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September 2023 Newsletter

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Choose SC as your state &

Piedmont as your chapter.



SUPPORT OUR CHARITIES

Piedmont Chapter - President's Message

We're into the "Dog Days of Summer" with many things going on in our chapter. Thank you to those of you who attended our 20 July membership luncheon at Sullivan's - MG Van McCarty, the South Carolina Adjutant General, did an exceptional job as our guest speaker. It was good that several of you got to meet and talk with him before and after our luncheon.

Coming up on 21 September is our membership meeting at the University of Clemson Madren Center where we will have the Army and Air Force ROTC leaders as our guests to give a brief overview of their programs; and the Army and Air Force Cadets who were the ROTC MOAA medal recipients to briefly talk about their ROTC experience and their plans for the future.

We welcome 2 new members: Lt. Col. Don Warmuth and his wife Ann of Central; and former Army 1LT Sam Hammond of Anderson. Please extend a hand of welcome when you see them at our meetings. We continue to actively seek new members.

Sadly, we unfortunately mourn the loss of Lt. Col. John Russell, USAF (Ret) who passed away in June. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Mary Lou (please see our TAPS section).

As I have mentioned before, our Piedmont Chapter is the sponsoring organization to breathe life into a new MOAA Greenville Chapter. We feel this is a very important step for the largest metropolitan area in South Carolina to support the MOAA mission with the 1269 current MOAA members in that area. We are planning and hosting a 10 October organizational meeting, spearheaded by Lt. Col. Howard Stammerjohn and Col. Dale Ellenburg, at the Rupert Huse Veterans' Center in Greenville. We have the commitment of Maj. Gen. Akey, SC Council President for financial support and to come speak at the 10 October meeting. Several of you have already stepped up to assist us with planning and leg-work help. However, WE NEED MORE OF YOU TO HELP!!! Please let Howard or me know if you can assist us before or during the 10 October meeting.

With the leadership of CDR Janelle Merritt, we are also making progress to strengthen our relationship with the JROTC programs we support. We are sending out invitations to the JROTC leadership at each school to join us in a roundtable discussion of common challenges for the programs and to identify areas that we can help them.

An important item for the financial well-being of our chapter: over the past several years, during and following Covid, we have seen significant increases in the cost of food, gasoline, labor and almost everything else that we use, eat, drink, and do. We have been the beneficiaries of some raises in our Social Security payments and our retired/disability pay to help keep pace with that. In our planning for events, we have tried to hold the line on the cost of meals with our chapter having to supplement what each of us paid for meals, but we can't continue to do that at the level we have been operating. Your Board of Directors has voted to set a cap of \$25/person for luncheons and \$35/person for dinners. Please keep in mind that we only have 6 luncheon/dinner meetings per year so each of us is looking at an increase of only between \$30 and \$60 per person per year. Our Board has also voted to increase our annual membership dues to \$25/year from the \$15 that has been the annual dues amount for at least the last 10 years. I trust you will understand why this is necessary and continue to support our Piedmont Chapter. This increase in annual dues will be voted on by the membership at our 21 September meeting.

Coming up this month, we will all celebrate with our Air Force brethren the United States Air Force's 76th birthday (18 September 1947). Happy Birthday Air Force!!!

This day (1 September) in US military history: On 1 September 1944, General of the Army, Dwight D. Eisenhower, established his headquarters in France as the Commander-in-Chief of all Allied Forces in Europe after the successful 6 June 1944 Normandy Invasion and Allied Forces attacks to the East. On 1 September 1982, the United States Air Force Space Command was established.

Thank you all for your support of our chapter. I look forward to seeing you at our 21 September dinner meeting in Clemson.

Mel Case; Colonel, Infantry (Ret) President, Piedmont Chapter, MOAA

Piedmont Chapter - 21 September MOAA Meeting

Date/Time: 1730 - Thursday, 21 September 2023

Place: Clemson Madren Conference Center

Address: Madren Center Drive, Clemson, SC 29631

Cost: 35.00 per person (includes tax and gratuity)

RSVP/Mail Checks: Dan Tollison, 115 Piccadilly Ct, Anderson, SC 29625

Email: dan@majorgrumpy.com / Phone: 864-958-0975

Checks payable to: Piedmont Chapter, MOAA

RSVP Date: NLT, 14 September 2023

We have invited the Clemson ROTC Cadets who received the MOAA medals last Spring as well as the colonels from both the Army and Air Force programs.

