



# EAGLE NEWS

The official Newsletter of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) Central Minnesota Chapter 115

October, November & December 2006

## RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY, MYSTIC LAKE

Approximately 800 of the 16,000 plus retirees in the state of Minnesota attended this event on September 30<sup>th</sup>. In an impressive opening ceremony, the colors were presented by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Vietnam veterans in full Indian uniform and head dresses. Mr. Crooks, Tribal Chairman, himself a veteran, welcomed the attendees.

Attendees were arranged at round tables in the Ballroom and the overflow in an adjoining room with two wall video screens. The keynote speaker was Philip A. Dyer (CFR) Certified Financial Planner. Deputy Director, Benefits information Department of MOAA. Other speakers addressed topics such as Veterans Affairs and Homes, the VA Medical Centers, DFAS, JAG services, Space "A" lodging, airlift or seallift, Long Term care, TRICARE and Social Security. There were approximately 20 Exhibit tables, but not all organizations were in attendance. During a lull in the afternoon program, our Ralph Donais, a recognized expert in the Minnesota military exemption of retiree taxes, was called to the stage and gave a clean and concise report on the Minnesota bills and what action all retirees must take for these bills to be successfully passed.

Chapter 115 members set up a informational recruiting booth from 0730 to 1700 on Saturday: They had a drawing at the end of the day for a free one year membership from attendees that expressed interest in TREA. The winner was John Woods of Cleveland, Minnesota.



1<sup>st</sup> Vice Mark Davidson and President Ralph Donais



Display board prepared by Judy Donais



Recruiting new members

## TREA CHAPTER 115 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of 4 November 2006 was called to order by Ralph Donais President. Mark Davidson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Motion by Dick to approve August 5<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Second by Tom. Motion passed. Treasure's Report: 1<sup>st</sup> quarter rebate was finally received. A donation from the estate of William Clark was received for \$5,000.00. The balance in checking as of today is 3,044.83 and savings is \$3,026.21.

Membership Report: Mark Davidson - As of today we show 296 members, but there are over five new members that have joined that aren't on the latest listing. The termination report has been filed. A news release was sent out to over 40 news papers telling them of our efforts toward Veteran's Legislation. President Donais informed the members that the latest data showed 10,191 enlisted retirees living in Minnesota. TREA has signed up only about 800 which is a little over 7%. Mark made a motion to pay \$78.00 for postage, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim. Motion passed. Another motion was made by Mark to allow up to \$400.00 annually for postage. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim, Motion passed.

Old Business: Legislative Bulletins were discussed at this time. PNP Riddle has spent all of the Legislative Fund and ran over by more than \$2,800.00 into the red. The last mail-out that he did cost over \$5,000.00. President Donais has contacted the TREA National President and asked that something be done to correct what was done by PNP Riddle. As of this meeting no reply has been received. Discussion was held on spending chapter funds to send out legislative reports. PNP Holmes told the board at the National Convention that TREA is made up of over 80% MALS and nothing is ever done with them except to ask for money.

Second and third quarter reports have been sent to national. Rebate for the first quarter was received in September.

It was decided once the November elections are done we would send out a bulletin informing the all TREA members in the state of our legislative efforts. President Donais has been attending meetings at the state capital since the last session ended last spring. The following issues are being worked on at this time for the next session:

1. Retiree tax exemption of retirement pay.
2. Real property relief for veterans
3. Primary mortgage home loan program
4. Free tuition at public higher education institutions for honorably discharged veterans. This is an attempt to fill the gap for reservists education.
5. Personal loan programs for education for veterans, their spouses and children...\$25,000.00 max with a fixed rate of interest.
6. Re-codification of the 1941 War Orphans Act, and expanding the tuition benefits to include spouse of disabled veterans.
7. Apprenticeships for medically trained military personnel to become LPNs and Rns.
8. An initiative to get more health care providers to accept Tri-Care.
9. Veterans Firearm Certification Exemption: exempting the shooting range portion of the course for weapons certified veterans. Classroom training would still be required.
10. Allocating monies for Dept of Public Safety to help in driver's training during reintegration for returning veterans.
11. Extending the enrollment deadlines at public higher education institutions. In some cases, returning veterans have had to wait months to take courses because they were unable to meet the enrollment deadlines due to Military deployments. This would provide some preferential placement within the college scheduling system.

