

NATIONAL ACTIVE & RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

MIDWEST CITY/DEL CITY
CHAPTER 946
(OKLAHOMA)



CHAPTER NEWSLETTER
Volume 38, Number 2
February, 2018

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on call, Mon 9-12 ... 739-1200

FEBRUARY 23RD MEETING PROGRAM
Michelle Thompson, Public Affairs Officer with the **Oklahoma Tax Commission**, will give us tips for filing the 2017 state return, as well as explain new features of the 2018 federal tax reform. Don't miss this valuable presentation.

Coming Attraction!

We're happy to report that plans are being made to present our biennial "KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES" Forum on or about August 10, 2018.

This forum will feature candidates running for county, state or national office in the November 2018 election. It will give you the opportunity to meet each candidate, listen to his/her stand on issues, and answer any questions you may have regarding those issues.

The Forum is given by our Chapter 946 and is open to the public. Plan now to attend, and be ready to offer your services as we prepare and present this ever-popular event.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: By Ron Cannefax

Another year is upon us and already we are into the second month of the year 2018. We are getting closer to the end of the second decade of the 2000's. Remember all of the concern and worry of Y2K, and the doom and gloom about the impact on computers that the change from 1999 to the year 2000 could have, and that the data and calendars would be all messed up?

Well, here we are in 2018, and all is well? If anything, today's technology has exploded in advances and even I am upgraded to a "smart phone", even though it is an android, LG by brand. Okay, I am another year older on the last day of February and trying to get caught with better communications by texting and catching up with what is going on. Our chapter group may be getting smaller, but we have had a lot of blessings, fond memories, continuing friendships, and events, with more to come this year. Come be part of the meetings.



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Jamie Thompson...613-8212

Kathy Little..... 273-9298

Larry Little 273-9298

Webmaster

Vacant

Now for some more encouragements:

1. We need to really recruit new chapter members in 2018.
2. We need to help Billie Ripple encourage chapter members who have been dropped from membership to be reinstated and stay with us. You can also help with that.
3. We need you to help us obtain increased media advertisements and issue word-of-mouth invitations to invite past co-workers and prospects to our meetings.
4. We need all of us to submit names of prospects to Billie for follow-up with information about NARFE and give formal invitations to come to our meetings.
5. We need you to come to our meetings when you can and bring someone with you.

Our first meeting of 2018 in January was way down in attendance having only 21 members and the guest speaker in attendance, which is five less than in January of 2017. But I know we can improve those numbers. We ought to be having 35 to 40 members in attendance each month.

Our speaker was **Sen. Jack Fry**, who is our Oklahoma state senator representing parts of Midwest City, Del City, Choctaw and parts of OKC. Jack, as former mayor of Midwest City, felt he could get some things done in the state legislature where he could not if he was not in the legislative branch of Oklahoma government, and this was the reason he ran for his current office. He requested that we send him emails regarding our concerns because that is one way to let him know what we think on a bill, and where you, as an Oklahoman, stand to help him vote on bills of importance. He thought our Candidate Forum we have every other year is great because those attending get to ask questions on issues and find out where each candidate stands on those issues.

The senator's point was that communication is never a bad thing and the voter needs to be informed. Jack addressed a number of questions from the group and why things work as they do at the state capitol. Some things are hard to change because they are fixed appropriations, so legislators only have a portion of revenue to budget.

Keep in mind our speaker at our February 23rd meeting will be Michelle Thompson, who is the public affairs officer, Communication Division, of the Oklahoma Tax Commission. She will be speaking on the changes to the state income tax, and how seniors can deal with any changes to the federal tax reform and perhaps how to benefit from those changes.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: By Billie Ripple

It seems a lot of people were missing at our last meeting. It was sad to see so many seats empty, so let's fix that at our next meeting. If you were one of those who couldn't attend, you certainly missed a good speaker.

We want to welcome our newest member, **Linda Case**, from Meeker, OK. Remember, Linda, your husband can join us also. Hope to see you both at our next meeting.

We know some of our members have had health problems and have missed some meetings. I think we are gonna have Bill and Evelyn Mullins back with us. Sure hope so. We have missed James and Ethel Broiles lately. Hope you get back with us. Miss you guys.

We have a good sergeant-at-arms (Jerry Ryan and his assistant Johnny Evans). If you need assistance at our meeting they are ready to assist. But part of their job is to keep the peace. We have such a quiet group they don't have to work very hard. But if you interrupt the speaker, or talk during the meeting, they might show up at your table. We are proud of them, and they do a good job. We would raise their pay, but we can't afford it.