Spouses and guests are encouraged to attend. If you are a prospective member and wish to attend this function, and/or join the chapter, please send in your reservation, and contact the following:

Membership Chairperson: Howard Stammerjohn

Phone: 864-964-1631 / Email: piedmont.moaa@aim.com

RESERVATION FOR: Clemson Madren Center, Thursday 1730 21 September 2023

Name(s):	 	
0 ./.		
Guest(s):		

Piedmont Chapter - Dates to Remember!

Board Meeting 3 October – (1000) Ravines Club House, 104 Life Style Lane, Anderson.

Member Meeting, Chapters 60th Anniversary 16 November – (1130) – Anderson Bleckley Inn (Benson Room). A former SC Air National Guard F-16 Pilot and former SC State Senator Phil Leventis will be invited to speak.

The November meeting will be the Chapter's 60th birthday and will be celebrated with a cake and a sword. Mel will supply the sword and Daniel will supply the cake.

Board Meeting 5 December – (1000) Ravines Club House, 104 Life Style Lane, Anderson.

Member Meeting 18 January 2024 - TBD. Tuckers Restaurant

Member Meeting 21 March 2024 - Tentative lunch to be held at Occasions, at 1130.

Piedmont Chapter - New Members

HERE WE GROW AGAIN...WELCOME ABOARD

1LT Sam Hammond, USA, Former Officer, Citadel Graduate. 132 Life Style Lane, Anderson, SC 29621, 864-276-1967, samhammond36@yahoo.com

LtCol Donald Warmuth, USAF (Ret) and his wife Ann. 610 College Street, Central, SC 29630, 864-634-0260, donald.warmuth@att.net

Piedmont Chapter - Thank you for your gift to support our Chapter programs:

We have 2 Beneficiaries:

1. JROTC

Citizenship, leadership, character, and community service are the core tenets of high school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs. Your South Carolina Council of MOAA supports many JROTC activities directly and through our individual state chapters. Your donation will provide scholarships or other benefits to select JROTC candidates. For more information about JROTC, click HERE

2. Fisher House Foundation

Fisher Houses provide military families with housing close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury. Your South Carolina Council of MOAA supports Fisher House directly and through our individual state chapters. Your donation provides funding for local Fisher House facilities throughout South Carolina. For more information about Fisher House, click HERE

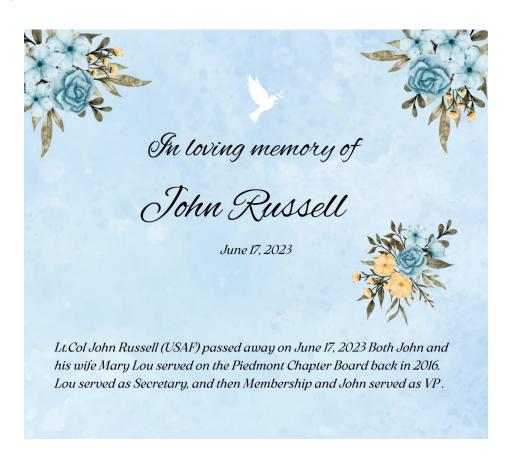
Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Current Donations for 2023 - Total \$694.00

Please send all donations to the following address:

MOAA Piedmont Chapter, Dan Tollison, 115 Picadilly CT, Anderson SC 29625

Piedmont Chapter - TAPS



Military News - Who Is Eligible for Space-A Flights?

The following is a partial listing of eligible individuals and their category of travel. In Space A terms, your "category" of travel is your priority. The numerical order of space-available categories indicates who gets to board the plane first. Travelers in lower numbered categories move first.

You are placed in one of these six categories based on a combination of two criteria: your status (for example, active-duty member, DoDDS teacher, etc.), and your situation (for example, emergency leave, and ordinary leave, etc.). Once accepted for movement, a space-available passenger may not be "bumped" by another space-available passenger, regardless of category.

A complete listing of eligible passengers by category is found on the AMC website.

