



**Join the Small Town and Rural Planning Division of APA
Be a STaR!!**

**By Dale Powers, AICP, STaR Division Chair, and
Paul Bednar, AICP, STaR Membership Coordinator**

Every year when you get your invoice for renewing your APA membership, you are also renewing your dues for membership in your State Chapter. Down on the bottom of the invoice, you are also given the option of joining one or more of the Divisions of APA. Unlike Chapters that are geographically based, Divisions are based on some aspect of planning and are nationwide in scope.

By far the most dynamic of APA's Divisions is the Small Town and Rural (STaR) Division. STaR is dedicated to planners in small town and rural areas of the USA and Canada. While many of you could not imagine working as the only planner in your agency, many of STaR's members are solo practitioners and are called upon by their agency's Planning Commission and City Council to provide professional guidance on planning issues. Further, these planners typically have less experience than metropolitan-area planners. Consequently, these planners look to STaR for answers to general planning and zoning matters that come before them.

Another set of planners that look to STaR for guidance are county planners. STaR is nationally known for its work in agricultural land preservation and has recognized experts in conservation subdivision among its members.

Finally, many private practitioners located in metropolitan areas are STaR members due to their client base in rural areas. Planning outside a major metropolitan area is quite different than what metropolitan planners experience, and the STaR connection has proved invaluable to these planners when working with small town elected officials and staff.

What are the benefits of joining STaR? The following list is just a sampling:

- Access to our quarterly newsletter that is an eclectic mix of planning information, planner profiles, columns on planning management and technical planning, as well as the most fascinating photography of small town and rural America of any Division newsletter.
- Access to the STaR message board where questions to your planning questions can be posted and responses received from throughout the country.

- 24-hour “rapid response” to any questions posed directly to the Division Chair, Dale Powers of Pine County, Minnesota.
- Qualification for the STaR Awards programs for best small town plan, small town planner, and student awards.

STaR is also working on an initiative to subsidize a portion of the cost of AICP certification maintenance for those STaR AICP members whose income falls below the state median.

STaR is excited about the menu of services offered to it’s over 750 members nationwide (including 5 here in Delaware), and we would like you to consider joining our Division. We believe the \$25.00 annual dues are returned to you and your agency several times over in service.

For more information about joining STaR, contact Division Chair Dale Powers at drpowers@co.pine.mn.us or Membership Coordinator Paul Bednar at paul@paulbednar.com