

# The AERA Voice!

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## LEGISLATORS ATTEND ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETINGS

By JANICE J. CHARLESWORTH, AERA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AERA President Joe Ward and I were on the go for over a month presenting nine Annual



REP. DONNIE CHASTEEN

District Meetings hosted by district directors around the state! Although the same information was presented at each meeting, each district director planned and hosted a truly unique meeting in their area. The first meeting was conducted in Montgomery (District 7) and the last meeting was in Thomsville (District 6). Every year something new is presented.

President Ward wore two hats at each meeting. He began the meeting and spoke to retirees as the AERA President. Later in the meeting, he put on his TRS/PEEHIP Board of Control member hat and updated attendees on what was happening at RSA. As president, he placed emphasis on challenging members to recruit new members and to be engaged in the political process at the state house. President Ward also reminded retir-



REP. HARRY SHIVER

ees that "AERA represents your interest and is totally dedicated to the welfare of [its] members."

*Government Relations Specialist Jake McMillan* and I provided the legislative update entitled, "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly!" The governor called a first special session during the second half of the district meetings. However, as we all know, the General Fund Budget was not passed.\* (See page 5) Thanks to the efforts of Mr. McMillan, a number of legislators stopped by our meetings to discuss the funding situation in Alabama.



REP. BILL POOLE

AERA truly appreciates the time that these legislators took from their busy schedules to address attendees. A special thank you to: *Representative Donnie Chasteen, Enterprise meeting; Representative Harry Shiver, Bay Minette meeting; Former Senator Roger Bedford, Russellville meeting; Senator Shay Shelnett, Birmingham meeting; and Representative Thomas Jackson, Thomsville meeting.* At the District 3 Annual Meeting in Northport/Tuscaloosa area, AERA was honored to have *Representative Bill Poole, Chair of the House Ways and Means Education Commit-*

*tee.* Representative Poole did a great job explaining the Rolling Reserve Fund and the possible use of ETF funds for General Fund expenses.

AERA's six *Area Coordinators: Marian Wood, Area I East; Charlotte Wilson, Area I West; Jim Shannon, Area II West; Pauline George, Area II East; Peggy Mobley, Area III East;* and *John Paul Jones, Area III West* addressed members at the district meetings in their areas. They shared tips for successful local unit meetings, inviting nonmembers to the meetings from all levels of education, communicating with all education retirees, and suggesting ways for retirees to save money just by being members with the various discount programs available.

The remainder of each meeting was spent on PEEHIP insurance updates, prescription drug coverages, and TRS updates. This year *PEEHIP Director Donna Joyner* provided an overview of the PEEHIP program and the impact changes could have on retirees. All attendees

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