Category I - Emergency leave travel

- US citizens and DOD Civilian Employees stationed overseas.
- Full-time, paid personnel of the American Red Cross serving with U.S. military overseas.
- Military family members whose sponsors are stationed within the Continental United States (CONUS) and the emergency exists overseas.
- Family members of U.S. citizen civilian DOD employees when both sponsor and dependents are stationed at the same location overseas.

Category II - Accompanied Environmental & Morale Leave (EML)

- Sponsors on EML and accompanied family members.
- DoD Dependent School (DoDDS) teachers and their accompanied family members in EML status during school year holiday, vacation periods.

Category III - Ordinary Leave, House Hunting TDY

- Military members on ordinary leave and military patients on convalescent leave.
- Military members on permissive temporary duty (TDY) orders for house hunting in conjunction with PCS orders.
 Military members can be accompanied by one family member.
- Dependents of military members deployed for more than 365 consecutive days.
- Military family members (up to age 23 with a valid ID card) of a military member when accompanied by their sponsor who is in an ordinary leave status between overseas and CONUS.

Category IV - Unaccompanied dependents on EML

- Dependents of military members deployed more than 120 consecutive days.
- Unaccompanied family members (18 years or older) traveling on EML orders. Family members under 18 must be accompanied by an adult family member who is traveling EML.
- DoDDS teachers or family members (accompanied or unaccompanied) in an EML status during summer break

Category V - Permissive TDY, Students, Dependents, Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence

- Unaccompanied command-sponsored dependents
- Students whose sponsor is stationed in Alaska or Hawaii
- Students enrolled in school INCONUS when the sponsor is stationed overseas.
- Military personnel traveling on permissive TDY orders for other than house hunting.

Category VI - Retirees, Dependents, Reservists & Disabled Veterans

- National Guard/Reserve components/members of the Ready Reserve and members of the Standby Reserve who are
 on the Active Status List.
- Retired military members who are issued DD Form 214 and eligible to receive retired or retainer pay & their family members, family members are only eligible if they have an ID card and travel with retired service member.
- Veterans with a VA rated permanent 100% disability and their dependents. Dependents must be accompanied by the sponsor and travel must be in CONUS or directly between the CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, or U.S. territories.
- Surviving spouses of retirees or of service members who died on active duty or training status. Their dependents may also travel if accompanied by the surviving spouse.

Stay on Top of Your Military Benefits

Military benefits are always changing. Keep up with everything from pay to health care by subscribing to Military.com and get access to up-to-date pay charts and more with all latest benefits delivered straight to your inbox.

Military News - Lawmakers Advance Bill to Let Disabled Vets Collect Full Benefits, But Hurdles to Passage Remain

A key House panel has for the first time advanced a bill that would dramatically expand benefits for veterans injured in combat.

In a voice vote Wednesday, the House Armed Services Committee approved the Major Richard Star Act, which would ensure service members who medically retire before 20 years have full access to both military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits.

"This bill gets at a big injustice facing many of our veterans," Chairman Mike Rogers, R-Ala., said at Wednesday's committee meeting.

Right now, veterans with fewer than 20 years of service and a disability rating of less than 50% have their retirement pay reduced by a dollar for every dollar of disability pay they get.

Those rules mean an estimated 50,000 retirees are ineligible for concurrent benefits. The average offset was about \$1,900 per month in 2022, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The Major Richard Star Act, which is named after an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran who died in 2021 from cancer he developed after burn pit exposure, would remove those restrictions so that all retirees with combat-related disabilities can collect their full retirement and disability benefits.

The bill has been a major priority for veterans' service organizations, and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester, D-Mont., identified it as one of his top priorities this year. The legislation has also garnered broad bipartisan support, with 325 co-sponsors in the House and 68 in the Senate.

Despite the strong bipartisan support, the bill has in the past struggled to advance, in part over questions about how it would be paid for. Additionally, last year, getting the sweeping toxic exposure bill known as the PACT Act over the finish line took precedence over the Major Richard Star Act.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the legislation could cost an estimated \$9.75 billion in what's known as mandatory spending over the next decade.

Despite Wednesday's breezy passage through the House Armed Services Committee, questions about how to pay for the bill remain, making its path to final passage unclear. Under House rules, increases to mandatory spending must be offset. "Although I support this bill, I am disappointed the committee is being forced to act on it before a pay-for could be found. Moving a bill forward with mandatory spending that isn't fully offset opens the bill up to a point of order against its consideration on the floor," Rogers said. "Nevertheless, we will work with leadership and the VA committee to see if an offset can be found for this bill."

