STLE by the numbers
Our annual financial checkup shows an organization in good health.

STLE’s Constitution and Bylaws require that an independent accounting firm conduct an audit of the organization’s finances each year and report the results to the board of directors.

The latest report, covering the period July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, was presented to board members in October. It shows that STLE’s finances are being managed in a responsible manner that allows us to both provide efficient current operations and support growth of membership services in the future.

Current operations received the top rating of an “unqualified opinion” from the audit team, which spends about a week in the STLE headquarters office combing through financial records and meeting with staff members. The auditors also meet independently with members of the Audit Committee, which is made up of four directors, to ensure that the board has an independent voice in the process.

In stating their opinion on STLE finances, the auditors reported no disagreements with management about methods of accounting or access to records. In addition, they concluded that management is producing accurate financial information. These are all major positives that contributed to the unqualified opinion.

From a dollars and cents standpoint, the audit report shows that STLE received $2.46 million in annual revenue, a growth rate of about 4.3% from the prior fiscal year. Expenses declined by $13,150 from the previous year. In addition, the report shows that less than 15% of expenses go toward general and administrative costs. This means that the vast majority of STLE expenditures are focused on membership programs and services.

These solid results for the past year allowed the organization to increase net assets by $179,363, a 14% gain from the 2010-2011 fiscal year mark of $156,753.

An increase in net assets is more than just another line in the audit report. It provides STLE with the funds needed to serve and expand our not-for-profit mission. Student scholarships, for example, are distributed through a matching funds program at the Local Section level (up to $2,500 per section per year) and by the STLE Presidential Council in support of the Richard Booser undergraduate student scholarship and the Elmer Klaus graduate student fellowship (a combined $10,000 per year).

A portion of net assets is used to maintain a financial reserve fund. Monies in this fund are designated by the board for a variety of longer-term needs, including capital expenditures at the society headquarters building and as a rainy day fund to sustain the organization in the event of economic downturns or underperformance of a major event such as the annual meeting.

In addition to review of the audit report, a major portion of the October board meeting was devoted to a strategic planning session. Directors began a process of looking at the challenges and opportunities facing STLE and its members in the next 3-5 years. A Strategic Planning Committee has been created to continue the project and craft a plan for how the organization can adapt to serve your needs better in the years ahead. The committee will present an interim report at the January 2013 board meeting.

While the Planning Committee’s conclusions and recommendations are still to come, what’s clear at this point is that the team’s members can plan with confidence knowing that the organization they are advising is on solid financial footing.