



Serving active and retired state employees in Arkansas for over 50 years.

ASEA News

Meet your new board members!

State employee issues update!





Jeff Jackson
Board President

Meet your new ASEA board members! We had five first-term members sworn into office at our October 16th meeting. Seven incumbents were sworn into office as well. The makeup of the new board is a great blend of tenured employees, retirees, and the next generation of tenured employees.

We still have a few vacancies left and if you are interested in serving and one is open in your district, please visit: www.aseaar.org for more information, and thank you for being an ASEA member!

Matthew Thomas

Position: District 9a - Pulaski County

Agency: Department of Human Services, DAABH

Job title: My official title is Administrative Specialist 3 per OPM.

Years of service to the state: Going on 10 years

Years of ASEA membership: 1 year, 6 months

Why do you want to serve on the board?

I would like to help steer the future benefits of my peers, increase educational opportunities for our lower grade levels to help with promotions, and bring ideas and issues from my peers to the forefront of what we would like to see promoted.

I have worked blue collar all my life. I started at ASH in 2012 working the "floor" clinical sitting.

The movement or next step for promotion was/is not clear from that position.

I was able to move into a clerical slot and from there have moved again to prove what an asset I am to the hospital. I have seen a lot of on fire employees that get "stuck" in these lower positions and burn out.

Now I work in a position where I feel like I am making progress. I work with multiple departments and agencies to still aid our clients.

I want to mentor the peers that have potential to make ASH shine and hopefully be able to decrease the turnover rates for some highly skilled personnel.

I want to prove these peers have skills but may not have the paper to prove the skills they have.

What do you think ASEA does well?

I think they work hard to bring great benefits to all state employees. I think they are doing a wonderful job communicating to our members over a variety of platforms.

Where do you think ASEA could improve?

I think we could do better with some of the plain language reasons when we send out less favorable information. Put it out plainly, "We have to concede to raising rates so we can still get raises". I cannot count the number of times I have met a peer and they have asked me about information you are putting out for understanding. I think we could do better with some of the membership drives. I agree with Ms. Siccardi in this regard. My peers do not understand what ASEA does for them, and I think we need to be more forward in this area.

What state employee issues concern you most?

Turnover and burn out. We have some of the best employees I have ever worked with. I have seen the once-positive new employee decline to "I only have to work 30 more minutes this week". It is a very sad and demotivating issue when we are working to bring in the new positive employees.

Brock A Baker

Position: District 7b - Clark, Garland, Grant, Hot Spring, and Saline Counties

Agency: DHS - DCFS. Job title: Family Service Worker Supervisor

Years of service to the state: 4 years 8 months. Years of ASEA membership: 4 years 8 months.

Why do you want to serve on the board? I am interested in helping other state employees be better served as we serve the State of Arkansas. I believe that working for the state can be a great experience if we allow people to see the good parts of it. I want to encourage the state and its leaders to continue to support the employees who serve our citizens.

What do you think ASEA does well? I believe ASEA has a dedicated group of employees who work to represent the members of ASEA. The job done with the legislature representing the state employees and our interests in lawmaking.

Where do you think ASEA could improve? I believe that as a state association, we could work harder to represent the long time employees who have elected to make this a career. I think ASEA also does a fantastic job with communicating and using Facebook and other mediums.

What state employee issues concern you most? I want to protect our long time employees and retirees, while continuing to make state employment competitive.

Robert S. McQuade

At-Large Retiree

Agency job title – Dept. of Information Services, Director of Administration

Years of service – 24 years

Years of ASEA Membership – 1 year

Why do you want to serve? – Recent actions by the EBD to effectively reduce retirees' health benefits have caused grave concern to all retirees. Serving on the ASEA Board will provide retirees a greater forum to combat all negative actions towards retirees.

What does ASEA do well? – ASEA provides visible positive support for state employees and retirees. ASEA has also established a working relationship with the legislature to provide support for employee/retiree issues and legislation.

What issues concern you most? – The main issue is that there is not enough retiree input to the EBD who continually attempts to reduce retiree health benefits. Further, EBD and legislative consultant reports appear to only reflect the desires of EBD/legislature to reduce benefits rather than consider other options to retain intact all retiree health benefits.