Still, supporters cheered that the bill had inched forward.

"The brave men and women who return from serving our country should be able to receive the benefits promised to them," Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., the lead sponsor of the measure in the House, said in a statement after the committee scheduled its vote on his bill. "Military retirement pay and service-connected disability compensation are two completely different benefits. One does not diminish the merits of the other."

MOAA News - Here's How the NDAA Versions Address Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network

Both the House and Senate addressed one of MOAA's top priorities – cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy network – in their markups of the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Language in both versions requires reporting on the beneficiary impact of the narrowed network, which shrank by nearly 25% in the last 12 months.

After the October 2022 departure of approximately 15,000 independent pharmacies from the TRICARE network, hundreds of MOAA members and other TRICARE beneficiaries reached out to us expressing anger and disappointment with yet another TRICARE cut. A Congressional Research Service report later revealed the network reduction was driven by reduced network requirements in the new TPharm5 contract: The Defense Health Agency (DHA) dropped the minimum number of network pharmacies from 50,000 to 35,000 as a cost-cutting measure, allowing Express Scripts to construct the narrowed network.

This has created access challenges for rural residents, the elderly, and those with serious, chronic medical conditions. With both Walgreens and CVS currently in network, most healthy families in metro areas can still access medications for their occasional prescription needs, but they recognize the network cut has reduced the protections TRICARE should provide. Many affected beneficiaries already use mail order for maintenance medications, but they now face challenges in obtaining prescription drugs for acute conditions. For instance, MOAA recently heard from a beneficiary in Idaho whose town had two independent pharmacies in the TRICARE network; he now must drive nearly 27 miles, one way, to get to the nearest network pharmacy.

Members Can Make a Difference

MOAA appreciates the efforts of our spring Advocacy in Action participants – both in person and online – who took the pharmacy network cuts issue to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. But we still need your help to get the optimal report requirements included in the final version of the FY 2024 NDAA; that's why the issue remains part of our 2023 Advocacy in Action Summer Campaign.

We thank both the House and Senate for responding to MOAA's request for a report on beneficiary impact. The Senate's committee report included directive report language for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on TRICARE's pharmacy network cuts. While this language is not legally binding, agency officials generally regard it as a congressional mandate and respond accordingly.

MOAA appreciates Rep. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.) who submitted a floor amendment with detailed DoD reporting requirements that was included in the House version of the NDAA. Section 765 of that bill requires an analysis of the change in access from TPharm4 to TPharm5, with a focus on rural families, long term care residents, and medication compliance rates.

Please join MOAA's efforts to ensure robust reporting requirements are included in the final version of the FY 2024 NDAA by contacting your lawmakers today.

Piedmont Chapter - A Little NAVAL History

Why some liquors are designated 'Navy strength' and how they get the title!

During a quick browse through the gin section of your local Class Six, you might come across a label that reads "Navy Strength." Be advised that choosing a Navy Strength gin over a more common label like Beefeater, Bombay or even Hendrick's will give your tonic a potent kick – kinda like the power of a battleship's guns.

It's not only gin brands that offer a Navy Strength alternative. Any liquor can be dubbed Navy Strength, but it's usually used for gin and rum – the chosen beverages for old-timey sailors. The reason for that is intertwined with the history of the title and dates all the way back to the age of sail.



Leander-class frigate at their last rum ration, known in the navy as Black Tot Day, on HMS Ajax, UK, 31st July 1970. (Photo by Evening Standard/Hulton Archive/Getty images)

Any liquor with an alcohol by volume of above 57% can be considered "Navy Strength," but the reason we most commonly associate it with gin and rum is because there weren't a lot of sailors flying around the Caribbean drinking bourbon or tequila, if there were any at all. Rum and Gin were cheap, easy to produce, and didn't lose their flavor over time. They also packed a wallop – or at least, they were supposed to.

Water wasn't easily found at sea, and when it was available, it wasn't always safe to drink. Beer would have been preferable, but it also tended to spoil in wooden barrels. Distilled spirits, with their high alcohol content, never did. The British introduced rum, mixed with water and lime juice (to prevent scurvy) in the 1700s.

