

# STATE OF THE AVA NATION

June 12, 2019

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President, AVA: America's Walking Club



*Fun, Fitness, Friendship*



# AVA'S MISSION

Promote and organize  
noncompetitive fitness activities  
that encourage lifelong fun, fitness,  
and friendship for all ages and  
abilities.



# AVA'S VISION

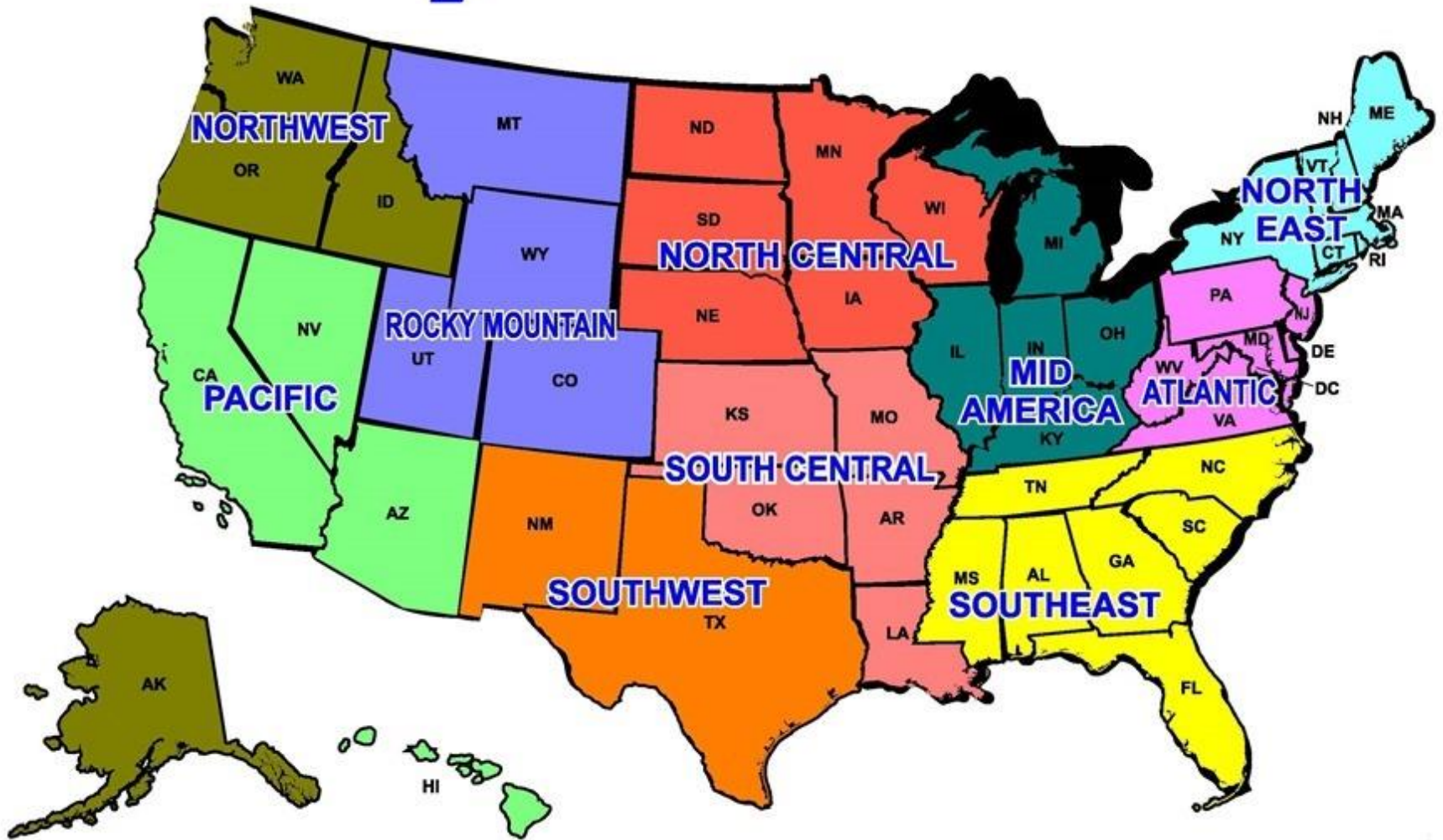
Increasingly engage Americans in  
lifelong walking and other  
noncompetitive physical fitness  
activities.

