

From the President's Desk ...



Susie Dahl

"One of the Best Yet!"

"I don't know how you can make next year's better than this."

- 2009 conference participant

Comments like these on the evaluations of the 2009 Annual Conference tell the story. From long-time participants to first-time attendees, the consensus was that the timely theme, effective and informative presentations, and location made the 2009 conference difficult to top.

Given the multitude of threats that have arisen against our retirement plans, coupled with the challenging economic times, we felt that it was important for this conference to address these tough times with straight talk and creative solutions. We developed an agenda with pertinent topics

and expert presenters to address the issues and challenges facing us today. The only question was whether state and system travel restrictions and budget concerns might affect attendance. We were extremely pleased that the total number of registrations reached 80% of previous conferences.

The keynote speakers, Tom Lussier, Larry Johnson and Tripp Frohlichstein, focused on the conference theme - RETIREMENT REALITY: TOUGH TIMES, STRAIGHT TALK. Lussier, an NPEA past-president, discussed the state of the public pension industry and urged us to stay connected with other organizations and be open to new ideas and strategies for defending defined benefit plans.

Johnson discussed the following six strategies for building an organizational culture that values straight talk and rewards integrity:

1. Tell the truth.
2. Tackle the problem.
3. Disagree and commit. Choose among three healthy choices: Proactivity, Acceptance, or Leaving (PAL).

NOTICE: The 2010 NPEA membership invoices have been mailed. If you did not receive an invoice, you can find one on our web site, www.npea.com, on the "Membership" page. The fee remains \$500 per system, and we would like payment by March 31.

4. Welcome the truth.
5. Reward the messenger.
6. Build a platform of integrity with a clear set of values.

Frohlichstein, using a highly effective multi-media presentation, stressed positive communication in a negative climate. He demonstrated and critiqued both effective and ineffective communication initiatives by public pension leaders and others. He gave tips for avoiding jargon and using positive language to convey a message, and left us with several catch phrases such as "when in doubt, get it out" to report bad news. He stressed that we should remember that when we are talking to a reporter, we are not talking to the media, but rather through the media, to our members.

The remaining topics and workshops created an awareness and understanding of pension legal cases, internet security issues, and estate planning information. The presenters offered a multitude of ideas on their respective topics to take back and share with our members. And last but not least, always a highlight of

our conference was the presentation that showcased the successful communication efforts and techniques being used by our NPEA member systems.

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In recent years, this session has become an annual highlight of our conference and will continue to be a focus at future programs.

For your convenience, copies of the conference presentations can be accessed through the secure member area of the NPEA web site www.npea.com.

Work has already started on the 2010 conference in Lake Tahoe, which is set for October 16-20, 2010. We know we have a huge task ahead, as we try to top the 2009 program. (See the related article on this page)

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While we are aware it will be another tight budget year for many systems, the Board appreciates your continued support of NPEA. We believe we have demonstrated our value as an outstanding educational resource at a very reasonable cost.

We hope you will be able to join us in Nevada in October. Until then, the Board and I wish you and your systems a productive year.

Let Us Know if You Plan to Attend the Conference!

The NPEA Board is making plans for the upcoming 2010 Annual Conference, which will be held in North Lake Tahoe, Nevada on October 16-20. As we did last year, we are asking you to provide us a preliminary indication of your intent to attend the conference. Your feedback last year was extremely helpful in developing the budget and agenda and keeping the cost low.

While the conference registration materials and final agenda will not be available on the web site until late spring/early summer, a simple email from you at this point indicating your intent to attend will help our planning efforts. We continue to look for ways to reduce the conference fees, while still providing you with the quality of conference you have come to expect from the NPEA. For your planning purposes, the hotel room rate is \$189 and we expect the registration fee will be in the \$625-\$650 range.

Please respond to David Daly, NPEA Administrator at dave.daly@npea.com.

We look forward to hearing from you, and hope to see you in October.

Help us Plan for the 2010 Conference!

If you plan to attend, let us know by sending an email to:

dave.daly@npea.com



2010 Annual Conference
Hyatt Regency
North Lake Tahoe, NV
October 16 - 20, 2010

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Serving on the NPEA Board of Directors

Serving on the NPEA Board of Directors can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It comes, however, with responsibilities, duties, and commitments that are essential to the Board's success in achieving its mission of working together to promote and expand retirement education programs and communication initiatives for public employees across the country.

Board Member Responsibilities

Because the Board plays such a vital role in NPEA, individual members on the Board must fulfill certain obligations including:

- Supporting the mission of NPEA and working to implement its goals.
- Building relationships with NPEA members.
- Demonstrating a willingness to work as part of a team.
- Traveling to and participating in at least two Board meetings per year.
- Actively participating in the planning, organization, and implementation of the annual conference.
- Participating in conference calls when required.
- Taking on Board officer duties, such as Secretary or Treasurer, and accepting special assignments such as mailing annual invoices, updating the web site, preparing the conference workbook, etc.
- Being prepared to participate fully in all meetings.
- Keeping up-to-date on public pension issues and communication trends.

