It is truly remarkable how far our Florida Section has come over the past 20 years. We now have a very professional staff, led by a truly remarkable executive director, and we have a modern headquarters building that provides our staff with the facilities to succeed and a central location for section volunteers to meet. All of these significant developments are the result of the foresight and dedication of our past leaders, and the executive committees they worked so closely with.

But, in my humble opinion, the evolution of our section owes most of its success to the commitment and drive of our regions, and the region leadership. Over the years, we have expanded from five regions to 12 in response to the needs of our membership, and to reduce the significant travel demands of our volunteers, which they endured in those early years. Today, the 12 regions are thriving and are undoubtedly the strength and backbone of our section.

I feel very strongly that the regions and the section have worked collectively to bring us to where we are today. But to me, it’s the regions that drive everything we do, and produce the success we enjoy.

What is so important about our 12 regions?

- They serve the needs of each geographic area by offering timely educational presentations, information from vendors, and overall networking opportunities for our members. All of the regions conduct monthly, or quarterly, meetings that greatly enhance our ability to learn from and/or pass on valuable information to others in our career field. They also host informative training sessions that benefit many professionals every year.
- They provide members the unique ability to “step up” and become leaders. The vast majority of current section leaders began their volunteer journeys at the region level. It’s here that we learn to organize and train our fellow volunteers to meet the needs of our membership, while working to meet section goals as well. From my own experience, I started a 20-year relationship with the Florida Section by participating in the creation of Region II. Since that time, we have developed a very successful mentoring program to encourage growth in our leadership, and our section is very well represented by past region chairs.
- Among the fundamental goals of both the section and the regions is fundraising. Due to the success of the regions, our section has been a true national leader in raising funds for several important causes. Every year the regions conduct events that directly benefit Water For People, the Water Equation, and our own Roy Likins Scholarship Fund. We should all be very proud of the efforts of our regions to help others in Florida and around the world.
- The regions are represented in our Best Tasting Drinking Water Contest every year at the Florida Water Resources Conference. This fun competition allows each region to share its expertise, while bringing attention to the importance of water.

If you are not already involved in a region, please consider doing so. To get more information about the activities of each region, and who to contact to get involved, go to www.fsawwa.org.

For all the reasons I mentioned, and for many more, you will not regret volunteering your time to this great organization. It could be playing golf for a fundraising event or attending a technical lunch and learning some new water technology. It all starts in the regions!