

NSEA-Retired 2014-2015 Report to the Delegate Assembly

By Roger Rea, NSEA-Retired President

Membership continues to grow: NSEA-Retired continues to be a growing membership group in the NSEA family. As of February 2015, retired membership stands at 5,451, an increase of 136 over last year's membership for a membership growth of 2.6 percent. In addition, we have 736 pre-retired subscribers. Pre-retired subscribers are individuals who will be lifetime members of NSEA-Retired when they retire without paying additional dues to the retired organizations. NSEA-Retired is the only state-wide retired organization that guarantees continuation of NSEA services for retired educators and access to NEA member benefits. Contact Rebecca Smith at [**Rebecca.smith@nsea.org**](mailto:Rebecca.smith@nsea.org) for details about pre-retired or retired life membership in NSEA-Retired, or visit our web page, [**www.nsea.org/retired**](http://www.nsea.org/retired) and click on the *Join Now* link on the left of the page.

NSEA-Retired turns 30! NSEA-Retired was founded on Sept. 14, 1985, and is celebrating its 30th anniversary. It is our understanding that the lifetime dues rate for NEA-Retired will increase for 2016-17, so at this year's Delegate Assembly we are promoting a "*Beat the Dues Increase – Join in a Flash*" membership campaign to increase our pre-retired membership numbers. You don't have to be retired to become a pre-retired, lifetime member of NSEA-Retired. You can join as a pre-retired, lifetime member at any point in your career. We are giving a free flash drive to anyone who becomes a pre-retired, lifetime member during Delegate Assembly. Details of the membership campaign were included in the Delegate Assembly mailing from NSEA, and are included elsewhere in this Delegate Assembly booklet. *Beat the dues increase – Join in a Flash*, and save!

Retirement information seminars offered by NSEA-Retired: NSEA-Retired offers an excellent pre-retirement seminar for active local associations throughout the state. The seminar has been presented 229 times in the last 11 years to more than 8,400 members. Contact your NSEA District president, local association president, your NSEA-Retired District director, or NSEA-Retired President Roger Rea, [**rrea68154@yahoo.com**](mailto:rrea68154@yahoo.com), for details, or to arrange a seminar for your local.

Medicare and EHA information seminars provide needed guidance: For several years, NSEA-Retired has conducted seminars on the basics of Medicare as well as information on **NSEA-Retired BlueSenior Classic**, the Medicare supplement that is endorsed by NSEA-Retired and underwritten by Blue Cross of Nebraska. Attendance at the four Medicare seminars held in

2014 totaled 313. The seminars brought information about making the transition from EHA insurance to Medicare as well as how to use the Medicare website to select an appropriate Medicare Part D provider for prescription medication. Information on Medicare was also provided during our two min-conferences. For the past five years, NSEA-Retired has partnered with the Educators Health Alliance to host information seminars across the state on the new EHA insurance options for pre-65 retirees. In 2014 we had 70 members and spouses attend the information seminars. The total attendance at these seminars for the past five years has been 788. More information on making the transition to Medicare, as well as the handouts for both the Medicare and pre-65 EHA seminars held in 2014, can be found on the NSEA-Retired web site, www.nsea.org/retired.

Mentoring project provides help for first-year teachers: NSEA-Retired has a nationally-recognized Intergenerational Mentoring Project to provide assistance to first-year teachers in making the transition from full-time student to full-time teacher. Now in its 12th year, this program pairs first-year teachers with retired educators across the state. First-year teachers say that the experience of a retired educator enhances their confidence to do an outstanding job in the classroom. Retired educators say that the experience re-invigorates their minds and helps them keep their connection with the classroom. NSEA-Retired is looking for retirees who are willing to participate as mentors. Contact either your NSEA-Retired District director or the SEAN leadership to get more information. To request an application brochure, reach Duane Obermier at duane.obermier@nsea.org.

NSEA-Retired awards three scholarships to SEAN members: Three \$1,000 scholarships are awarded by NSEA-Retired to members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) each year. Applications for these scholarships are available to students during their student teaching semester in every teacher training institution in the state. Contact your campus SEAN leadership or the SEAN web page, www.nsea.org/SEAN, for more information and for application forms.

Keeping members informed: NSEA-Retired uses both print and electronic media to inform of important events and activities. The *Advocate*, the newsletter for NSEA-Retired, as well as *The Corner*, the column that appears in each issue of *The Voice*, have both won national awards for excellence. Both *The Advocate* and *The Corner* are edited by Renae Kelly. You may suggest story ideas to Renae at renaerkelly@gmail.com. Check out the NSEA-Retired website at www.nsea.org/retired. The website is updated frequently and keeps our members informed about issues of importance. Registration for NSEA-Retired activities is conducted through the website.

Contact John Jensen, who maintains the content of the web page, at jensen.omaha@gmail.com.

NSEA-Retired Lobby Day successful: More than 50 NSEA-Retired members and guests came to the Unicameral in February to share information with Senators on maintaining state funding for public education, providing more relief from the state income tax on Social Security benefits, and making a major governance change for the Omaha School Employees' Retirement System. This year our Lobby Day was sandwiched between two major snow storms in Lincoln, and attendance was high despite the threat of bad weather. Sen. Galen Hadley, Speaker of the Legislature, gave the luncheon address on Lobby Day.

Mini Conferences attract retired educators: Two "mini conferences" were held this year for NSEA-Retired members. The Younes Conference Center in Kearney was the site of the fall conference, and St. Benedict's Retreat Center near Schuyler was the site for our spring conference. The agenda for the conferences included keynote speakers, a business meeting, and break-out sectionals on various topics of interest.

NSEA-Retired elections: NSEA-Retired members elected a District Director from Metro District to the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors; 18 delegates to NSEA Delegate Assembly; and six delegates to NEA Representative Assembly.

Coalition on tax reform: NSEA-Retired continues its work with various labor groups and organizations representing retirees across the state to investigate ways to make Nebraska more "retiree friendly." Nebraska has a higher tax burden on retirement incomes than any of our surrounding states, and ranks among the least favorable places to retire, according to several sources. LB165, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom, would eliminate all state income tax on Social Security benefits over a five-year time period. Members of the coalition, including NSEA-Retired, testified at the hearing for this bill.