

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of November 2, 2011

At The Maple Tree, McFarland WI,

ARC President Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 12:50 pm.

66 paid members and 1 guest were present.

The meal was \$ 12 .

A moment of silence was observed for friends and family who have passed and for our troops who are serving in harm's way.

Guest Speaker:

Dave Stella outgoing Secretary of ETF was the speaker. Dave will retire at the end of 2011. Originally from Spooner, Dave seems quite happy in the balmy south of Madison. Robert Conlin has been named by the ETF Board to succeed Dave.

Dave discussed the impacts of Wisconsin Act 10 and Wisconsin Act 32 the 2011-13 biennial budget and mandated studies and changes to the Wisconsin retirement system. They will , in his words “ provide a lot of challenges” for ETF. They were 16,800 retirements so far in 2011, compared to 9,000+ in 2010. Requests for information packettes continue to come into to ETF as more state workers consider retirement before the end of the year.

Five studies were mandated by the Legislature related to Health Care:

- 1) High deductible health care and establishment of Health Savings Accounts, The study was submitted to the Governor and Joint Finance co-chair on October 31, 2011 asking for further direction on specific goals to evaluate, since cost, quality and timeliness of care are among the trade-offs that need to be considered.
- 2) Creation of multiple coverage options , including single, 1 + 1 (two adults no children) and family coverage. Because older adults cost more for health care this may not achieve the expected savings envisioned by some legislators if premiums are established based upon costs of services to the various options.

- 3) Online pharmacy in addition to current options. This sounds cheaper, but because experience says fewer folks choose generic medications when shopping on line costs may not go down from those in current Navitus coverage system
- 4) Health Benefit Exchanges. This is basically what was included in the President's health reforms. This is targeted to individuals and small businesses to increase their risk pool. It is not necessarily beneficial to a large risk pool like the state system.
- 5) Combining the state health care system with federal Medicare. There are over 250,000 in the current state health insurance program and over 500,000 in Medicare in Wisconsin, but it is unclear if combining the risk pools would result in any savings and would result in increased paperwork due to differing benefit packages, which are protected by IRS regulation or would require a federal exception to take away any existing coverage from the state system members.

Another study was mandated to evaluate Retirement Benefits . ETF was asked to evaluate a 'Defined Contribution' for employees versus the current system of money purchase and the Defined Benefits' system formula used by ETF. IRS does not allow an employer to take away options, so this would only impact new employees and would require ETF to manage two systems until all existing employees left state service. If new employees choose not to contribute, it would increase the cost to senior employees to maintain existing benefits.

There is also a proposed bill to stop the "double dipper" who retire and then are hired back to state service while getting a pension. They do not contribute to the WRS, which could also raise costs for those left contributing. .

Previous month's minutes:

The minutes of the previous (October) month's meeting were reviewed and approved.

Financial Report:

The opening balance was \$ 2,276.26 including interest earned on the savings account.

We collected \$ 12 from the lunch proceeds.

Closing balance will be \$ 2,276.46 including \$.20 interest earned.

The funds collected were handed over to John Hagman and deposited in Summit Credit Union account.

Guests:

Donna Royston, attended her first meeting.

Guests who were attending their second meeting and were voted in as new members.

Randy Jurewicz , sponsored by Sheree Vande Brink, attended his second meeting .

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Election of officer was to be in November but time ran out. Members are encouraged to contact any existing officers: Jim Miller, Doris Rusch, or John Hagman, as well as luncheon organizer Linda Meyer, with nominations or as volunteers.

Deaths and Illnesses.

Henry Kern passed away.

Dick Knitter has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Birthdays and anniversaries. None

Trips.

John and Brenda Hagman just returned for a trip to Oktoberfest in Germany.

Next meeting:The next meeting is the holiday party at Rex's Inn Keeper in Waunakee on December 7, 2011 .

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.