It’s been another excellent Alaska summer, despite copious rain in Anchorage and Southeast, but we are rapidly approaching summer’s end. This weekend, with its Labor Day “extension”, pretty well rounds out the summer, takes us into moose season and is our reminder that the long, cold winter approaches.

This year, that winter might have organizational impact in addition to the usual physical and heating bill impact.

Our state continues to face very severe revenue and funding challenges, but has not yet engaged the discussion that might reach a collective decision regarding what services state government (and, by extension, local government, as well) will continue to provide, and what services will be discontinued. This will be a difficult, challenging and stressful discussion, but is probably necessary if we are ever to create a financial plan for the state and resume conducting the state's business in an organized and focused manner.

In addition to our state’s challenges, our society, nationally, needs to define, or re-define as the case may be, the relationship and balance between employers, employees and the employees’ bargaining representatives – unions. If our congress could begin negotiating in good faith across party lines, perhaps that concept would begin to “trickle down” and employers-employees-unions might also return to a more collegial, more positive and more mission-focused relationship – that would be much better for business!

Between now and whenever these issues are decided (if they ever are), APEA/AFT is committed to building its strength, educating its membership and finding ways and means to navigate whatever challenges we may be compelled to confront and overcome. Effective representation is our business, and we intend to continue that business regardless of the challenges.

As always, the union is you – the workers who are represented and the membership. And the key to effectiveness is an educated and engaged membership, a membership that will support their union, “continue the march” and work together to maintain and improve their working conditions.

Thank you, in advance, for committing to these values! I look forward to working with all of you to maintain our common interests and the society we love and respect, and that respects us.
First Friend, Best Friend

By Anne Knight, Southcentral Field Representative

First Friend, Best Friend

As an APEA/AFT Employee Representative, you have the opportunity to be a “first friend, best friend” to new employees. It is helpful to approach them personally and regularly to provide support and encouragement to ensure their survival and success in their difficult first year on the job. It also allows you to introduce them to the union and to let them know their success is a priority for APEA/AFT.

5 Ideas for Being a First Friend, Best Friend

1. Introduce yourself, explain your role in the union, ask them what union experience they may have, and tell your union story.

2. Provide them with a new member packet and the link to or copy of the current contract. Schedule a time to go over the contract and to answer any questions they may have once they are settled.

3. Provide a walking tour of the worksite, if possible. Introduce them to co-workers and point out important locations (rest rooms, break rooms/areas, material and supplies, union bulletin boards, emergency exits, etc.)

4. Plan drop-in visits to check in on new employees to provide encouragement, positive feedback and to see if they have any concerns or questions.

5. Extend a personal invitation to accompany new employees to a union event, such as a worksite meeting, training event or social gathering.

Hurricane Harvey

Texas AFL-CIO President John Patrick said today Aug 28, 2017: “As Hurricane Harvey and its remnants bring unprecedented flooding and damage to a huge portion of Texas, working people in the state are going above and beyond their duties to help one another” If you would like to help you may make a charitable donation by going to http://www.texasafclio.org/ and follow the link for the Texas Workers Relief Fund.

We all appreciate what our public servants and private sector union brother and sisters are doing to help their community. We stand in Solidarity.
Happenings within the Northern Region

By Michael Koskie, Northern Regional Manager

Members came out in the rain on June 11th to support a statewide rally in support of an FY18 budget and a workable state financial plan.

Members and staff attended Union Night at the Park and joined with other Fairbanks Central Labor Council unions in a pre-game tailgate and free tickets to the Goldpanners ballgame.

Al Agee and his wife Brenda enjoy the pre-game activities.

Bette Watts (SU) has some fun in the sun.
The Fairbanks Central Labor Council will host its 33rd annual Fairbanks Labor Day Parade and Picnic on Monday, September 4th. The event will begin at the Noel Wien Public Library at noon, and will follow a route along Airport Way and the frontage roads to Pioneer Park.

All APEA members are welcome to march with your co-workers and prizes will be distributed along the parade. After the conclusion of the parade, there will be a picnic provided by the CLC and everyone participating in the parade will have free admission. Door prizes, games, and free train and carousel rides will be available.