# A BRIEF HISTORY of the BIRTH of AVA

- April 20, 1976 IPS-USA incorporated in Texas
- 1<sup>st</sup> Volksmarch, June 12-13, 1976 in Fredericksburg, TX (210 participants)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> IVV sanctioned event, June, 1977 in Fredericksburg, TX (840 participants)
- June 15-17, 1979-1<sup>st</sup> national convention of volkssporters
  - Name changed to American Volkssport Association
  - AVA became a full member of IVV



# REGIONS



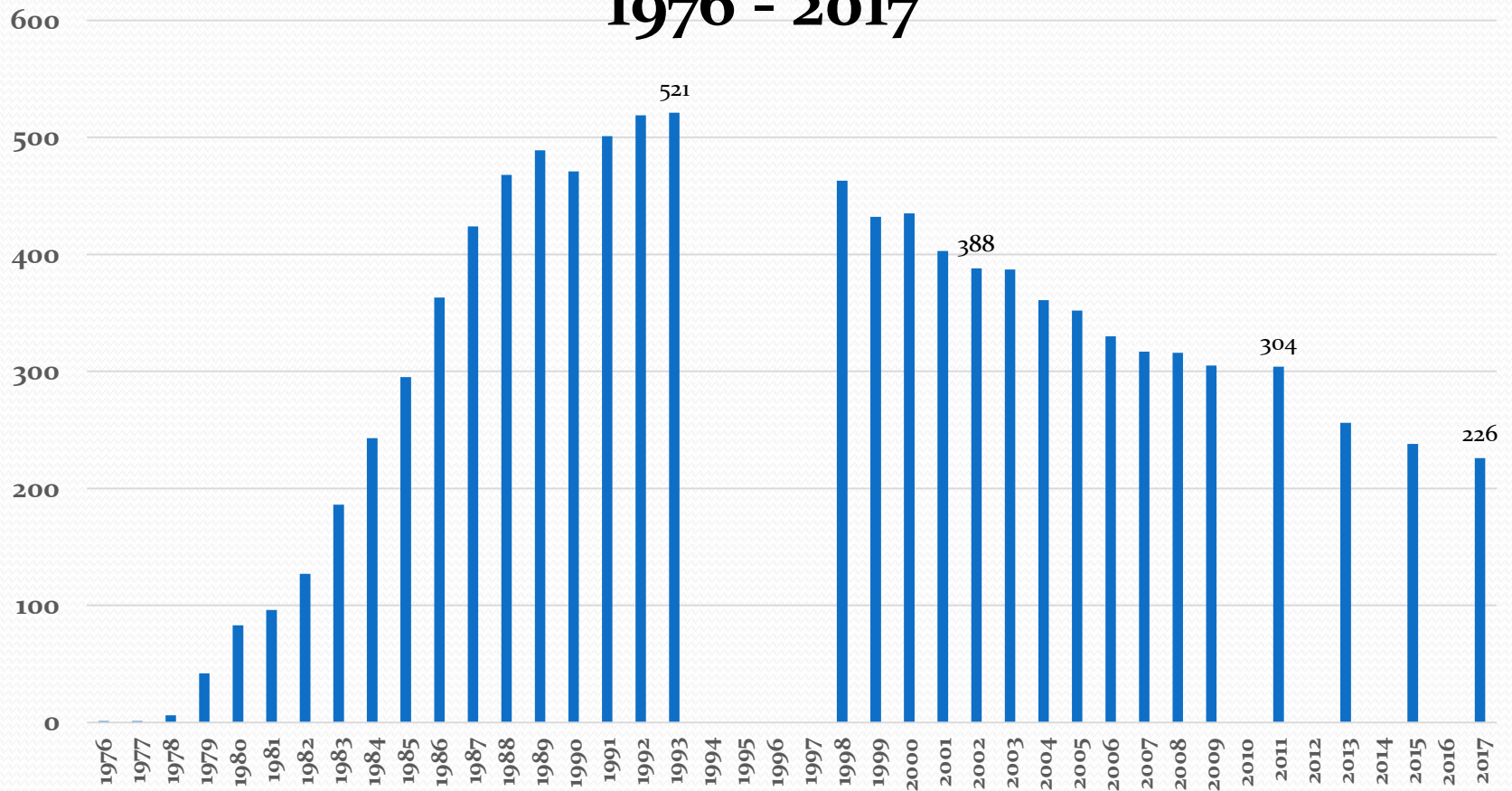
**SO WHAT HAVE  
BEEN THE  
TRENDS?**

# TRENDS IN CLUBS

# TRENDS - CLUBS

## # AVA Clubs

1976 - 2017



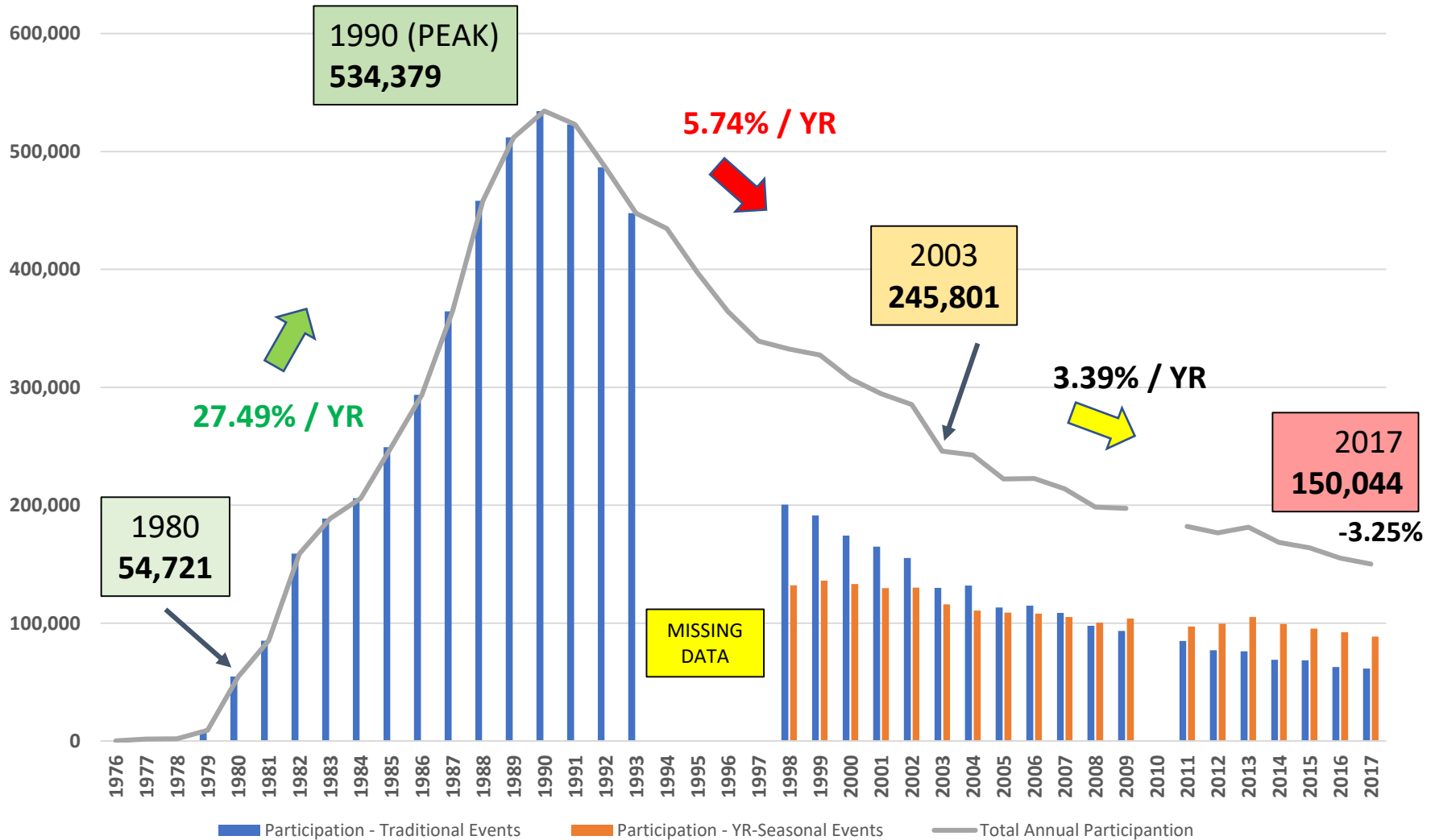


