



REGION X REPORT

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Summer 2015

As we head into the Fall season and the time when many chapters are returning from their summer break, I thought I would give you a report on the joint National Executive Board (NEB) and Federation Presidents Meeting was held in Reno, Nevada in July. The meeting was held at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino which is also the site of the 2016 NARFE National Convention. All five Federations within Region X were represented: Michael Cornelison (Kentucky), Ron Buffaloe (North Carolina), Larry Minnear (Tennessee), Richard Giangerelli (Virginia) and Steven Sosson (West Virginia). Also attending from Region X was Regional Alzheimer's Coordinator Donna Shackelford (Virginia). You should be proud of your Region X attendees who were all very active participants in the discussions of the issues facing our organization.

The many areas of discussion made for a very full agenda over the three days of meetings. Topics included: Mid-Year Budget Review and Approval, Legislation and NARFE-PAC 101 (policies and procedures), Grass Roots Campaign and Legislative Webinars, Marketing Update, Membership/Fundraising, New Business (sponsorship) Development, Legislative and NARFE-PAC Update, Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Update, extended discussion of SPC progress and recommendations, State Legislative Support Program, Membership Database Transition In-House, Federal Benefits Update, NARFE Website Orientation, Online Activities Module (OAM) Orientation, NARFE Officer Recruitment and Retention, and NARFE Officer Qualifications.

During the extended segment on the progress of the SPC, much of the discussion concerned the twelve items assigned to the SPC for further development, including the proposed structure of the Board of Directors (currently called the NEB) the implementation of a Congressional District Leader (CDL) system and its effect on current Federations, determination of national dues and the elimination of mandatory chapter membership. The current NARFE officers are taking strong, positive steps to address the problems we face instead of pushing the issues under the rug. It is amazing how much has been accomplished so much since the NEB meeting in March. All of the information about the Strategic Planning process is available on the NARFE website, www.narfe.org and you may also provide comments to the Strategic Planning Committee at any time by sending an e-mail to stratplan@narfe.org. I know that many Region X members are very skeptical of the ongoing Strategic Planning process. Considering past efforts, which many consider failures, by NARFE Headquarters of a similar nature, I fully understand this skepticism. Even I, having served on two National Bylaws Committees and the Future of NARFE Committee have some reservations about this latest effort. I believe that the SPC is making a strong effort to be honest, open, and transparent with the membership, an approach which I respect. The effort of the SPC can best be summarized in the words of Region II SPC representative Ted Jensen (Maryland) - -

"We have no illusions about the task ahead. This process will be complicated and difficult, but we believe we can be successful or we would not have signed on. We agree we have an obligation to future generations.... We just can't hope things will work out if we don't act. They won't. I know for certain that a majority of our members need to understand the need for change and support it or nothing will happen. Communications and trust will be critical going forward. We can safely predict that the Strategic Planning Team and the Strategic Planning Committee will not do everything perfectly or to every member's satisfaction. We do pledge:

- ***to be honest, open and transparent,***
- ***to listen to everyone, and think carefully about what changes can and should be made,***
- ***to do our best to include and represent both the active and vocal groups and the silent majority.***

"We will collectively have to balance the need for urgent action with the risks of moving at a pace faster than our members will support. If NARFE moves too slowly or too quickly, the result will be failure. The brutal truth is that about one third of our current members will not be with us in 5 or 6 years, based simply on our average age and the IRS life expectancy tables. That argues for urgency."

As you remember, on June 4, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced that a security breach had occurred over a time period beginning in 2014. This initially reported breach affected 4.2 million current and former Federal employees, and included such information as full name, current address, birthdate, and social security number. A second breach was reported on July 9, which is estimated to have affected 21.5 million individuals, including 19.7 million who have applied for a security investigation and another 1.8 million spouses and co-inhabitants. To access the most current information about the two major OPM data breaches, log in to the NARFE website (www.narfe.org), and click on the OPM Security Breach Update button.

August was the annual NARFE Grass Roots Advocacy Month. I hope that many of the NARFE Region X members were able to participate in this effort to help protect and preserve our earned employment and retirement benefits. You can gain some excellent information by joining the monthly Legislative webinars or conference calls. You can sign up for these excellent sessions by sending an email to NARFE's Grassroots Program Manager Sarah Weissmann, at sweissmann@narfe.org. The June legislative webinar pertained to the implementation of a Congressional District Leader (CDL) system, which is one of the twelve items assigned to the SPC for further development. This proposed CDL system is an initiative that every Federation in Region X is discussing or has already established.

NARFE closed 2014 with a total membership of 236,890, which includes 24,943 members of Chapter 2363 (E-NARFE). At the beginning of August, 2015, NARFE had 226,411 members, of which 27,376 were E-NARFE members. Since the end of 2014, we have lost over 4% of our total membership, while E-NARFE gained approximately 11% over same period. Everyone understands

that we must enhance our recruiting and retention efforts in order to stem the loss of our membership. One thing each current member can do whether they attend NARFE chapter meetings or not is to reach out to someone that we know is eligible for NARFE membership by sending a personal handwritten invitation to join and include the application, dues withholding forms and any other material relative to the NARFE organization and our accomplishments on behalf of the Federal community. NARFE Headquarters has instituted another recruiting incentive for the final months of 2015. Between September 1 and December 31, 2015, Headquarters will offer a \$10 reward for the recruiter of any new member of NARFE. Since this recruiting incentive coincides with recruiting efforts at Health Fairs during and after the FEHBP Open Season, this is a great time to recruit new members with a cash bonus to the recruiters.

Enjoy the beautiful fall weather, the upcoming holiday season and thank you for your continued membership and your support and belief in NARFE. We are all in this effort together so let's move forward before it is too late.