See you at our next meeting. Remember, bring a guest, maybe one you can sign up as a new member. Okay?

LEGISLATIVE REPORT: By James Crowder

Days before the legislative session was set to begin, four of the state's top lawmakers shared their positions on Oklahoma's most pressing issues. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber held its annual legislative breakfast on Wednesday, January 31. Organizers hosted Senate Majority Floor Leader Greg Treat, Senate Minority Leader John Sparks, House Speaker Charles McCall and House Minority Leader Steve Kouplen. A moderator asked each member questions about topics bound to crop up during the legislative session, which was to begin Monday, February 5. The **Step Up Oklahoma** plan adds to the consensus that new revenues are essential.

When lawmakers returned to the Capitol, it was not just the first month of the 2018 session. In many ways they were returning for the 13th month of the 2017 session, with last year's unfinished business dominating this year's agenda. The first order of business was to complete the 2017 budget.

State Auditor and Inspector Gary Jones says one of the most effective ways for Oklahoma to tackle financial mismanagement is to set up a joint accountability system. He says it would embed his auditors within state agencies to assist internal auditors, a practice pitched to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission in the past and met with interest there. Lawmakers have considered proposals in the past, but those measures have stalled.

Oklahoma State Department of Education is rolling out details of its 8-year plan known as Oklahoma Edge. Some details were covered in an address recently by Oklahoma Superintendent of Schools Joy Hofmeister at Northwest Oklahoma Alliance luncheon and quarterly meeting held at Woodward Conference Center. "It is the first time in a long, long time that we have had a long-term vision and a goal with very detailed steps," Hofmeister said. Another year goes by, and Oklahoma still leads the nation for cuts to education.

In another step toward restoration of the state Capitol, the building's recently renovated west public entrance was reopened on January 31. The action is part of a \$245 million Capitol overhaul being paid for with bonds approved by the Legislature. The building has electrical, structural and plumbing problems that need to be corrected. The new corridor is much wider and more aesthetically pleasing than the old entrance.

On February 1, Oklahoma House Speaker Charles McCall said he's optimistic he can get enough Republican votes to pass **Step Up Oklahoma's** plan to resolve the state's budget impasse if as many Democrats will vote for the plan as voted for a revenue bill that failed last year.

When members of the Oklahoma Senate and House of Representatives returned to the state Capitol to begin this year's regular legislative session, there was little debate about which issue would confound them the most. Oklahoma's budget outlook may be improving, but major challenges remain. The state of our state is bad. The members of the Oklahoma Legislature were sent to Oklahoma City to solve problems, and we've got plenty. After a four-month regular session and two dithering special sessions, one of which continues to this day, lawmakers are yet to produce a balanced budget for the year, much less deal with the chronic problems facing Oklahoma.

Step Up Oklahoma, a self-titled grassroots, bipartisan effort to fix Oklahoma's systemic budget issues, has gained a lot of steam and some high profile supporters, including Clay Bennett and Brad Henry. The plan is a compelling one: It calls for a \$5,000 teacher pay raise and significant changes to our state government and tax system. But there are some nagging questions that have yet to be answered. Questions Step Up Oklahoma's media partners should ask. "Step Up" revenues are only the first step needed to fix Oklahoma's budget problems.

Gov. Fallin has identified the right goals for this year's legislative session: pass new revenues to fix the budget, reform ineffective and cruel criminal justice policies, and fund mental health and addiction treatment. The structural budget deficit and incarceration crisis are years in the making, but Oklahomans from many backgrounds have reached a remarkable consensus on the direction that we need to go.

While the Governor's address identifies the right problems, her budget makes clear that we still have a long way to go to fully solve them. Even with all revenues from the Step Up Oklahoma plan included, Gov. Fallin's FY 2019 budget does nothing to increase general support for K-12 schools and higher education that has been cut the most in the nation. It does not address overcrowding and staff shortages in state prisons. It does not provide pay increases for thousands of state workers, many of whom have gone more than a decade without a raise. It does not undo cuts to community health providers or reduce the long developmental disabilities care waiting list.

The Governor's proposals are a first step towards correcting a decade of cuts and underfunding. However, Oklahoma has much more to do to put our state on a path to good health, safety, and prosperity for all of us.

