

AFPE Meets with Legislators

The 2005 legislative session should be interesting for all of us with a number of retiree benefits issues in play.

For some time, AFPE has been working to improve benefits for retired state employees, specifically we have been seeking an increase in the retiree benefit allowance, in the form of a one time 13th payment to retirees in the amount of 100% of their benefit.

AFPE was invited to meet with legislators on December 9, 2004 to discuss the future of retiree benefits in North Dakota. The meeting which was proposed by legislators also included members of INDSEA, the Independent North Dakota State Employees Association.

Of discussion for retirees was the health benefit credit which is currently at \$4.50 per month for every year of service. This retiree benefit is of major concern to the organization as it has not been adjusted in over 10 years and has fallen far behind the increased cost of insurance premiums.

AFPE's position is to seek an increase from \$4.50 to \$6.00 in order to adequately compensate for market and inflationary increases. Currently there is no legislation proposed to make this change. However PERS, the Public Employee Retirement System, is proposing a Bill that would increase the benefit to \$5.00 from the current \$4.50.

PERS is also introducing a bill that would allow for a 13th benefit payment this biennium based on the retirement fund's annual return reaching 11%. The "trigger" percentage is something that AFPE will be working to lower to 10% or lower and to increase the payment from a "half" payment to 100% of the normal benefit.

Both bills as presented by the PERS board have received favorable recommendations and would be an improvement to the current benefit.

Legislators in attendance were Senate Majority Leader Bob Stenehjem (Bismarck), Rep. Ron Carlisle (Bismarck), Rep. Bob Martinson (Bismarck), and Rep. Todd Porter (Mandan). The Legislators answered questions and heard comments from those present. AFPE President Carl Rodlund asked the panel how the organization could show their support for an improved benefit. Senator Bob Stenehjem responded by saying "Get out and meet your representatives face to face or call them on the phone. That is the best way to let them know what issues are important to you."

The Legislative session starts January 4 and AFPE will be actively lobbying on your behalf. We need your support and help! Contact your legislators and let them know you support these improvements to retiree benefits.

Legislator information is available at the link below:
<http://www.state.nd.us/lr/assembly/59-2005/>

www.afpend.com

Happy New Year from AFPE

A Message From the President

Thanksgiving starts the holiday season. A time to visit with friends and relatives. A time to enjoy fine food and conversation.

I hope all of you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and Christmas and I wish everyone a very happy New Year!

In January the Legislature will be meeting. A number of issues will be discussed and voted into law. For information regarding retirees, please refer to the Association of Former Public Employees website on the internet at www.afpend.com.



Carl Rodlund, AFPE
President



Your Voice Matters:

2005 legislative session is key to retiree benefits

With the 2005 North Dakota legislative session upon us it becomes apparent that the key to maintaining retiree benefits is the voice of our members. The AFPE strives to protect and promote legislation that benefits our membership. Our voice is strong but needs to grow.

The 2005 legislature will be considering a number of proposals that would influence the retiree benefits of our members. In order to maintain a strong presence in the legislature we need to grow our membership and further strengthen our voice. As a former public employee, AFPE represents your interests as an independent, non-union advocate. Through the participation of our active members and by increasing our membership AFPE can insure that your benefits will remain and improve for years to come.

AFPE's positions on issues for the 2005/2007 biennium

1. Increase the prefunded health care contribution from the current \$4.50 per month per year of service to \$6.00.
2. Provider for a 13th payment to retirees, in each year of the biennium, in the amount of 100% of the current benefit.

These proposed changes that AFPE is supporting would provide a much improved boost to the current benefits you are receiving. By supporting the AFPE and becoming a member, you strengthen our voice and can take an active role in improving your benefits.