Regina D. Carr

Position: District 7a - Saline County

Agency: Department of Human Services/DCO

Job title: County Administrator

Years of service to the state: 41 YEARS. Years of ASEA membership: 40 YEARS

Why do you want to serve on the board? My whole career with the state has been serving others. I like change and improvement. I want to serve as a representative of the community of state employees. I am currently the president of the Saline County area, but I live in Little Rock.

What do you think ASEA does well? Informing the members of what has been proposed as a service. Fighting for the health insurance premiums for the retired employees, and for the pay plans. How any member can access this information is by reading the newsletters, reading/following the posts on the Facebook page, or by visiting the website.

Where do you think ASEA could improve? The proposal to look for an increase in salaries for the employees that were missed from the last pay scale increase.

What state employee issues concern you most? Retiree insurance premiums and other benefits that may be available. Employee retention. Since Amazon has come to Arkansas, we have lost so many employees to that company.

Dorothy Henderson

Position: District 5 - Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha, and Drew Counties

Agency: Department of Human Services. Job title: Area Director DCO

Years of service to the state: 38 years. Years of ASEA membership: 38 years.

How long have you served on the board? 4 Years

Describe some of the issues or projects that the board faced that you are most proud? The association and board have faced many challenging issues and projects. However, I am most proud that ASEA continues to serve their members and are the eyes and ears at the Capitol. As a board member, we listen to the concerns of the state employees and make them known to legislators and the administration. The ASEA lobbyists represent the state employees during the legislative sessions and at committee meetings year around. Also, they perform research analysis to assist elected officials and state officials on active and retired state employee issues. The association has been most successful in COLA campaigns, CEAL Act Expansion to include guardians of developmentally disabled adults, Performance Pay, the Pay Plans that were passed, and the return of Merit to base salary just to mention a few accomplishments.

What are your goals for the future as a returning board member? As a returning board member, I will continue to carry out the mission and goals of the organization, which is a membership-driven association that advocates on behalf of active and retired state employees and offers exclusive benefits to its members. ASEA's mission is to unite all state employees to create a better future for employees and citizens of Arkansas through quality state government. ASEA believes that employees are most important as it relates state government's resources. ASEA and the board members encourage high-quality work performance and professionalism by all state employees. As an appointed board member made up of active and retired state employees, I will continue to represent District 5 to the highest level.

Judy Beatty

At-Large Retiree

Why do you want to serve? I have been on the board for more than 20 years and have served as board president for two terms. As a recent retiree, I would like to pass along my knowledge of ASEA and state employees to the new generation of ASEA board members.

What does ASEA do well? ASEA has done a good job of implementing new technologies to engage and communicate with its members. I also take great pride in utilizing our limited resources as to not raise membership dues.

What issues concern you most? Health insurance and retirement benefits.

Lisa Rhodes

Position: District 6 - Hempstead, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, and Nevada Counties
I have been a resident for 55 years. I have been with Arkansas Highway Police since 2006 my job title is Motor Carrier Safety Auditor. I have been a member of ASEA since 2018.

Why do you want to serve on the board?

I want to serve on the board to be a voice and represent my district.

What do you think ASEA does well?

Represent state employees, advocates for better insurance for employees and pay plans and retirement.

What do you think ASEA could improve?

Improve the website, have more local meetings and get information out to more employees.

What state employees issues concern you most?

The Outstanding State Employee awards are back and bigger than ever! This year we are awarding 10 OSE awards to state employees who go above and beyond the call of duty in the workplace and in their communities. Each winner will receive \$1,000 and a plaque! Visit: www.aseaar.org

Does your agency give out holiday donations?

Please send us your pictures!

They may appear in our last newsletter around the holidays!