**NEGOTIATIONS UPDATES**

**Alaska Higher Education Crafts and Trades Employees, Local 6070**

The recently negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement document is going to the printer and should be available soon at your local field office.

**Fairbanks Northstar Borough Employees Association, Local 6125**

The recently elected negotiations team consists of:
JHAC: Primaries, Cecily Hodges and Tom Steer. Alternate, Angela Parker.
Remote sites: Primaries, Jeana Apling and Paul Holland. Alternate, Shawn Fletcher.

**City of Nome Employees Association, Local 6141**

Thanks to President Troy Miller and Dana Handeland, your collective bargaining surveys are out and bargaining team nominations are being accepted. Watch for a planned September membership meeting.

**City of Bethel Employees Association, Local 6055**

Collective Bargaining Meetings with the City were conducted August 16-17 and on the 23-24th. Negotiations are ongoing and will continue after the City shares APEA’s last round of proposals with City Council. We look forward to meeting with the City of Bethel later in September. Watch for updates.
TOTEM Board Planning and Swearing in of Officers

By Jennifer Madsen, Southcentral Field Representative

The TOTEM Board met on Saturday, August 26, 2017, for their annual planning session. The TOTEM Board starts each new school year by donating a Saturday to setting goals, calendaring events and welcoming new officers.

They began this annual planning meeting in 2005, and as a result they have a number of ongoing programs that focus on growing the union and educating their members. Every new TOTEM member receives a personal phone call from a Board Member welcoming them to TOTEM and inviting them to a new member orientation. TOTEM holds a member orientation every quarter where new and seasoned members come to the union hall, meet Board Members and learn about the benefits of being a TOTEM member. TOTEM also has continued to be successful in recruiting and keeping a site contact in each site in the Anchorage School District where TOTEM members work. This year the Board is focusing on updating their communications and recognizing members.

Alicia Woods, Felicia Woods, Sharon Baker, Sandy Thompson, Kathy Miller & Denise Tilley

Sharon Baker, President and Felicia Woods, Secretary, taking their oath of office.
$5,000 Group Accidental Death and Dismemberment Coverage for AFT Members

Whether an accident happens at work or away, Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance provides members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) with financial support needed during a stressful time. As a benefit of the American Federation of Teachers membership, AFT has arranged for all active working members* in good standing to have a $5,000 AD&D benefit from The Union Labor Life Insurance Company.

Membership in an AFT local union includes AD&D coverage that pays the member or member’s beneficiary a cash benefit after an accident resulting in covered injury or loss of life within 90 days after the accident. As one of the valuable benefits of AFT membership, AFT has paid for this coverage for ALL eligible members of AFT.

AFT members who spend their lives working to provide stability for their families should have extra protection if a work-related accident occurs. That’s why the policy provides extra benefits for workplace accidents.

**Feature Details**

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<th>Standard Benefit**</th>
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<td>• Coverage for both on-the-job and off-the-job accidents.</td>
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<td>• Coverage extends to accidents occurring anywhere in the world.</td>
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<td>• $5,000 benefit is paid to member’s beneficiary for accidental loss of life.</td>
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<td>• Full or partial benefit for accidental loss of hand, foot, sight, speech or hearing.</td>
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| Double Benefit | • Injury or death occurring at the workplace. Travel to and from work is excluded from this double benefit. |

* Retired members and members who pay a fee for representation but are not full members are not eligible for this benefit.

**This policy has eligibility criteria, limitations, and terms under which the policy may be continued in force or discontinued.
Additional Information:

- This standard new $5,000 AD&D benefit is 100% paid by the American Federation of Teachers.
- Coverage terminates on the date the person is no longer an active working member in good standing in the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO or if the coverage terminates for a reason outlined in the policy.
- The $5,000 benefit under the American Federation of Teachers’ AD&D policy is effective 8/1/2017 and is underwritten and issued by The Union Labor Life Insurance Company. This policy has exclusions, limitations, and terms under which the policy may be continued in force or discontinued.
- For complete details on coverage, please visit www.aft.org/add.

About The Union Labor Life Insurance Company

Unforeseen accidents are exactly why The Union Labor Life Insurance Company (Union Labor Life) was founded. Union families needed protection against loss, and Union Labor Life stepped in to deliver the solution. Since they had offered their first life insurance product to union members in 1927, they have been developing products that protect the financial stability and safety of the American worker. Today, Union Labor Life offers AD&D along with other products that help secure the future of union members and their families.

