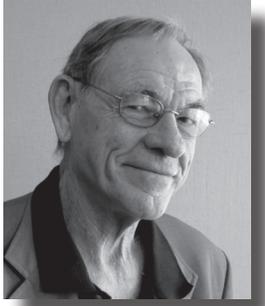




1011 East Main
Street, Suite 400
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804-355-3120
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Retirees' Chapter News

Virginia Governmental Employees Association



A Message from the President...

The New Year often generates resolutions. May I encourage you to resolve to stay engaged with VGEA, our Chapter, and the issues which affect our members? In 2014, we want to increase Chapter membership and meeting attendance. Our goals are to continue to voice our concerns and to advocate positive solutions. Let our mantra be "Each one reach one."

The upcoming General Assembly will be a long session (60 days as opposed to 45) in which the biennial budget will be developed. This is where the real priorities of the Commonwealth are expressed. It will be important for each of us to express our thoughts to the Governor and General Assembly representatives. We will have such an opportunity this **Presidents' Day, February 17**. Members will gather for our annual **VGEA Legislative Day** at the VGEA Office to walk to the General Assembly Building to visit with Senators and Delegates to personally share our concerns. Look for details on page two of this newsletter, as well as in *ForeSight* and on the VGEA website: www.vgea.org

On another note, our Dec. 9 luncheon at Crab Louie's was terrific. Many thanks to Treasurer Faye Spruill for handling the arrangements. Our special guests – Joan Dent Pond and Glen Pond – had an early Christmas gift. They received twin grandkids. They were called into service and could not attend. Mr. Henry Giles and Ms. Giles had to cancel as he suffered a broken arm. He generously donated his lunch payment to our Chapter,

and our thanks and best wishes for a quick recovery go out to him.

VGEA staff – Ron Jordan, McKinley Jordan, and Sonya Williams – joined us. Ron brought good tidings as VGEA has potential patrons for 2014 legislation to increase the retiree health care credit from \$4 to \$5 per service year; and also to establish a minimum life insurance amount for retirees. In addition, VGEA is working to allow retiring employees to retain optional dental coverage if they choose to pay the premium.

As we conducted no business, Secretary Janet Martino was not charged with taking minutes. But it was noted that the VGEA Board has approved pro rata dues payments for folks who join after July 1 and the 2nd or additional retirees in the same household may join for \$24 per year. VGEA staff will be hustling as they try to get these options in place before the April membership drive.

NOTE: Meeting Date Change

Our January 13 meeting has been shifted to **Monday, January 27, at 11:30 a.m.**, due to room renovations. We will still be in the activity/sales office building at Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Avenue, Richmond (804.262.6537). Vice President Dee Esser has scheduled Donald Piacentini to speak about Elder Law. This should be very informative. Plan to attend and bring a guest!

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President

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General Assembly Session 2014: What Might it Mean to The VGEA and What are Our Legislative Priorities?

The General Assembly has begun its 2014 session this month! This year it will be a 60-day session, which means it is also a budget year – which falls on evenly numbered years. Virginia runs on biennial budgets, which last for two years, and then they are amended during the odd years to accommodate necessary changes.

Governor McDonnell submitted the budget at the beginning of this month, prior to his term ending, which means that Governor-elect McAuliffe is left to legislate with a budget he did not propose. This is an ongoing challenge that Virginia Governors face, and many legislators have proposed “fixes” to this odd legislative timing issue, but so far none of them has passed to correct it. McAuliffe takes the oath of office on January 11.

The VGEA has worked with legislators to get bills sponsored and is continuing to strive to get legislation passed to achieve the 2014 Legislative Priorities. The Association is very fortunate to have seasoned and well-respected lobbyists who have developed relationships with Senators and Delegates who have genuine concern for the interests of state employees and retirees.