President - Jeff Jackson (2022)
Past President - Loy Bailey
Vice President - Dona Bowry (2022)
Secretary - Holli Patrick (2022)

District 1 – (a) **Vacant** (b) **Vacant** (Counties - Benton, Carroll, Washington, Madison)

District 2 – **Vacant** (Counties - Fulton, Izard, Lawrence, Randolph, Sharp)

District 3 – (a) Janice Griffin (2023) (b) **Vacant** (Counties - Clay, Craighead, Greene, Mississippi)

District 4 – (a) Greg Murray (2022) (b) Delilah Ingram (2022) (Counties - Arkansas, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke, Monroe, Prairie)

District 5 - Dorothy Henderson (2023) (Counties - Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha, Drew)

District 6 – Lisa Rhodes (2023) (Counties - Hempstead, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada)

District 7 – (a) Regina Carr (2023) (b) Brock Baker (2023) (Counties - Clark, Garland, Grant, Hot Spring, Saline)

District 8 - **Vacant** (Counties - Crawford, Franklin, Logan, Scott, Sebastian)

District 9 – (a) Matthew Thomas (2023) (b) Heinz Braun (2022) (c) Jennifer Siccardi (2023) (County - Pulaski)

District 10 - Jacqueline Caradine (2022) (Counties - Stone, Van Buren, Cleburne, Faulkner)

District 11 - **Vacant** (Counties - Howard, Montgomery, Pike, Polk, Sevier)

District 12 - Nathan Marlin (2022) (Counties - Independence, Jackson, Poinsett, White, Woodruff)

District 13 - **Vacant** (Counties - Boone, Baxter, Newton, Marion, Searcy)

District 14 - **Vacant** (Counties - Johnson, Pope, Conway, Perry, Yell)

District 15 - Chasity Lucas (2023) (Counties - Crittenden, Cross, Lee, Phillips, St. Francis)

District 16 - James Scott (2022) (Counties - Dallas, Cleveland, Ouachita, Calhoun, Columbia, Union)

At-Large:

Clayton Rogers (2023), Retired, Jerusalem; Gary Wallace (2023), Retired, Greenbrier; Helen Emerson (2023), Retired, Pine Bluff; Mary McGehee (2022), Retired, Little Rock; Judy Beatty (2023), Retired, Lewisville; Bob McQuade (2023), Retired, Little Rock



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10/4/2021

Governor Asa Hutchinson
 500 Woodlane Street, Ste. 250
 Little Rock, AR, 72201

Governor Hutchinson,

With the upcoming reformation of the Employee Benefits Division board, Arkansas State Employees Association would like to recommend two candidates for your consideration.

Retiree Ron Burch has a strong background in quantitative analysis and in-depth knowledge of health insurance. Active state employee Stephanie Lilly Palmer has served on the board in the past, and we were always impressed with her knowledge of the issues. Both have the respect and confidence of their peers.

Thank you for your time in reviewing their attached resumes. We look forward to working with the new board members going forward.

Sincerely,

John Bridges
 Executive Director
 Mobile: 501.773.5594
www.aseaar.org

Stephanie S. Lilly Palmer

As the Arkansas Insurance Department's Agency Human Resources Manager, she oversees all operations in the HR department, and serves as an EBD board member and benefits subcommittee member. She coordinates new hire orientations, handles employee presentations, coordinates employee training events, and is responsible for exit interviews. She also conducts criminal background checks, and is the administrator to interpret FMLA and Worker's Compensation. She performed much of the same at the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality as the Assistant Personnel Manager/Human Resources Analyst for many years.

Ronald R. Burch

Has had a 37 year career with Arkansas Legislative Audit and is now retired. He was responsible for leading the audit of some of the State's largest and most complex agencies. He developed a working expertise regarding Arkansas' organization and financial operations, appropriation laws, Arkansas Code Annotated, and the U.S. Code of Regulations governing federal award programs and audit requirements. He is a retired certified public accountant and fraud examiner.

Below are the attendees of the "Sweet Tea Social" at the Governor's Office. Special thanks to Jennifer Siccardi, the Governor's Management Specialist, and one of our ASEA board members for putting this together. We welcomed eight new members! Nicholas Poole, MPA, our Director of Governmental Affairs is pictured center in the blue blazer. Thank you, Nicholas for all you do!





The Segal Group's Final Recommendation to the ALC Executive Committee:

The Segal Group did not recommend removing retirees from their prescription drug plan and requiring them to find a Medicare Part D plan in the open market.