NARFE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

By James Crowder

A significant event occurred the morning of February 9, when Congress passed a two-year bipartisan spending agreement, which was signed into law by President Trump. Here is a quote from NARFE National President Richard Thissen issued February 9, 2018, outlining NARFE's role in safeguarding federal pay and benefits:

"For months, NARFE has been asking its members to contact their lawmakers while Congress negotiated a bipartisan spending agreement. Today, I want to say thank you to all those who took action and tell you that your advocacy paid off. Congress passed a two-year bipartisan spending agreement that did not require cuts to federal pay and benefits as offsets. This is a big victory for the federal community and another powerful demonstration of NARFE's grassroots efforts. Every email, letter and phone call you made to your legislators made a difference. The federal community has many fights ahead of us this year, but I know that NARFE members will rise to the occasion and advocate for their earned pay and benefits."

This is from the Feb. 9, 2018, issue of NARFE Legislative Hotline:

"After a brief funding lapse, the president signed into law a two-year bipartisan agreement to lift strict budget caps on annual defense and domestic spending without using federal pay and benefits as offsets. This is a big win for the federal community and NARFE wants to thank all of its members who took action by contacting their legislators over the past several months. Your advocacy played a vital role in this victory."

ALZHEIMER'S REPORT: By Norma Baxter, Assistant to Dorothy Branson

It was with sadness and deep concern that we learned of Dorothy Branson's serious thigh fracture the last week of January. We breathed a sigh of relief when she survived the surgery that followed. She now faces a long period of recovery which we hope will enable her to resume her regular activities. Please pray for her. Cards are welcome and may be mailed to her home address at 4800 Michael Drive, Del City, OK 73115.

Until Dorothy is able to resume her work with NARFE as Alzheimer's Coordinator for our chapter, I shall try to carry on as best I can with education and fundraising for Alzheimer's Research. We are so encouraged and grateful for the enthusiastic response we've received from all of you this past year in meeting our goals. **KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!** Make Dorothy proud of Chapter 946!

SUNSHINE REPORT: By Joyce Woodring and Helen Cannefax

If you know of anyone who is ill or has passed away, contact your SUNSHINE LADIES, so we can send cards and/or acknowledge the loss of a loved one. Please call us with your Birthday or Anniversary date and particulars. Call Joyce Woodring at 602-8043 or Helen Cannefax at 259-9979.

Cards sent in January, 2018:

Get Well – Rosie Pettett, Herb Barrett.
Thinking of You – Jamie and Bill Thompson.

Birthday acknowledged at January meeting: Billie Ripple.

NARFE-FEEA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Will Your H.S. Grad Be a Winner?

Here's how you can make this happen:

- Each year since 1998 NARFE has awarded \$1,000 college scholarships to deserving children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of NARFE members. Twenty of these scholarships will be awarded in 2018.
- Deadline to apply is March 21, 2018.
- The scholarship application is now available. Go to www.narfe.org and follow the prompts for full details. Be sure to download the 4-page brochure for instructions.
- One of the requirements will be an essay to be submitted with the application. The topic will be revealed on the scholarship application.

We encourage all members to look into this opportunity for your deserving child, grandchild, even great-grandchild or step-children, etc. Also, if you are not yet a member of NARFE, **JOIN NOW.** You don't want to miss this chance to enhance your family's education.

National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association
Midwest City/Del City
Chapter 946
11013 Larkin Lane
Midwest City, OK 73130



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*Remember --
Spring
is just around
the Corner!*

FEBRUARY MEETING DETAILS

PROGRAM: We welcome Michelle Thompson from the Oklahoma Tax Commission. Michelle is knowledgeable not only about filing the 2017 state return, but has tips for seniors for the new 2018 tax reforms.

WHEN: Friday, February 23, 2018

TIME: 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: Twin Hills Golf & Country Club

LOCATION: 3401 N. E. 36th St. (From Sooner Rd. travel west on N. E. 36th St., 1.8 miles. Turn into the gate on the north side of 36th St. and drive to the parking lot.)

Handicapped parking spots are near the entrance. The meeting room is on the second floor. There is a nice large elevator to the right of the main doors inside the building.

Drive carefully and slowly in Forest Park. The local police watch for speeders.

MENU: Hot buffet with two meats, two vegetables, salad bar, desserts, coffee and iced tea. Cost is \$13 per person.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: You will be contacted by one of our "Calling Committee" Volunteers. Be ready to give them a "yes" or "no" concerning your reservation. If you want to make a reservation or if you have to cancel, call Helen Cannefax at 259-9979 by NOON on Wednesday, before meetings (February 21, 2018). If you make a reservation and do not attend or cancel on time, please send payment to Treasurer Ken Dungan, P. O. Box 10583, Oklahoma City, OK 73140.

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is open for membership to all federal civilians who are current employees, retirees, former employees, spouses, surviving spouses of those eligible to join NARFE, and former spouses who are eligible for a federal or survivor annuity.