

## USDF Governance Reshaping Initiative

In 2007, USDF completed its new Strategic Plan and has now entered the implementation phase. Successful implementation requires that the organization's infrastructure support the directions and goals established in the plan. Often, organizations fail to act on strategic plans because their current infrastructure prevents successful implementation.

One of the primary goals stated in the Strategic Plan is:

*"USDF will be known for its state-of-the art infrastructure that supports and sustains its success"*

With this goal in mind, the USDF Executive Board has commissioned the Ad-Hoc Committee on USDF Governance (the "Committee"), to review and make recommendations to reshape where appropriate USDF's governance system (both process and structure). The eleven member Committee, chaired by USDF Region 1 Director Alison Head (VA), is composed of a cross section of experienced and diverse USDF volunteers from all over the country, including current and past GM and PM delegates, council and committee chairs and members, and members of the Executive Board. The current chairs of the Bylaws and Audit Committees and the Nominating Council are included. In addition, USDF has engaged an experienced consultant, Bud Crouch of Tecker Consultants, to guide this challenging project. Mr. Crouch was instrumental in the creation of the Strategic Plan and has worked with many not-for-profit organizations, including the US Eventing Association, in similar implementations.

The goal of the Committee's review will be to answer the Strategic Plan's question:

*"What kind of Governance System will USDF need over the next 5 to 10 years to sustain and increase its success?"*

This review will include an evaluation of the Board of Governors, the Executive Board, the Regional Director system and the various councils and committees. The initiative is not intended as an indictment of the past. USDF is the successful organization it is today because of its governance system and past leadership. This reshaping project is focused on the future. Many changes have occurred in USDF, dressage, not-for-profit organizations and the external world since USDF was founded in 1973.

There is no mandate in this initiative to the Committee to suggest change for the sake of change. Following the Strategic Plan, the milestone to strive for is:

*an increase in USDF's overall operational efficiency, effectiveness and nimbleness.*

Over the next two months, the Committee will seek out background information and input from a wide variety of USDF volunteer leaders. GM and PM delegates, council and committee members, and the Executive Board will be invited to provide input to the Committee through surveys and questionnaires. Starting in July, the Committee will utilize this information to assist in its review of the current structure and process and to develop recommendations for change as appropriate. The Committee will present its preliminary recommendations to the Executive Board at the 2008 fall meeting at the annual convention. The Committee's recommendations will be discussed at the convention. Recommendations for process changes will continue to be developed during 2009. Changes to the Bylaws needed to support the structural and process modifications will be identified and presented to the Board of Governors at the 2009 annual convention. The Committee will communicate with the Executive Board, the volunteer leadership and the members throughout this process.

The overall objectives of USDF's governance reshaping project are to:

- Increase:
  - ✓ the through-put of benefits to USDF's members;
  - ✓ the quality of the volunteer leadership experience;
  - ✓ the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance process.
- Reduce governance bureaucracy, duplication, overlap or layers and wasted resources.
- Increase:
  - ✓ the tracking and accountability of USDF's governance system;
  - ✓ the speed and practice of knowledge-based decision-making;
  - ✓ the fluidity, flexibility and responsiveness of governance.
- Clarify governance roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships.
- Increase membership trust in USDF's governance system.
- Maintain desired level of member "ownership" and input in USDF.