Selecting a Board Member

When a vacancy on the Board is anticipated, as will generally be the case every two years, the Board will announce the vacancy and solicit letters of interest from the NPEA membership. The criteria the Board will consider when reviewing letters of interest include:

- Does the candidate have the support of his/her system and executive director, and the assurance that he/she will be granted administrative leave to participate in board meetings? In addition, does the candidate's system agree to pay for attendance at the annual conference?
- Board meetings require travel and time away from home and work, and are generally held over a four-day period, which includes a Saturday and Sunday. Since NPEA does not have an office or full-time staff to accomplish needed tasks, the Board members and the part-time administrator divide assignments and rely on each other to provide a finished product in a timely manner. Will the candidate commit to expend both the work and personal time necessary to attend meetings and to accomplish the goals of the organization?
- Is the candidate's system a supporter of NPEA and do they regularly send participants to the annual conference? Has the candidate actively participated in previous annual conferences?
- Are the mission and goals of NPEA consistent with those of the candidate's system? Does his/her



system recognize the importance of quality retirement education and communications?

- What does the candidate hope to accomplish during his/her tenure on the Board?
- What experience, skills and accomplishments would the candidate bring to the Board?

The information submitted by the candidates is evaluated by the Board's nominating committee. The nominating committee makes a recommendation to the Board, and the recommendation is voted on by the Board. The Board's candidate selection is then ratified by the full membership at the annual business meeting, which is held at the annual conference.

As we mark the 30th anniversary of NPEA, we recognize that we would not have achieved our success as a national leader in public pension education, without the dedicated Board members who have served NPEA through the years. Although the Board of Directors changes over time, all who serve must remain steadfast in their commitment to NPEA, encourage and guide the development of programs and services, and challenge experienced counselors, educators, and communications officers to achieve greater success.

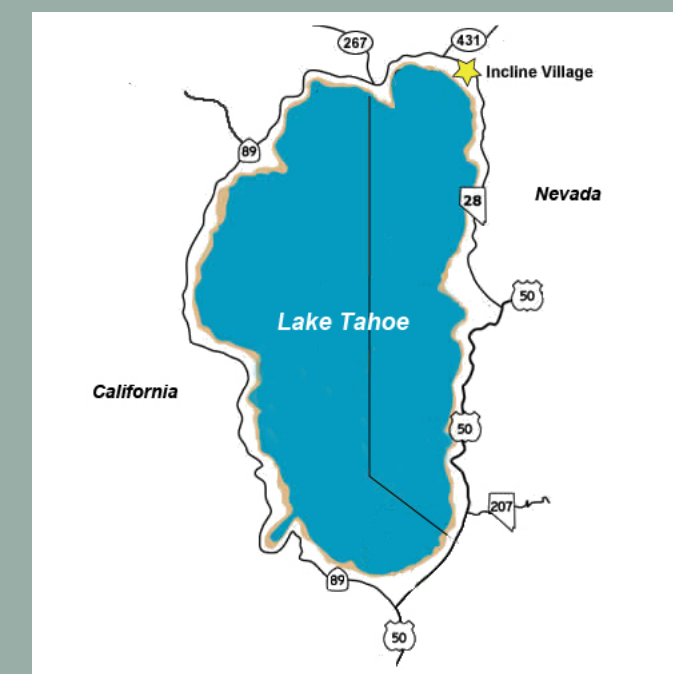
2010 Annual Conference Lake Tahoe, Nevada October 16-20

The Hyatt Regency in North Lake Tahoe, Nevada is the site for our 2010 Annual Conference. Mark your calendar for October 16-20. Located in Incline Village, the hotel is 34 miles (a 45 minute car ride) from the Reno/Tahoe International Airport.

Lake Tahoe is a masterpiece of nature: a jewel of blue water surrounded by the Sierra Nevada and Carson Range Mountain peaks. It is also an area that is steeped in history, which is the perfect setting as we note the 30th Anniversary of the founding of NPEA.

For centuries, before being discovered by explorers John Fremont and Kit Carson, Lake Tahoe was the summer gathering place for the Washoe Indians, who held spiritual and sacred ceremonies along the lake shores. The California Gold Rush and the discovery of the Comstock Lode put the lake on the map. Over the next 100 years, it grew in popularity as a get-away haven. The main attraction continues to be the quiet beauty of the Sierras and the timeless inspiration of the lake itself.

The location is guaranteed to leave a lasting impression and provide the perfect backdrop to look back and reflect on the growth and accomplishments of NPEA over the years, and to look ahead to the challenges we face today and in the future.



NPEA

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