A brief report on the UVLC was given by President Donais. The UVLC is waiting for the outcome of the elections also. Reports were given by the Veterans Commissioner, VA Regional office, VA Hospitals (Mpls & St. Cloud), MN Veterans Homes, Fort Snelling National Cemetery, and the 88<sup>th</sup> Regional Command USAR.

Good of the Order: Mark gave a report on the RAD at Mystic Lake. Over 150 membership applications were given out. Many retirees stopped by our table to get information and ask questions. We were located in side room that wasn't a good location compared to the MOA booth. President Donais was allowed time at the last minute to present the latest legislative news that was being discussed by the Military Action Group at the Capital. President Donais also attended RADs at Camp Ripley and assisted the Superior Chapter at the RAD in Duluth. Our internet site is doing very well. We need to thank Dave Hammer for the great job that he is doing.

#### New Business:

1. Nominations for 2007 board were made at this time. President Ralph Donais, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Mark Davidson, Treasurer, Membership Lynne Davidson, and Secretary Rod Erickson. Appointments were Chaplain Frank Buhl, Newsletter Dennis Rock, Legislative and ROTC representative and Webmaster David Hammer.
2. Meeting schedule for 2007 was discussed at this time. The consensus of the members present was to keep the schedule as stated in newsletter.
3. Discussion was held on sending the news letter out to all TREA members in the state. A special section will be added to inform MALs of our chapter activities and asking them to join in our efforts.
4. Discussion was held on dropping our post office box. We only get junk mail at the PO Box since National is mailing directly to those who need their reports.

Motion to adjourn made by Jim, Seconded by Mark. Motion passed. Next meeting will be 3 February 2007.

## **DEBT REDUCTION PLANNER**

People today are racking up big bills and taking on far more debt than they can handle. Experts blame the financial problems Americans, especially older ones, on an array of factors, among them: job loss, medical expenses, death of a spouse, divorce, financial support for children or grandchildren and less retirement income. To see what it would take to reduce or eliminate your debt refer to [www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourmoney/debt\\_reduction\\_calculator.html](http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourmoney/debt_reduction_calculator.html). Here you can determine how long it will take to pay off your existing debt with whatever monthly payment you feel you can afford. [Source: AARP Online Bulletin 7 Jul 06]

## **UNITED VETERANS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA**



Approximately 100 members of Minnesota Veteran organizations attended the UVLC meeting on Wednesday, December 6, 2006 at the Minneapolis VA Hospital auditorium.

Representatives from State Agencies, Federal Agencies and Federal Congressional offices updated the audience on veteran events they are participating in

The highlight of the meeting was recognition of Tim Pawlenty, Governor of Minnesota, as the first Governor in 40 years to bring forward 10 financial legislative proposals (listed on page 2 of Chapter 115 meeting minutes) to help current warriors, veterans and retirees in Minnesota.

Pictured is President Donais, Governor Pawlenty and Chapter 115 member Dennis Rock following the ceremony

## **MEMBERSHIP**

As we start 2007, I'd like to thank the chapter members who recruited military retirees into TREA. Our chapter has more than 300 members now. I'd like to end 2007 with more than 350 members. And that's not an impossible task given the fact that there are more than 10,000 enlisted retirees in the state of Minnesota. Here's how we can achieve this goal:

1. Think of the people you know who are retired enlisted from the military. Ask them if they have heard of TREA and tell them why you are a TREA member. Most of you don't have TREA membership applications. You can always refer potential members to our chapter website at: [www.trea115.org](http://www.trea115.org). Or you can have them contact me or Ralph Donais and we will mail them a TREA application.
2. Another way to recruit military retirees is think of the non-TREA groups you belong to such as the VFW, the American Legion, the DAV, Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), Air Force Association (AFA), Army of the United States of America (AUSA), Marine Corps' League, Navy League, the Coast Guard Association, etc.

