominent and logical navigation. Try to limit your menu items to 10 or fewer by remembering that visitors don't like to hunt for information. Usability testing shows that long

link text makes it easier for visitors to find their way around a site and are favored by Search Engines as well. Back links give users a sense of direction and keep them from getting lost. Navigation should indicate where you are on the site. Make sure to have a "home" link on your menu/toolbar. Sites should have a minimum loading time. Good navigation should be user friendly, simple and stand out. Good websites with many pages have a search tool to assist their readers. Speed is something people only notice when it is absent. And, don't forget accessibility for the mobile phone.

5. FUNCTIONALITY & CLARITY

Every component of your website should work quickly and correctly. It should be easy to access, use and navigate. Text should require no interpretation. Consistency and organization of information should be utilized throughout. People do judge websites by the quality of their writing, spelling and grammar which should be free of errors.

6. BROWSER COMPATABILITY

Another key element of a good website is that it displays well in as many of the mainstream web browsers as possible and is also compatible across platforms. Different browsers often have different rules for displaying content. You should test your content against the latest versions of Internet Explorer as well as Firefox and Safari. The success of your website can hinge on how well it is optimized for search engines.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legal pages for websites include things like: privacy policies, copyright notices, terms and conditions of use, disclaimers, accessibility information, abuse or complaints contact information and trademarks. You will need to take a look at your website and evaluate it (with or without legal counsel) to determine if you need a specific type of legal page. It is important to include a copyright notice on all of your WebPages. Many websites include a terms and conditions of use of their site. This explains what actions are allowed and disallowed while using the site. Disclaimers are used on sites where there is a lot of user submitted content that isn't moderated by the site owners or there are a lot of links to external pages. What legal pages should all websites have? The answer is, "it depends". However, PSA feels strongly that sites for members should be password protected, copyrights should be in place for member images, clubs should have bylaws included and external links should be addressed.

8. INDIVIDUAL CLUB OR COUNCIL OBJECTIVES MET

Clubs have differing objectives for their websites and these objectives should be clear to visitors to the website. Is your site intended for members only, to recruit new members, to provide an outlet for member images, to educate members or some combination of these objectives? Clearly indicated objectives will let visitors decide whether your site will be useful to them.