

What's this I hear about Governance at ESA?

By: Tim Creenan, NYSESA Past President

You may have seen various emails and newsletter articles over the past several years about Electronic Security Association's (ESA) Governance or the Governance Task Force (GTF) and wondered – What is that all about and why is anyone discussing and working on that? Well now is the time to learn about the topic, as you will be asked to make a decision about how ESA – your national association – is directed and governed by its Board of Directors. You will be seeing a ballot this May and June asking for you to vote on a change in both the size and where the directors come from, of the ESA Board of Directors.



For background, you should know that as your current NYSESA Past President, I have served on the ESA Board of Directors two times as the New York representative and the Installation Quality (IQ) Certification Program representative, as well as having both served on and chaired several ESA committees. The NYSESA has a seat on the ESA board, as does every other Chartered Chapter State that has an agreement with ESA. This agreement covers many areas including training, affiliation of the national and state associations to each other among many other details. Two years ago I was asked to volunteer again as a member of the Governance Task Force. As a member of this group, we were asked to consider ways to make the ESA Board of Directors more effective.

This begs to ask the question; How is the ESA Board of Directors not effective or what is lacking? Well on the surface it starts with the attendance and participation of board members. We have in New York a very active association with leadership volunteers from across the 8 state chapters, as well as the leadership to develop transition on the NY board. This is not the case in many of the other state associations. Many of the other state associations are strapped both financially and volunteer wise to be able to participate as effective members of the ESA Board. In short, many ESA Directors do not attend meetings and or are not prepared to participate; thus a signal is sent that they do not care about the Directorship and they cannot take information back to their state association about the good work / programs that members need from ESA.

So how do we fix this was that the challenge put to the Governance Task Force. While the GTF considered many solutions, the model of new type of board of directors was ultimately presented to the ESA Board of Directors for consideration. This new type of board would be completely different and require a major change to the ESA Bylaws. Thus the need for a vote by membership.

Other documents and articles can go into more details for exact details of these changes, as they are extensive. But what I would like to share with you is how this would effect New York and all the other Chartered Chapter State associations.

- New York State Electronic Security Association's membership on the ESA Board would be eliminated. Thus no voting on the ESA Board.
- In lieu of the board seat, all Chartered Chapter States would elect from the group of Chartered Chapter States representatives, five directors for the ESA Board.
- So New York goes from 1 to 0, and the Chartered Chapter States go from 31 to 5. (Not all states have state associations or are affiliated with ESA)
- At a recent meeting of the Chartered Chapter States, only 1 representative declared an interest in serving as one of the five directors. This clearly states that they are not interested in the commitment needed for this new model board.
- As the proposed board would replace the current board and executive committee, the new format board would meet monthly. The Chartered States group that elects the five representatives would still meet twice a year. Thus if the State Associations are concerned about an issue, they cannot call for a board meeting to discuss and resolve, as they can now.

I am of the opinion that we should fix what we have, not throw it out. We have tools and mechanisms in place that are not being utilized to deal with the Chartered Chapter States that are not participating. We need to deal with these issues to create a stronger industry at both the national, state and local levels. Changing the size of the ESA Board does not accomplish this, fixing what we have, using the current agreement and bylaws to do this is the place to start.