I'd be willing to talk to someone at these local organizations about TREA in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Just get me a name, telephone number or e-mail address and I will talk to them. Call me at 952-884-6077 or send me an e-mail at: [LDavidson77@msn.com](mailto:LDavidson77@msn.com)

Thanks for your support of TREA! Mark Davidson, 1st Vice President

## **VA TO OPEN NEW CLINICS**

The VA has announced plans to open 25 new community-based outpatient clinics in 17 states and American Samoa. The new facilities, two within the Midwest are set to become operational this year, are to be Bemidji, Minnesota and Rice Lake, Wisconsin.

## **NURSING HOME DAILY RATES**

Looking for a place to retire—and one you can afford? According to the MetLife Mature Market Institute, the daily nursing home rate for long term care in the 10 least expensive U.S. cities is:

- |                               |                                |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Shreveport, La., \$96      | 5. Jackson, Miss., \$124.01    | 9. St. Louis, \$133.21         |
| 2. Little Rock, Ark., \$117   | 6. Wichita, Kan., \$127.43     | 10. Charleston, S.C., \$135.50 |
| 3. Kansas City, Mo., \$120.83 | 7. Dell Rapids, S.D., \$127.60 |                                |
| 4. Birmingham, Ala., \$123.36 | 8. New Orleans, \$128.65       |                                |

## **CHAPTER CONTACTS**

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## **President Ralph says,**

There are a lot of loose thoughts in this job of President. One very important message I missed in my letter at the end of this newsletter is my willingness to help TREA chapter and members at large band together for the good of the organization. If you would like to know of other TREA members in your zip code area, Chapter 115 can provide a list of names and address. Then if you can gather six or more retirees together I would be happy to meet with you and answer TREA related questions about Minnesota Legislative proposals, membership, National Convention, or topics of your choice.

**FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE**

Saturday, February 3, 2007

Saturday, May 5, 2007

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Saturday, November 3, 2007

All meetings are held at 1100 hours at the VFW Memorial Complex, 7350 Quaday, Otsego, Minnesota. Phone 763-241-5225. As always, spouses and guests are invited to attend!

From I-94 in Rogers:

Go north on highway 101 towards Elk River to CR 37. Turn Left at the light. Second road on the Left is Quaday Ave NE and turn Right.. You will see several brown buildings which are the VFW Sport complex on your Right..

From Highway 10 in Elk River:

From Elk River take Hwy 101 South towards Rogers to CR 37. Turn Right. Second road on Right will be Quaday. Turn Right. . You will see several brown buildings which are the VFW Sport complex on your Right.

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**TREA Members At Large (MAL)**

You the Members At Large (MAL) are one of the most unused assets that TREA has. I would ask that you stop being a MAL and join one of the two chapters in Minnesota. If there are several members in your part of the state, why not start your own chapter? While many of you live far from St. Cloud Chapter 115 or Hibbing Chapter 96, there is still a lot you can do. While I don't expect most of you to drive hundreds of miles to come to a meeting, I do think that you can better be served by TREA if you belong to a chapter. News Letters will keep you informed of the latest developments at the state capital.

There are over 10,000 retirees living in Minnesota. We have only about 7% of those retirees as members of TREA. If each member in Minnesota recruits one retiree we will start to equal states that have larger membership base and give Minnesota members the ability to have more control of the National TREA board.

In this news letter you can see that Chapter 115 is actively working to get Veteran's Issues passed at the capital. It is important that we are all on the same page when it comes to contacting our legislative representatives at the capital. Military retirees bring over \$20,000,000.00 into the state each month in our retirement checks. If our retirement pay becomes tax exempt, then we hope to bring double the retirees to Minnesota which would bring in more than \$40,000,000.00 to be spent in the state each month.

Our governor has stated that he wants Minnesota to be Veteran Friendly and will support our tax exemption as well as the many other issues being brought forward in this next session of the Legislature.

Finally I would ask that you consider going to the National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina next summer. This would give us a better position in dealing with what TREA National does following the convention. Last year there was only one MAL at the convention. Remember that TREA is made up of over 80% MALs. Charlotte is a great vacation spot with much to do there. It would be a great vacation with the many discounted attraction offered to the convention attendees.

Ralph Donais, Chapter 115 President

If your mailing label contains incorrect information, contact Lynne Davidson at [ldavidson77@msn.com](mailto:ldavidson77@msn.com)