In the officer's mess, however, they were enjoying gin, a similarly distilled spirit, but flavored with a mix of botanicals that came from Asia and Africa. It's just one more perk of command. But whether you're an officer or enlisted sailor, you want your daily alcohol ration to pack its expected punch, so the sailors would "proof" their booze.

The ship's alcohol was stored in the hold next to the ship's gunpowder back in those days, and for good reason. If the barrels of alcohol split open and drenched the powder, a proper-strength spirit would still burn, meaning the drenched gunpowder would still explode in the ship's guns. It also meant the alcohol would have the sailors' desired effects. When the booze was first brought on board the ship, the sailors would test it using the powder. They would mix the two and light it on fire to see if it would burn. Any alcohol above 57.15% by volume would still burn the powder, and the crew would accept that the booze as "gunpowder proof." Hence the "proof" designation on alcohol bottles – at least in the United Kingdom.

In the UK, a spirit above 57.15% is 100 proof. When diluted to 40%, it's listed as 70 proof.

In the United States, the proof requires much less math. The U.S. proof of any given batch of alcohol is twice the percentage of alcohol by volume, so a 100-proof liquor is 50% alcohol by volume.

No matter what country the booze is from, it still needs to be able to burn with gunpowder to earn the title "Navy Strength." So, no matter how much math you're doing to proof it, it still needs to be above 57% alcohol by volume. It's unlikely that any manufacturer or distiller is still using gunpowder to determine its strength, though. Story by Team Mighty.

Piedmont Chapter - What's Happening in our own backyard...

If you have any events that you would like to add to the calendar, please email me at. lynnlaht@aol.com

Message from Dale - Maui Fires

David Dempsey is a very good friend and is probably now the backbone of the Daniel Morgan Chapter. I receive their newsletters, special correspondence like below, and invitations to attend their special meetings. Although according to David I'm a member in good standing I receive no dues, guess I'm an Honorary or as David put it an ornery member. David and Nan are both friends of Mary Ellen and I and our hearts are grieving for the losses on Maui but thankful that David's son and his family are safe and well. At one time we had numerous other friends in that Chapter alas, "Father Time" has depleted the ranks.

This is a worthy issue, as stated, David's son is a resident of fire-stricken Maui. Although not impacted personally, he is so emotionally and socially. I'm certain as the body count climbs, he may find a personal connection to the devastating fire and its impact. Please read. This is not a report from the media, this is an on the ground live eyewitness account. So, these are "spot on" observations as to what has and will continue to occur as this event moves from search and rescue to recovery and identify. This and the huge material destruction will no doubt take several years for total recovery.

Our President, Mel Case, served at Schofield Barracks, Wahiawa, Oahu, where the 25 ID is stationed for a goodly number of years. So, he too has familiarity with the geography and history of the Islands.

The following is a message from David Dempsey:

Greetings All,

As most of you know, our son, Griff, lives on Maui. Nan and I have 8 family members living on Maui. They are all ok and did not suffer any losses. They are currently working to help those who have experienced devastating losses. The situation there is far worse than we know. The loss of life will be much higher than currently reported. Some estimate 1,000 +. There are thousands of people who have lost EVERYTHING. Griff has been working for the last several days carrying food, water, and supplies by truck and by boat to those in need. Our other family members are cooking food for displaced families.

Nan and I have visited Lahaina many times over the years and can't imagine it being gone. All the history and the Hawai'ian cultural sites are gone. I looked at a limited-edition poster in our hall, from a restaurant we visited in Paris. We purchased it in Lahaina several years ago and I could not help thinking that we "rescued" that poster from destruction.

I would encourage all the Daniel Morgan Chapter MOAA members to consider a donation to a reputable charity for Maui assistance. I also ask that you forward this email to other organizations and friends.

