HOPE TO SEE YOU AT APEA'S 2016 CAUCUS!!

Cecily Hodges, President

Things are very busy at APEA right now. As you probably know, APEA’s 2016 Biennial Caucus is 20 – 23 October, and many of us are completely immersed in final plans, bringing the Caucus and its many activities together and trying to assure that Caucus runs smoothly and is an enjoyable and useful event for everyone attending.

I hope you are planning on attending, and will look forward to seeing you there. If we haven’t personally met, please make a point to introduce yourself and chat with me for a few during Caucus.

Caucus is an opportunity for APEA members to come together, to meet and learn about each other and about the various APEA local unions that, together, constitute APEA.

Our unions, individually and collectively, succeed to the degree that we each engage, support and work on behalf of our union and our unions’ values and our collective commitment to work with each other in support of those values.

Caucus is a place where we re-direct our focus, re-calibrate and re-invigorate ourselves by renewing our commitment and replenishing each other’s engagement.

Hope to see you at Caucus!!

We will have visiting speakers, present a variety of informational and educational workshops and programs, and learn about each other, about APEA, about AFT and about the many things we are all doing to advance and improve the working life and activities of each member.
New Hire, Annie Knight, SC Field Office

By Annie Knight, South Central Field Representative

Anne Knight – Recent hire for South Central Field office located in Anchorage

I am very excited about joining the APEA/AFT team. I have been a member of both the Supervisory (SU) and Confidential (CEA) Unions and I am grateful that I now have the opportunity to represent State employees of these two unions and to be able to participate in future negotiations, in an effort to make positives changes for you all.

A little bit about myself. I am born and raised in this great State, married, a mother of three, a grandmother of three, a Girl Scout leader and an individual who strives to make a positive impact on the people I serve, meet and represent.

Prior to joining the APEA/AFT team, I worked as a public servant for nearly fifteen years, with the past seven years being in Human Resources. I believe my knowledge and experience with the State will enhance the services I am able to provide to you all. Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions. My contact information is as follows: Email: aknight@apea-aft.org; Direct Line: 907-274-1724.

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Labor Day Happenings in Southeast.

By Joel Hill, Southeast Field Representative

Labor Day. Rain or shine, in this case rain. Had I not been cooking, I may have more photos and material.

We had great representation from all APEA/AFT Locals: SU, CEA, JESS, RPEA and more.

Here in Juneau, we enjoyed a huge Labor Day BBQ for all workers--union or not.
By Brian Penner, South Central Regional Manager

The APEA/AFT Confidential Employees Association (CEA) and State of Alaska DOA, through their Labor-Management Training Committee, invited world-renowned workplace bullying expert, Dr. Gary Naime, to present on the subject to a group of CEA members in Anchorage on September 14.

Those present were introduced to ideas on how to respond to bullies, common characteristics of bullies, common characteristics of bully targets and how a workplace bullying policy can be an effective way of controlling them. The presentation also included ample research and statistics about the prevalence, cost, and consequences of bullying to employers and employee health.

It is hoped that this training will be the beginning of a movement to greater ensure the health and safety of public employees by reducing their exposure to this issue at work.

For more information on the topic, Dr. Naime’s website, http://www.workplacebullying.org is a helpful resource.
Getting Ready for APEA/AFT Caucus!
By Annie Knight, South Central Field Representative

As the APEA/AFT Biennial Caucus nears, many of the Locals are in the process of selecting and submitting their delegates who will attend.

For the APEA/AFT Supervisory Unit, this process has involved members being nominated and then having it put out to vote.

The vote closed on September 15, 2016, and 213 ballots were received.

Anna Nowak, Jackie Bennett, Emily Astrande and Brian Penner

Anna Nowak, Annie Knight, Emily Astrande, Jennifer Madsen, Barbara Strong, Cris Sanders

Anna Nowak spent Friday, September 16, 2016, at the South Central Field Office, officiating the count of the ballots.

Anna Nowak is an Office Assistant IV for the Department of Environment Conservation and is an active member as witnessed by the amount of time she spent opening, counting and tallying all of the ballots.

The outcome of the ballot count will be shared by the SU president John White.
Retired Public Employees of Alaska

Southcentral Chair, Fran Rabago stated that she would continue to serve as Chapter Chair for the next year with Gene Christian and Kris Warren as members. RPEA has decided to hold only quarterly meetings over the winter instead of the usual monthly meetings. Those meetings will focus primarily on issues related to retiree benefits. The next meeting will be December 13th, followed by March 14th, and finally May 30th.

Teleconferencing will continue to be made available despite most RPEA members attending in person. Fran asked for a show of hands of those who were not members. RPEA signed up an additional three new members!

As a reminder, Aetna is putting on a Health Fair for AlaskaCare retirees and their dependents. The dates for Anchorage are October 8th & 9th at 8:00 AM – Noon and again on October 29th & 30th, 8:00 AM – Noon. Both Sessions will be conducted at Hanshew Jr. High on Lake Otis Blvd. between Abbott and O’Malley Roads.

TOTEM Swearing In of Officers

TOTEM Association’s new and returning officers took their oath of office at their September 15, 2016 monthly Executive Board meeting.

We welcome Ken Tate, new TOTEM Member-At-Large (Instructional); Kathy Miller, returning TOTEM Member-At-Large (Instructional); Amey Tamagni and Alicia Woods, returning TOTEM Members-At-Large (Non-instructional); and Sandy Thompson, returning Vice President.

We thank these members for stepping up and volunteering their time to represent the members of TOTEM.

Pictured: Ken Tate, Amey Tamagni, Alicia Woods, Sandy Thompson & Kathy Miller
APEA/AFT’s Newest Local

APEA/AFT would like to welcome our 24th Local to the family. Homer Organization of Professional Employees, Local 6572, APEA/AFT (AFL-CIO) was certified, following a vote of the members, by the National Labor Relations Board on June 9, 2016. Since that time the members of HOPE have written and passed their Constitution, elected officers and negotiators and drafted most of their initial proposals for their first collective bargaining agreement.

The members of HOPE work for the non-profit Sprout Family Services in Homer. Our members provide child and family services to families in the Aleutian Islands, Seldovia, Homer and Anchor Point areas. The services they provide include pediatric occupations therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, child development screenings & evaluations, parenting support, infant learning, weekly playgroups and community referrals.

Written by Jeff Smardo, KBEA Employee Representative Nikiski Fire Department

The Nikiski Fire Department is located in the northern Cook Inlet Region and provides emergency services for the Nikiski Fire Service Area which actually covers about 6,400 square miles. Within this area are oil platforms, several oil and gas facilities, a wide variety of marine traffic, remote locales, and small communities that benefit from NFD’s fire, medical, and rescue capabilities.

Pictured is a select team of firefighters and paramedics from Nikiski Fire Departments Rescue Swimmer Team preparing for live rescue scenarios in the brisk waters of the Cook Inlet from OSK (Offshore Systems Kenai) Heliport facility.

This August 2016 training was accomplished in cooperation with Hicorp Alaska LLC, Pathfinder Aviation, and the Kenai Fire Department.

The aircraft pictured is the Bell 212 Twin Huey which has proven throughout the years to be a dependable resource and available for immediate response by the Nikiski Fire Department.

Left to right: Stephen Robertson, Jeff Smardo, Bryan Crisp, Kole McCaughey, Levi Doss, and Bryan Ledahl.
SU RATIFICATION SUDDENLY LUNGES FORWARD

We were most surprised this past week when the Administration called to ask whether SU was still willing to do a ratification vote for the mediated tentative agreement reached by SU and the state back in June, when we went through several days of mediation with a Federal Mediator.

The state had initially wanted that mediated agreement to be conditional on other state unions agreeing to our provision to allow members nearing retirement to have an alternative to furloughs that would preserve the member’s retirement pension value. But one union declined to adopt the alternative, and it seemed like it would be necessary for SU and the state to arbitrate their negotiating differences.

This past week, however, the state asked whether SU would submit the mediated agreement to the membership for a ratification vote, and we are happy to be able to do so. Ballots should be going into the mail to all SU members shortly before this newsletter issues, and we will be holding (perhaps will have already held) information meetings in Anchorage on Monday, 26 September; in Fairbanks on Tuesday, 27 September; and in Juneau on Wednesday, 28 September.

Separate announcements will distribute with times and places of the meetings, and copies of the mediated agreement package and a red-line version of the SU agreement will be posted on APEA and SU websites.

Ballots need to be returned to an APEA Office by close-of-business Monday, 17 October, and ballots will be counted in the Anchorage Office on Wednesday, 19 October 2016.

As we all know, this is an ugly year for contract negotiations, but perhaps the 2016 contract struggle may finally be completed.