



President's Report
2026 Fall HOD

President's Report

It is hard to believe that this is my final House of Delegates meeting as President of the Illinois District. In many ways, it feels like I just started this journey, and yet here we are. The time has gone incredibly fast.

Serving as your President has been one of the most incredible—and challenging—experiences of my life. It has given me an even deeper appreciation for the Illinois District, the work that goes into making it successful, and most importantly, the people who make this organization what it is. I am proud to be a fellow member of this district and grateful for the opportunity you gave me to serve.

Throughout my term, one of my goals has been to make sure our members have a voice in the direction of our district. I believe we have made meaningful progress in improving communication between the board and our members, creating more opportunities to hear your ideas, concerns, and suggestions, and then—perhaps most importantly—putting those ideas into action. Many of the changes and improvements we have made during my presidency came directly from you.

My hope is that, as your President, I have helped make our district—and its future—just a little bit better. I know there is still work to be done, but I am proud of the progress we have made together.

And while this is my final HOD meeting as President, my work with the district is certainly not finished. As your DRCJ, I will continue to serve the Illinois District and work to make our conventions and competitions even better than they already are. I look forward to continuing to listen, learn, and find ways we can improve the experience for every member and competitor.

When I first began this journey, I introduced a simple motto that I hope will continue beyond my presidency:

“If we don’t know, we can’t grow!”

I encourage all of us to keep asking questions, keep listening to our members, and keep being willing to make changes when we discover a better way forward. The strength of our district depends on our willingness to learn from one another.

Thank you for your trust, your support, your honesty, and your willingness to work alongside me. Most of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve an organization and a district that I care so deeply about.

It has been an honor.

Harmoniously,

Ben Dirks

President, Illinois District