

e-NARFE Organization and Structure

BACKGROUND:

In November, 2010 an e-NARFE membership was approved in order to stimulate much needed recruitment and retention. It was acknowledged that the future of NARFE rested with recruiting and retaining both active and recently retired federal employees and that this group demonstrated little interest in our traditional chapter life. An integral aspect of the approval process was the establishment of online e-NARFE chapters.

At the 2011 president's meeting in Sparks, Nevada, enthusiasm continued to build for the e-NARFE concept and considerable discussion of individual federation e-Chapters ensued. Due consideration was given to the fact that the operation and management of an e-NARFE chapter is fairly labor intensive, time consuming, and requires technical skills normally provided in similar organizations by salaried IT professionals. It was the consensus of the presidents that, considering the level of commitment required, headquarters should continue and manage the e-NARFE program prudently yet with an eye to the future.

CURRENT SITUATION:

With the overwhelming popularity of e-NARFE over the last year, and the growing body of evidence that e-membership is essential to the growth and successful future of NARFE, many federations are justly motivated to evolve their state recruitment and retention efforts by requesting approval to establish e-NARFE chapters.

At this juncture it is not only wise, but critical, that we pause and evaluate the association's future. As the flood gates open to an organization with fifty two potential e-Chapters, we must ask ourselves if this is sustainable, if this is attractive to potential members, and if this is in the long term interest of the association. If the answer is no to any of the above, we must ask ourselves how do we move forward ensuring the continued success of the e-concept while making certain that our federations maintain both their advocacy advantage and voting strength.

Sustainability becomes a major concern. Given that the same technical and operational concerns of maintaining an e-Chapter are extant: Can an initially enthusiastic proliferation of federation e-NARFE chapters be sustained and function over the long haul with volunteers? Can federations ensure that a consistent level of quality and commitment be maintained as volunteers grow tired or distracted by other commitments and depart their eNARFE positions? It seems unlikely. For potential AFEs, more familiar with electronic communities, the concept of multiple sites with geographic distinctions will seem arcane as "e" is, by definition, world-wide and without boundaries. With AFEs critical to NARFE's future, it is imperative that NARFE's organizational construct meet their expectations of a modern and savvy association. These issues are all the more relevant as the individual member gains little or nothing from an organization with a multiplicity of e-Chapters.

At this time, as we meet and combat the membership crisis faced by all member-driven organizations, made all the more severe by the aging of our association members, our future is dependent on well focused strategic planning for the future. Our plans must consider the relevance of NARFE today, in five years and in ten years.

ACTION:

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NARFE National Executive Board (NEB) has approved an e-NARFE structure that will meet our long term strategic needs while maintaining the strength of our federations. This structure will focus on a single e-Chapter, maintained by salaried headquarters professionals. The single e-Chapter will include federation based virtual e-NARFE Divisions. Federations will be encouraged to establish a robust e-Division, will have access to all e-Members residing within their federation, and will include those members within their federation delegate count.

With this new construct we will ensure that NARFE remains forward thinking, relevant and meets the needs of current and potential members.

STRUCTURE:

1. Chapter #2363 will be designated the world-wide e-NARFE Chapter and will be the home chapter for all e-NARFE members. The single e-NARFE Chapter will be governed by bylaws and the e-NARFE membership will elect its officers. The chapter website will be operated and maintained by the Headquarters IT staff.
2. Each and every federation is encouraged to establish a virtual e-Division. As an e-Division, it will not have bylaws, officers, or a chapter number as it will be a satellite of and hosted by the world-wide e-NARFE Chapter.
3. If a federation elects to create an e-Division, then the federation shall establish:
 - An e- Division website that will be hosted by Headquarters IT staff via the world-wide web and be free of charge; and
 - A position of e-Division coordinator to oversee the website and provide content driven communications with the virtual federation members.
4. The Federation President will be the e-Division coordinator until a Federation e-Division coordinator is named.
5. Each federation will have access to all e-NARFE members resident within that federation in order to keep its members informed on state and local issues.
6. All e-Division members will have read and write access to the e-NARFE blog.
7. For purposes of delegate count and voting at national conventions, federation e-NARFE members will be included in the federation delegate count as defined in Article V, Section #1B of the 2012 National Bylaws and exercised by the federation presidents acting as the voting representatives.
8. Each Federation will be provided online management tools to:
 - Coordinate with and provide information to Headquarters IT in order to maintain a hosted website;
 - Manage communications with their federation e-NARFE members.

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