Thank You for your consideration, Nan and David Dempsey

Donate Now to the American Red Cross

Donate Now to the Maui Wildfire Relief



Piedmont Chapter 2023-2024 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

UFFIGENS		
President	COL Melvin E. Case, USA	904-304-8871
VP/Programs	COL Wayne Beam, USA	843-814-7145
Secretary	Sharon Jacobs, Surviving Spouse	864-245-5501
Treasurer	MAJ Daniel Tollison, USMC	864-958-0975
Past President	LtCol Wayne Watson, USAF	864-296-1815
DIRECTORS		
Legislation	COL Dale Ellenburg, USA	864-225-1073
ROTC Awards/Publicity	CDR Janelle Merritt, USN	864-617-1153
Membership	LtCol Howard Stammerjohn, USAF	864-964-1631
Newsletter	CDR Alan Erisman, USN	678-778-0183
Webmaster/Publicity	Angie Pellegrini, Honorary Member	864-318-4661
Facebook	LtCol Jack Gregory, USAF	864-367-6123
Chaplain/Personal Affairs	Rev (Col) Gordon Johnson, USAF	864-633-4995
Hospitality	Sharon Jacobs, Surviving Spouse	864-245-5501
	Penny Schriver, Surviving Spouse	864-224-4374

Piedmont Chapter - Reminders

Recording Secretary Needed

Ladies and Gents: This is a special appeal to **ALL** members of the Piedmont Chapter. I repeat...**ALL** members of each gender. The Chapter needs a Recording Secretary starting in 2024. Sharon Jacobs has held this office for many years and has done a superb job. But she announced earlier this year that this would be her last and we needed to seek a replacement. Hence this request.

The job entails attending 6 Board meetings a year and recording and distributing the minutes to the Board members for finalization. We also record minutes at 6-chapter luncheon or dinner meetings each year. Normally, no business is conducted at these meetings and any Board member could fill in if necessary. The Secretary also maintains the permanent records of the Chapter. A recording device is available for your use.

As the saying goes "It's not rocket science". Every member, their spouse, and surviving spouse are qualified and asked to volunteer for this position. You will be involved in the inner circle and know what is happening with your chapter. We realize a lot of our member's travel. This is not an excuse to not serve!! Another member of the Board can fill in when you are traveling.

So, in the spirit of MOAA's motto "Never Stop Serving", let me hear from you. Respond to President Mel Case if you can serve or if you have questions. He can be contacted at 904-304-8871 or at meleaseusma64@comcast.net.

Your Piedmont Chapter Board of Directors

Political Activities

A reminder as the 2024 election season heats up — from National MOAA — "As an organization exempt from federal taxation under Sec 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office."

Express Scripts

To all of you that use Express Scripts as your prescription provider make sure you've shopped around with the various local pharmacies for your best value. For example: I have a prescription that costs \$34/month that I receive through Express Scripts. However, it takes 10 business days for processing and shipping before I actually receive it. I can get the same prescription at Walgreens for the exact same price and pick it up the same day. So, do your due diligence and use whatever works best for you.

"Do the impossible, because almost everyone has told me my ideas are merely fantasies."
-Howard Hughes



HELP MILITARY FAMILIES TODAY

ACT NOW: Now is the time to urge your senator to help military families by securing financial relief for the U.S. child-care industry.

You may have noticed some changes to the Take Action Website, it is now even easier to reach out to your lawmakers on these issues, as well as track what MOAA is engaging in the halls of Congress.To learn more about the new changes, click here!

Take Action Now



Donate to help address emerging needs among currently serving and former uniformed service members, retirees, and their families.

Every donation, no matter the size, makes a positive difference in the lives of uniformed servicemembers and their families across the country.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Donate Now!

HELP SUPPORT OUR SPONSOR!



Association Member Benefits Advisors: AMBA works with small and large associations nationwide. We have the expertise to meet any association's needs, regardless of cultural, geographic, and economic conditions.

Contact Person: Michele Armesto, CLU, RHU

Telephone: 202-251-9488

Contact Email: michele.armesto@amba.info

Sponsor Website

JOIN MOAA!

BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR CHAPTER

Join MOAA: If you want to join MOAA national go to MOAA National.

To join our chapter, choose **JOIN**, choose the state of **South Carolina**, and choose the **Piedmont Chapter**.

To learn more about the National MOAA membership benefits, click <u>HERE</u>



Disclaimer: The Piedmont Chapter of MOAA is affiliated with the South Carolina Council MOAA and the national MOAA organization and all are nonpartisan.

PIEDMONT CHARTER LINKS:







MOAA SOCIAL LINKS:







