Thank You for Participating in APEA’s Poll!

Cecily Hodges, President

Thank you for participating, all of you who did, in APEA’s recent poll regarding solutions to Alaska’s state revenue challenges. 957 APEA members completed the poll. We are now in the process of calculating, organizing, reviewing and analyzing the responses.

The responses will be presented to the APEA Board of Directors at their 16 March 2017 meeting, and thereafter made available to the membership – March’s Newsletter will no doubt offer extensive discussion of the poll’s results.

The Board of Directors will further discuss the results at their 7-9 April meeting, which is the annual budget meeting and a training meeting, so there will be ample time to dig into the responses and determine appropriate Board action regarding advocating for a specific solution or solutions.

Regardless of the poll’s recommendations and responses, it is clear that Alaska faces a very serious, and a very immediate, challenge regarding how to raise the revenues to operate state government at the level of services desired by a majority of Alaskan citizens.

APEA and its members should be an active and engaged part of that discussion, and our activity and effectiveness will be defined by the degree of member engagement, combined with the levels of enthusiasm and energy staff and members bring to each and every activity in which we become engaged.

Member engagement and activism will be the real source of the effectiveness of our work, and we hope members will step-up and lead APEA and the state with their involvement and commitment to helping our state develop to its maximum potential.
This month the APEA/AFT Spotlight shines on Bob Murphy, the new Chapter Chair of the South Central Region of the APEA/AFT Supervisory Unit. Bob is an active member of the APEA/AFT Supervisory Unit as an Employee Representative, a member of the negotiation team and as the Vice Chair of the Employee Political Information Committee (EPIC).

Bob Murphy first started working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1986 in Fairbanks and moved to Kodiak in 1990, where he has been working in the same position as an Area Management Biologist for the Division of Commercial Fisheries.

He is responsible for the herring and salmon fisheries within a 225 mile stretch of coastline on the Bering Sea side of the Alaska Peninsula. The position entails gathering the necessary information from state employees located on local rivers, who are counting the salmon migrating upriver, or spending time in a small plane counting fish from the air and deciding whether to open or close the commercial fishery for 150-200 commercial fishing boats that participate in the area.

In addition to his union activities, he referees both basketball and volleyball for adults and youth in his community during the fall, winter and spring.

The South Central Chapter meetings are scheduled quarterly (second Wednesday of the month), with the next meeting being April 12, 2017 at noon. Please send any agenda items to Bob or APEA/AFT staff, Annie Knight, by March 27, 2017. Please know additional meetings will be scheduled if a topic needs immediate attention.
What is your Local and your members doing to give back to the community?

APEA/AFT members already give to the public by the nature of the jobs. Our Locals & members then reach out even further to better our communities by their generosity.

This time we are featuring members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Employees Association who annually organize a Christmas Food Drive for designated homeless families and students in need. The homeless children receive most of their meals from their school programs. When the schools are closed, the homeless students are often without enough food to get through the Christmas break.

This year KBEA focused on two homeless young females: one 16 years old with a mother unable to provide for her due to substance abuse, the other an 18 year old who lost her mother and had been living in the woods.

Additionally, three homeless families were helped, a single father with three young children, a grandmother with one young grandchild and another single father with one young child.

KBEA members set up collection boxes throughout the borough and then boxed up and delivered enough food for a couple of weeks of breakfast, lunches and dinners and a nice Christmas dinner. The boxes included gift cards designated for propane and other essentials.
Northern Region Report

By Michael Koskie, Northern Regional Manager & Jason Roach, Northern Field Representative

The UA Adjuncts Local #6054 Negotiating Team kicked off negotiations on February 2nd and 3rd in Fairbanks.

President Fran Polumsky and fellow team members Bruce Bowler, Ann Spohnholz, Katie Boylan with APEA staff Michael Koskie, Brian Penner and Jason Roach met the University’s bargaining team and presented their proposals.

Also on the Adjuncts Negotiating Team are Peggy Weaver and Sally Rafson. Meetings will continue in two weeks in Juneau.

Northern Region Supervisory Unit

On January 30th 2017, Michael Lund, Northern SU Chair, Walter Evans, Alternate SU Chair and APEA Field Rep. Jason Roach embarked on an informational road trip to Tok and Delta Junction.

Our mission was simple: make contact with available SU members and provide an update on the State’s current fiscal crisis and answer any other questions they may have.

