



**A**s we begin a new calendar year for Civil Air Patrol, I am pleased to announce we have crossed the 57,000-member mark. An upswing in membership is a good thing for CAP, since the Air Force and other valued partners are looking to us for even more missions in 2009!

With this in mind, CAP invites our readers who have set a goal to improve themselves and the world around them in the new year to consider joining CAP. If you cannot devote the time necessary to be a full member, you can become a Patron Member, who supports CAP's mission of serving communities "Above and Beyond!"

CAP is proud to provide volunteer service to our communities nationwide, and, in so doing, we operate very much like a successful business. Corporations that compete well in their market succeed because they have something unique they sell to their clients — or, they have a special way of serving customers. In CAP, we have both. We have missions we perform that basically nobody else can across the nation — either because of our aircraft that are at the ready or because of our people across the country, our training, our partners and other factors. Also, we have a different *way* of doing it. CAP not only performs missions for America each and every day in very efficient ways, but we also are effective because of the core values of our members — integrity, respect, excellence and, of course, volunteer service. What a great story we have to tell!

We're doing a good job. But is that enough? Jim Collins, a famous author of management books, would tell us that what keeps us from being great is *being good*. So, how do we ensure we continue to improve CAP, both our members and our programs?

To perform our missions, CAP must have the best equipment, sufficient and successful operational training and adequate numbers of people who can perform well. As for how we perform our missions, each and every member must honor CAP's core values in everything they do. As we gain more members, this becomes even more imperative.

In response to these needs, CAP is finalizing a new foundational professional development course, the *Organizational Excellence* program, which will be launched in February.

I intend to be the first to sign up for this program — a lifelong journey of learning and growing for members. Written for *every* senior (adult program) member of Civil Air Patrol, it links members with mentors across the country — both inside and external to CAP! As our members take this course along with our existing technical and professional courses, we will learn more about followership, leadership, safety, our missions, our values and ourselves. This is a transformation CAP needs to continue to be viable long into the future.

Through this program, CAP is challenging itself to grow both technically and professionally.

Semper Vigilans!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Courter". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Maj. Gen. Amy S. Courter  
CAP National Commander