

**Report of the NSEA-Retired Affiliate
to the 2016 NSEA Delegate Assembly,
By Roger Rea, Omaha, President**

Membership continues to grow: NSEA-Retired continues to be a growing membership group in the NSEA family. As of February 2016 our retired membership stands at 5,557, an increase of 106 over last year's membership for a membership growth of 1.9 percent. In addition, we have 418 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 for information about pre-retired or retired life membership in NSEA-Retired, or visit our website, 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 celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. On Oct. 14, 2015, Gov. Pete Ricketts signed a proclamation declaring Oct. 27, 2015, as "NSEA-Retired Day," and asking that all Nebraskans "...*take due note of the significant contributions the members of NSEA-Retired have made to the State of Nebraska, to the children of this state, and to public education.*" 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. To promote pre-retired lifetime membership in NSEA-Retired, we will give a free flash drive and twelve tickets to the annual baby blanket and quilt drawing to anyone who becomes a pre-retired, lifetime member during Delegate Assembly this year. (*All monies raised for the baby blanket and quilt drawing are donated to the NSEA Children's Fund.*) 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 243 times in the last 12 years to more than 9,000 members. Contact your NSEA District President, Local Association President, your NSEA-Retired District Director, or NSEA-Retired President Roger Rea, rrea68154@yahoo.com, for more information or to arrange a seminar for your local.

Medicare and EHA information seminars provide needed guidance: 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 for the past 10 years. Attendance at the four Medicare seminars held in 2015 totaled 140. A total of 2,174 members and spouses have attended the seminars over the ten-year period. The Medicare seminars brought information about making the transition from EHA insurance to Medicare as well as how to use the Medicare web site to select an appropriate Medicare Part D provider for prescription medication. Information on Medicare was also provided during our two mini-conferences. For the past six 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 2015 we had 37 members and spouses attend the information seminars. The total attendance at these seminars for the past six years has been 825. More

information on making the transition to Medicare as well as the handouts for both the Medicare and pre-65 EHA seminars held in 2015 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 thirteenth 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 a mentor application brochure, contact 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 website, www.nsea.org/SEAN, for more information and for application forms.

Keeping our members informed: NSEA-Retired uses both print and electronic media to inform our members of important events and activities of the association. The *Advocate*, the newsletter for NSEA-Retired, as well as *The Corner*, the column that appears in each issue of the *NSEA Voice*, have both won national awards for excellence. At the annual meeting for NEA-Retired in 2015, *The Corner* received a “lifetime achievement award.” This award is given to publications that have received three first-place awards in the annual competition. 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 web page 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. As a side note, John also serves at the national level as the NEA-Retired vice president.

NSEA-Retired Lobby Day successful: More than 40 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 postponed for one week due to a major snow storm in Lincoln. Attendance was high despite the change in date. 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 Bosselman Conference Center in Grand Island 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 to retired educators.

NSEA-Retired elections: NSEA-Retired elections were held in February for the offices of NSEA-Retired Secretary and Treasurer, and District Directors from Metro, Panhandle, and Tri Valley Districts. In addition, nineteen delegates to NSEA Delegate Assembly; and six delegates to NEA Representative Assembly were elected.

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. LB749, introduced by Senator Brett Lindstrom (LD 18) would raise the threshold income before Social Security benefits are taxed to levels that are comparable to what the threshold incomes would have been if the threshold incomes had been adjusted for inflation since they were introduced in 1983. Members of the coalition, including NSEA-Retired, testified at the hearing for this bill.