Good day to you GPs. I hope that you are all staying safe and cool this summer. Down here in my part of the world its 86-89 at 5:15 in the morning…nothing like a steam room on your way to your vehicle.

I am here to address 2020 Great Peppers’ Meeting. Lately, members of the Board have been contacted about the GPM this year. As of right now, we are still proceeding with plans for the GPM. The reason we are continuing is because for us to retain our non-profit status, a business meeting is mandatory per federal guidelines. We have heard many comments about the GPM and frankly, most of them are inaccurate. This is the annual business meeting for our organization. The meeting is not just to elect new directors to the board. We must give complete and thorough reports from all committees from the preceding year. These reports must be presented, discussed and approved by the GPs. This is the time that you as the representative of your Pod have an opportunity to ask questions of each and every aspect of CASI. The other reason is that we are under contract with Sheraton Arlington. We are in the last year of the three years that we were contracted for. For many GPs, you have come in as a GP during this three-year period. In 2016, the Great Peppers decided that the 2017 meeting was to be held in Virginia, then a contract would be negotiated for a time period of three years, then the fourth year it would move, then back to the Texas for another three years. No matter what we do, if we were to cancel with the hotel or have the meeting, we are still financially responsible.

We have received comments and suggestions that we have this meeting virtually. While this is attractive, logistically this is not an option. There are too many of us and unlike most other meetings, we require delegate participation. Also, some voting delegates do not have access to the technology that would be needed. Like was mentioned earlier, every report must be presented, open to discussion and a live vote taken on each motion. The only way for us to do this virtually, would be to do a roll call vote of every voting delegate and board member. That’s about 66 of us. And while I am sure everyone would love to participate from the comfort of their own homes, keeping everyone in front of cameras all day would present its own issues.

I can tell you at this time that we are pursuing all avenues to make financial cuts where we can regarding the GP meeting. The Board of Directors had a conference call just this week to discuss this very issue. I have been in contact with the hotel receiving updates on their compliance with the health dictates and the status in Arlington; as we all are very well aware, constant changes are happening at the local, county, state and federal levels what seems like almost every day.

We are working as diligently as possible. We are asking for your continued support and know that we are looking at every possible option available to us.

Thank you all.