# AVA Basic Club Data

- **# AVA Clubs:** 218 (June 2018)
- **Club Membership:** \*10,080 (November 2017)
- **Clubs 25 members or less:** 101; **46.8%**
- **Clubs less than 10 members:** 46; **21.3%**
- **States with **NO CLUB:** (4) LA, MS, RI, WV**
- **States with 1 Club: (16) AL, AK, AR, CT, DE, GA, HI, ID, IA, KY, ME, NV, NH, SC, VT, WY**
- **States with 2 Clubs: (8) KS, MA, MI, MT, SD, TN, UT, WI**
- **States with 3 or more Clubs: (22) AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, IN, MD, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, TX, VA, WA**

# TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION

# AVA TOTAL EVENT PARTICIPATION FROM 1976 -- 2017



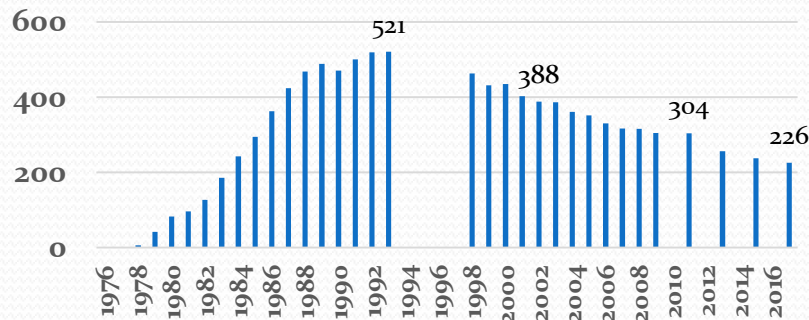