We also wanted to make sure our members had the packet the Northern Field office had put together for the annual SU holiday meeting. Our first stop was Tok where we ate lunch with SU members Dennis Bishop, DOT and Stephen Brooks, Weights and Measurements. Our discussion focused on the Governor’s efforts to contract out DOT’s design and planning and the moves APEA/AFT have made to combat this senseless idea.

Stopping in Delta Junction we met up with SU members Brandy Baker from Fish and Game and Michael Goyette DNR. It was great to share information first hand with them and answer their contract related questions. We hope to make more trips in the future and look forward to educating and engaging our members wherever they may be scattered around Alaska.
News from Local 6137, Ketchikan Gateway Borough
By Gabe Hargrove, Southeast Field Representative

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Local 6137 negotiating team met with management’s negotiating team January 25th and 26th.

We had productive meetings on both dates, with about 85% of the bargaining completed. The issues of Healthcare and Compensation are still on the table.

We are scheduled for our next round of negotiations for February 27th and 28th and the team is going into it filled with optimism.

Pictured above, (from left to right) is: Jim Pomplun, President Bryan Turner, Steve Franklin, and Fred Brannon. Southeast Field Representative, Joel Hill, is pictured sitting behind the members.

JESS Local drops by the APEA/AFT Union Hall
By Joel Hill, Southeast Field Representative

Member visitors from Juneau Educational Support Staff (JESS) Local #6096 dropped by your APEA Southeast Region office.

Remember, it is your union hall office so feel free to drop in! And, providing we have time, we would love to introduce you to staff.

Left to right: Greg Collen (who has just moved on), JESS Employee Representative; Chris Cairns, JESS Parliamentarian; Glendia Malaby, APEA Admin; and Jenn Johnson, JESS Treasurer.
News from Anchorage Council of Education

By Gene Christian, South Central Field Associate

The Anchorage Council of Education (ACE) Executive Board met this month to talk about a variety of topics as well as its upcoming officer election. More information on the election will be sent to the membership soon so be on the lookout.

The ACE Executive Board recently welcomed its newest member, Dee Parsons. Many of you may know Dee as she has served in many different TOTEM capacities over the years. Some of these include serving as a rep and first aid trainer for TOTEM, as well as the APEA/EPIC Board. Dee has recently taken an ACE position, and ACE is pleased to gain benefit of her skills, knowledge and experience.

For more information on what’s happening with ACE, please visit any of the links below.

www.aceaft.com

https://www.facebook.com/aceaft/

https://twitter.com/aceaft

From left to right: Rachel Molina-Lodoen, Suzette Johnstone, Stephen Brown, Dane Sutterfield, and Dee Parsons.
CONVERSATIONS CAMPAIGN WILL RESUME

About a year to a year-and-a-half ago, we were very much engaged in a campaign with AFT wherein we hoped to visit and speak with each and every person we represent – members and fair share feepayers – and talk about the union, what they would like to see the union do (or not do) and how the union might be more relevant to them and their working lives.

We got off to a very good start. JESS President Cricket Curtain and one of our Juneau field reps visited every JSD work site and spoke with very nearly every JESS bargaining unit member. TOTEM President Sharon Baker and members of her Executive Board visited every ASD work site, spoke with TOTEM members and successfully staffed TOTEM Site Representative positions in every location; newly seated ACE President Dane Sutterfield and selected Executive Board members made the rounds of ACE work sites, visited and spoke with ACE members.

Then the presidential campaign and election took center stage (the whole stage!), distracted and dominated almost everything that was happening throughout the country, and both APEA and AFT also got distracted and diverted from the campaign to visit with and engage the membership.

As we move into better weather, however, we will resume that conversations campaign, and although I don’t suppose we can actually expect to speak with every member, we will try to speak with every member, and I hope members will anticipate the conversations and be prepared to ask questions and express concerns, interests, issues and suggestions.

We are all aware of the revenue and financial challenges confronting our state. These problems have already heavily impacted our state of Alaska and University of Alaska members, and will no doubt soon be impacting our local agency members. Our state must decide how it will generate the revenue necessary to conduct the business it must conduct, and identify the business the citizenry wants it to conduct. We must define the latter before we can decide the former.

APEA should – wants to and expects to – play a role in those decisions and determinations.

That role will be more effective in proportion to the legitimacy, support and activism the membership accords APEA. We hope the conversations campaign will strengthen the relationship and connections between the “institution” of APEA and the APEA membership.