Leadership

President
Carl Rodlund

Vice President /Rep. To PERS Board
Ron Leingang

Secretary/Treasurer
Jim Sauer

Member at Large
Howard Snortland

By-Laws Committee Chair
Betty Brostrom

Past President
Jeanine Christy

State Office Staff
Tom Tupa, Ken Tupa, Tami Wahl, &
Bill Kalanek
Phone: 701-224-1815



Ron Leingang Elected to PERS Board

AFPE Vice President Ron Leingang was elected to the North Dakota Public Employee Retirement System board as a retiree representative. His term was effective July 1, 2004 and ends June 30, 2009. Ron is retired from the Department of Human Services and previously served on the board as an elected active member. AFPE congratulates Ron and would like to thank him for his years of service to North Dakota's public employees.

Visit us on the web at www.afpend.com

Thank You Weldee!

Weldee Baetsch's term as the elected retiree representative on the NDPERS Board concluded on June 30, 2004. Weldee served on the board for five years. AFPE would like to thank Weldee for his service to PERS and for his contributions to the members of AFPE over the last 5 years.



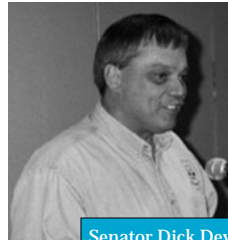
Weldee Baetsch with AFPE President Carl Rodlund

From the Archives: Annual Meeting 2004



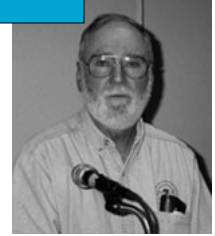
Kathy Allen from PERS speaks to the attendees about retirement.

Judy Austad from the ND Attorney General's Office discusses senior scams.



Senator Dick Dever speaks to the membership.

Rep. Ron Carlisle addresses the annual meeting



Attendees take in the speakers at the 2004 AFPE Annual Meeting



Take control of your future, become a member!

Please complete the bottom portion of this form and indicate your desired form of payment. **For payroll deduction, please check the authorization box and furnish your social security number.**

If you sign up for payroll deduction there is no need to submit the \$24.00 payment.



(NAME)

(MAILING ADDRESS)

(CITY, STATE, ZIP)

(PHONE)

(E-MAIL ADDRESS)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER - (REQUIRED FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTION ONLY)

DUES: \$24.00

Make Check Payable to AFPE

Mail to:

AFPE

PO BOX 1141

Bismarck, ND 58502-1141

(Do not send money if you are signing up for payroll deduction)

I authorize PERS to withhold AFPE dues of 1/12th (\$2.00) of the annual dues each month from my benefits and transfer the money to AFPE and will remain in effect unless canceled by written request.

Date _____

Signature _____



**ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES**

**PO Box 1141
Bismarck, ND 58502-1141**

**Phone: 701-224-1815
Fax: 701-224-9824**

Season's Greetings!

**Visit us on the web at:
www.afpend.com**

You are AFPE!!

In the event you are unfamiliar with this Association, AFPE is exclusively dedicated to protecting and enhancing public employee retiree benefits. AFPE has been hard at work getting ready for the legislative session that will start in January 2005. Like other organizations, we need to continue increasing our membership to support efforts like:

1. Representing you at PERS Board meetings and giving input on issues affecting your retirement.
2. Monitoring closely State Investment Board meetings, watching the PERS retirement and how the retirement fund is managed.
3. Visiting with legislators on a regular basis to keep them informed about the concerns of the retirees. (We previously met with the Governor's staff to promote a 13th paycheck for retirees and an increase in the pre-funded health insurance payment from \$4.50 to \$6.00, per year of service, if possible. This proposed adjustment will require a great deal of effort.)
4. Supporting and opposing legislation affecting retirees.

In order to have maximum influence with the state legislature, it is of utmost importance that we have a strong representation of former public employees in AFPE. As of now, only approximately 25% of eligible public retirees hold membership in AFPE, the organization that continuously advocates on your behalf. This percentage must be improved if we are to maintain the excellent retirement system retirees now enjoy in North Dakota.

**AFPE
PO Box 1141
Bismarck, ND 58502-1141**