**SO WHAT DO WE  
DO NOW?**

# SOLVE THE PROBLEM

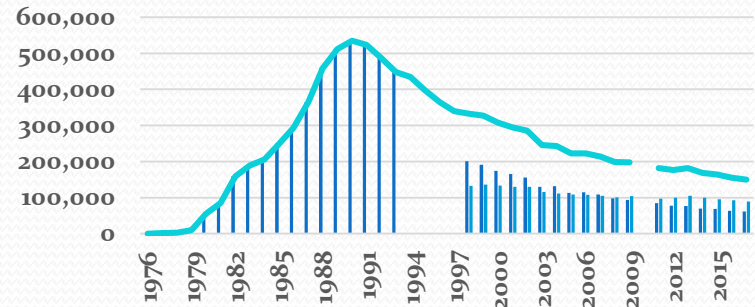
“The first step in solving a problem is to recognize that it does exist.”

- Zig Ziglar

**# AVA Clubs  
1976 - 2017**



**AVA TOTAL EVENT PARTICIPATION  
FROM 1976 -- 2017**



# FINANCES ARE ONLY ONE SYMPTOM

- Current budget has begun to cut into the muscle and bone – i.e., with the planned budget cuts we will be cutting back on programs and program support
- We have focused on reducing expenses, but real symptom of our problem is our falling income.
- The real problem that we must face is the downward trajectory of clubs and participation.

# CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL TO SURVIVAL

For 15 years we have continued to do the same things and have expected a different result.

If we don't make fundamental changes, AVA will not survive.

Those changes have been started, but we still have a long way to go.

THE FIRST STEP TO CHANGE

THE STRATEGIC  
PLAN



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Key Focus Area 1: Mission Impact
  - National Trails Program
  - Expansion of the Online Start Box
  - Implementation of a Virtual Online Program
  - Creation of new stamps
  - Establish a Club Development and Support Committee
  - Partnership with Red Roof hotels for member discounts

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Key Focus Area 2: Financial Stability
  - Create a Fund Development Committee
  - Implement an Individual Donor Campaign
  - Diversify funding over past 3 years
    - Unrestricted Donations – over \$225,299 raised
    - Sponsorship and advertisement revenues - \$11,650 raised
    - Grant Solicitations – 22 completed
  - Development of online retail store
  - Establish national partnerships with America Walks, Navigators USA, GirlTrek, and GroupWorks

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Key Focus Area 3: Internal Operations
  - AVA database upgrade
  - New AVA website (rolls out July 1)
  - Creation of new Publicity Committee
  - Hire Public Relations firm (MassMedia)
  - Procurement of stamp machine
  - Promotion of club events on social media and AVA website
  - Transitions from Mass 90 to Quickbooks

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Key Focus Area 4: Governance and Leadership
  - Develop committee charters for all committees
  - Create AVA Privacy Policy
  - Revise employee job descriptions to align with strategic plan goals
  - Board orientation and training
  - Propose Bylaws changes to move Board from operational to strategic focus

# SPECIAL RECOGNITION

## Information and Technology

- Upgraded software
- Added new functionality to legacy systems
- Dealt with outages due to road construction and hacking by bit coin miners
- Created unique software to produce the new stamps
- Improved the legacy ESR software helping RDs and National Office to better serve the AVA Nation
- New volkssporter portal “my.ava.org”
  - Being used to manage the new stamps
  - Will go live hosting the Online Start Box on July 1
- Completely customizable pre-registration and on-site registration software
- IT Committee has provided an in-kind income to AVA of at least \$120,000

# OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Partnership being developed with the Civil Air Patrol
  - Civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force
    - Formed into 8 regions with 52 wings (50 states, DC, and PR)
    - 60,000 members (adult and student)
  - Program developing as a health and wellness initiative
  - Based on AVA programs and events
  - Full details will be available after the CAP Convention in Baltimore, MD, this August

# NEXT STEPS

- The Board has its work cut out for it, but those you elected are up for the challenge.
  - Potentially recommend changes to our business model
  - Work with MassMedia to move PR tools to clubs
  - Assess Bylaws changes mandated by changes in Texas law
- The clubs are the heartbeat of AVA. It matters little what the Board does or says if the clubs don't make it happen
- You can be part of the team that turns things around
  - Volunteer to serve on one of the many AVA Committees
  - Volunteer to serve as a DRD or an RD or run for National Office when the time comes
- Go back home and energize your club

# The President's Challenge

FOR THE NEXT 2 YEARS, EACH YEAR:

- Hold one more Traditional Event than the previous year with a target of 25 paid participants.
- Recruit 8-10 new club members who walk as paid walkers an average of 10 events.
- Recruit/convert 3 new/existing club members to become AVA Associate Members.
- Plan for the future. If you are a club officer recruit, train and groom someone to do your job!

Special recognition at the 2021 Convention for those clubs who accomplish the President's Challenge





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# CONCLUSION



- The challenge is before us
- AVA can have a bright future, but only if we are willing to work for it
- I believe that AVA is worth the effort, and I hope you do, too
- Let's leave this convention energized and ready to meet the AVA's Mission in our home communities
- Let's take on the President's Challenge and not just achieve its goals but exceed them
- Together we can ensure a bright future for AVA