However, there is nothing that can substitute for **YOUR VOICE**. You are a constituent of these Senators and Delegates and they need to hear from you! Please plan to attend the **VGEA Legislative Day!**

Come out and meet with your representatives. Call them ahead of time and make an appointment. It is set for Presidents’ Day, **Monday, February 17, beginning at 8:30 a.m.** We’ll meet for coffee at the VGEA Office, 1011 E. Main St., Suite 400, Richmond, Va., which is about a block from the Capitol Building. You can park in the Bank of America parking garage directly behind our building which is on Cary St. We’ll give you a ticket for you to park free.

While there we can organize into small groups and mix newcomers with folks who have done it before and Board Members and Staff (we won’t leave you hanging if you’re new!). If you’re able to attend, please RSVP to 804-355-3120 or info@vgea.org.



This month the Governor’s Mansion on Capitol Square saw the McDonnells move out and the McAuliffes move in. Welcome to Richmond McAuliffe Family!

If you aren’t able to meet face-to face with your legislators, then you can still support the VGEA’s Legislative Priorities by sending letters and/or emails and making phone calls.

Your representatives still need to hear from you and will respond to your needs.

Write and call and tell them what is important to you. Find out who your representatives are if you don’t

already know. Contact your local municipality to find out or look it up on your computer if you have one.

(continued next page)

Read the weekly VGEA *eNews* newsletters that will be delivered to you each week of the General Assembly session. Please pay special attention to the issues marked “**Action Alert.**” Those newsletters will request that you take *ACTION* to contact your legislators immediately about something important to state employees and retirees. There’s no doubt that our legislators get the message when the VGEA publishes these *ALERTS!* Let’s keep up the good work by contacting your legislators when these *eNews Action Alerts* are published!!

2014 VGEA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

SALARY ISSUES

- December 2013 DHRM Salary Survey (<http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/reports/AnnualSalaryReport2013.pdf>) shows employee salaries – after making some progress this year – still lag behind private sector comparables by 18.2 percent. Implement a Pay for Performance plan to lessen this lag
- Further address Salary Compression (new employees making more than new hires) which remains a significant issue

VRS FUNDING

- Maintain the commitment to repay the retirement system and meet the full actuarial funding status

HEALTH INSURANCE

- Very important to hold premium costs down and replenish reserves
- Increase the retiree health credit (currently only \$4 per month per year of service). Needs to be raised – it has been the same for the *past 14 years!*

LIFE INSURANCE

- Establish a minimum threshold for retiree life insurance coverage to ensure that final benefits are sufficient to cover funeral and burial costs

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

- Strengthen fair treatment of all state employees in the workplace, regardless of their age, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion or sexual preference

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For State Retirees:

**Virginia Governmental
Employees Association**
(877) 302-7146 toll-free
(804) 355-3120 office
(804) 228-4501 fax

**Virginia Retirement
System**
(888) 827-3847 toll-free

**Social Security
Administration**
(800) 772-1213 toll-free

Medicare
(800) 633-4227 /
1-800-MEDICARE toll-free

**Department for
The Aging**
(800) 552-3402 toll-free

**Virginia Retiree Health
Benefits Program**
(800) 572-4098 toll-free

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Mark Your 2014 Calendar for VGEA Legislative Day: February 17

Don't miss this enjoyable learning experience: our annual VGEA day 'on the hill' is set for Monday, February 17. The VGEA staff, Board of Director members and participants will park in the Bank of America parking lot at 10th and Cary Streets downtown, then gather for coffee at the VGEA Office at 8:30 a.m. at 1011 E. Main Street, Ste. 400, Richmond. then split into small groups with our Board members. We will walk about two blocks to the General Assembly Building on Capitol Square at 9 a.m.

This is always a very rewarding and eye-opening experience. You may want to call your legislator ahead of time to make an appointment to speak with him or her that day. Between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m., complimentary lunch sandwiches will be served back at the VGEA Office as you finish with your legislative visits. RSVP to 877-302-7146 or info@vgea.org.