The Union Labor Life Insurance Company’s solid financial position was reaffirmed with a B++ (Good) and “Stable” Outlook rating as of 7/22/2016.

FOR THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS’ AD&D PLAN DETAILS, CONTACT:

Tish Olshefski
Senior Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer 202.879.4520 phone
tish.olshefski@aft.org

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
555 New Jersey Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202.877.4400 phone

On August 16, 2017, Local 6132 of the APEA/AFT held a vote on the Borough’s last best and final offer.

The result was overwhelming rejection by the voting membership. Many concerns were voiced during the meeting and a lengthy discussion occurred. Some of the concerns voiced by the membership are below:

- Our membership feels singled out regarding compensation and benefits to balance the Borough budget while other employees receive 4% increases.
- Our membership cannot agree to a health program that impacts current membership, or any other proposal, that is not clearly defined in both terms and scope.
- Our Local 6132 membership recognizes the need to help the Borough control costs and is willing to work with the Borough in a constructive way to assist in controlling costs.
- Our membership cannot agree with non-voluntary furloughs. They feel they should be able to determine their own furlough schedule based on the non-busy season rather than have it mandated.

At this time, we are hopeful the Borough will return to the table with a better offer.
Change is in the air. Want some for your wallet?

By Brian Penner, Southcentral Regional Manager

Good healthcare is one of the benefits we have come to expect as union members and bargaining for continued good coverage is the topic of many contract negotiations. Many of you have undoubtedly heard of the high cost of healthcare in Alaska and many members are directly involved in working with their employer to keep those costs down and still provide decent coverage for members and their families. For instance, many, if not most employers, are now offering the choice of a consumer-driven health plan (CDHP) which can work for a select group of people, but could be catastrophic if selected inappropriately. Offering this plan not only gives members more options, but it also helps the employer keep health costs lower.

What about keeping your costs lower? One of the things you can do is to make sure that you understand your health plan and all that it offers. For instance, the State of Alaska has recently joined a healthcare coalition with clinics in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Members will soon be able to go to these clinics and achieve substantial out of pocket savings. Another program, for members who have VSP vision coverage, is the opportunity to save up to 60% on digital hearing aids. [https://www.truhearing.com/vsp/?mid=121](https://www.truhearing.com/vsp/?mid=121). VSP also has special offers on diabetes care products, contacts, and LASIK. Healthcare costs are going to continue to go up and it is going to take more and more effort and ingenuity to keep money in your pocket.

AHMC Honors Past President Les Forbes

By Jennifer Madsen, Southcentral Field Representative

Les Forbes, former President of the Alaska Housing Maintenance and Custodians, Local 6082 is honored by his brothers and sisters in Anchorage. Les has worked at Alaska Housing for 30 years; he was a charter member of the Local and served as the Local President from 2000 – 2010.

The AHMC presented Les a plaque of appreciation. The quote on the plaque states “Goodbye Tension, Hello Pension.” Les will be greatly missed but we wish him well on his next journey. Thank you, Brother, for all you have done for Labor.

HEALTHCARE CORNER
Congratulations Chris Clark!

By Jason Roach, Northern Field Representative

Chris Clark, Computer Coordinator IV for the Fairbanks Northstar Borough, has elected to retire after 33 years of service.

I had the opportunity to interview Chris on his first official day of retirement August 1, 2017.

Chris Clark began his career at the Fairbanks North Star Borough on January 9, 1984, in the library mail room as a circulation and media page. Chris worked in the mail room until 1987, when he accepted a Library Assistant Outreach Services job. He would deliver books to the correction center once a week and once a month he would also deliver and pick up books from the youth correction facilities. During this time, Chris was also responsible for bringing 16mm films to show the residents of the Pioneer home every month. Yes, 16mm film! Boy, how things have changed. In 1988, Chris moved to the General Service's mail room receiving and posting mail while handling all in-house mail deliveries for the Borough. In 1989, Chris moved to the Reproduction Center where he remained for nearly a decade. During this time, he also helped install one of the Boroughs first 5 PC networks.