Instead, the consultant recommends state employees and public-school employees switch to group Medicare Advantage prescription drug plan.

The consultant states that the plan premium would be cheaper and have better benefits than the plan currently given. The consultant estimates that the savings would be \$20.9 million a year for state employees and \$12.6 million a year for retirees. If retirees would like to keep the current plan, they can keep it, but will have to opt out of the group Medicare Advantage prescription drug coverage. When the provider is selected for the group Medicare Advantage plan, they will have meetings across the state to inform the members of the changes and the benefits of the new plan.

The Segal Group did recommend that the health insurance plans for state employees, public-school employees and retirees, have annual increases to offset the rise of health care cost. Segal proposed increasing the monthly \$500 per position funding that the state contributes to the state employee's plan.

Segal also stated that state funding should outpace future increases to active or retired state employees. Segal told the ALC Executive Committee that price increases for active state employees and retirees should be tied to the medical consumer price index of 3% or 4%. Active state employees' health insurance plans should have a reserve fund of between 12% to 16% in case of years with high claims.

Other recommendation that Segal made:

- Reduction of urgent care co-pay from \$100 to \$75 to hopefully reduce members visiting the emergency room.
- Keep the current cap of \$3 million on bariatric program.
- Repeal Act 1004 of 2021. Due to the law, the current plan sponsor has lost all ability to negotiate with the manufacture of insulin; the pharmacy benefit manager has lost all leverage to negotiate with the drug manufacturers.

The Governor will presumably call a special session at the end of October for tax cuts and the proposal from The Segal Group.



We've partnered with
Benefits Insurance Group of Arkansas (BIG)
to bring you new options for home
and auto insurance!

Our partnership allows ASEA members access to a
variety of carriers and exclusive discounts.

Visit: www.bigofarkansas.com

Questions?
Contact NEW Little Rock Agent Sharon Buckholts at
501-378-0187 Ext. 408 or sbuckholts@aseaar.org



Not all products are underwritten by Farmers Union Insurance.

Let **BIG** be your guide
through the home and auto
insurance jungle.

Be sure to let our staff know you are with ASEA
when you call to ensure you receive your discount



Our Membership Drive is Back!

We are doing another membership drive where you can win a Yeti tumbler!

Tell others about the benefits of joining ASEA and each person who recruits just 8 new members will win a Yeti tumbler.

When they join on our website at: www.aseaar.org and be sure they say **YOU** referred them.

Spread the word, and Good Luck!



**ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES
BENEFIT ADVISORS**

Voluntary Benefits for State Employees:



- Accident Insurance
- Cancer Insurance
- Critical Illness
- Identity Theft
- Dental Insurance
- Short-Term Disability
- Hospital Indemnity
 - Life Insurance
- Long-Term Disability
- Vision Insurance



One of our board members, and the Governor's Management Specialist, Jennifer Siccardi already won a Yeti.

Great job, Jennifer!

Have any new recruits scan this QR code below to see all the benefits of joining ASEA!



To have an enrollment specialist reach out to you, leave a message at (866)753-3250.

For additional information, please visit www.arseba.com or call 501-224-5234.





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STAMP
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John Smith
123 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

HEAR IN AMERICA



Hearing Plans

ASEA Members: Call Hear In America at 1-855-242-1670 to register yourself or any extended family member for hearing benefits. If you contact a hearing center before registering, that hearing center will not honor these benefits. Hear In America will connect you with one of thousands of participating professionals to make an appointment for your free hearing screening. There may be charges for additional testing if recommended.

Benefits Include:

- Discounts on all styles of hearing aids from all major brands.
 - Low price guarantee.
 - No-interest financing available with approved credit.
 - We will file your insurance claim if you have coverage.
- There's a 45-day money back trial period for exchanges and returns.
- Three years of once service for regular maintenance and adjustments.
 - Three-year warranty coverage for repairs covers wear and tear.
- Three-year loss and damage coverage offers one-time replacement for a hearing aid that is lost or can't be repaired; deductible applies.
- Three years of hearing aid batteries mailed to your home on request.