Computers have always been Chris’ passion. His father worked at IBM so Chris started using a PC when he was 13 and was very active in PC user groups around Fairbanks with his dad. In 1999, Chris had finally gotten his foot in the door and was moving to Computer Services where he would spend the rest of his career moving up through the ranks reaching Computer Coordinator IV. In 1998, he also started his Union service by becoming an employee rep and negotiator. Along the way, Chris held the positions of Secretary and Vice President in his local and also completed two terms on the APEA board of directors. Chris was very involved in his local and always had time to lend a hand or give advice to fellow employees. I asked Chris what has been the greatest technological improvement he has seen in the Borough? “Modern networking with shared files and centralized printing is what made a huge improvement bringing services to the public,” he said. Looking forward, Chris plans on using his retirement to catch up on home improvements and to start new hobbies while improving his guitar playing. With 30 plus years of service, I asked what he would tell the next Chris Clark starting at the Borough today? His answer, “Take the time to listen and stay involved.”

Chris, you have always led by example and good luck in your next chapter with RPEA. On behalf of all APEA Staff - Thank you for your service. Your calm and cool demeanor will be missed.
APEA/AFT presents Public Service Proud, an ongoing series wherein we spotlight a member(s) each month to illuminate the good work they do for the people of the State of Alaska. This month we are pleased to introduce Cindy Keyes (CEA).

“I love my job, working for the people of Alaska”

Cindy Keyes
Payroll Services Supervisor
Division of Personnel
Alaska Department of Administration

My name is Cindy Keyes and I’m a Payroll Services Supervisor for the state of Alaska. I’ve been with the state for over 26 years and with payroll for 21 years. In my role I oversee 10 payroll technicians and several administrative staff.

We work with many job classifications, different work weeks, and several labor contracts. It can be challenging; technicians take about a year to train.

As is often true in Alaska, the distances between all of our different divisions—from Nome to Sitka—make our work unique.

We do everything to make our deadlines and make sure our colleagues get paid on time. We know that if someone doesn’t get paid, that’s a real hardship.

Support those who work for OUR Alaska.
THE CHALLENGE INTENSIFIES, THE RESPONSE IS UNCHANGED

As we move deeper into 2017, and closer to 2018 and a new legislative session, then statewide elections, our challenges to maintain reasonable, decent terms and conditions of employment – regarding both compensation and the work environment – continue to mount and become more daunting.

The FY2018 state budget “fix” involved another (now codified) reduction to our personal PFDs and another substantial draw from the state's PFD earnings account. Our personal PFDs are now capped and the state's PFD earning account is virtually tapped – we might get one more year of subsidy (or, perhaps, partial subsidy!) before it is emptied.

So, the 2018 statewide election now looms as the event which will define how Alaska finally responds to its financial/revenue situation. We will elect a governor, we will elect the entire State House and we will elect one-half of the State Senate. The gubernatorial race is beginning to take some shape – the incumbent administration will seek reelection, at least one conservative Republican is announced (we will see how many more jump in) and possible Democrat candidates are playing it cagy and watching each other. We must question all the candidates closely and make hard and firm decisions regarding which will best address our state's problems.

Meanwhile, however, the problems become more severe and the solutions become more complex.

The state has already acknowledged the situation in the 2016 negotiations, and this fall's 2018 negotiations are likely to be even more stressful and difficult. Our local government Locals are now beginning to see fallout in their negotiations – nearly every local government Local negotiating this year (right now!) has been confronted with proposed wage freezes, with demands for unfettered furlough programs and with a general constriction of both compensation and consideration in their negotiations. This is even true of local agencies with whom we have long and generally positive relationships – they all seem to be singing off the same book, ignoring reality, ignoring actually effective ways to save money and enhance efficiencies and running like proverbial lemmings to catch-phrase, but pathetically ineffective, so-called solutions.

Our response, our best defense, our most effective means to reject these ill-advised proposals and ideas is solid and determined support for the union, solid and determined support for your union's negotiating team and solidarity among you and your fellow members.

Our greatest successes come when we convey our determined and collective solidarity, support and resolve to the employer, whether friendly or hostile, and make the employer realize that we will not be rejected, we will not be deterred and we will not be divided.