



Issue 2009-2

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NARFE

National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association

Protecting the Future for Retired and Current Federal Employees

New Mexico Federation

Voices

Late Spring 2009



National Web Site: www.narfe.org

Federation: www.narfe-nm.net

President's Message *Mary Ellen McKay*

This is the time to reflect on NARFE in New Mexico. We have held a successful Federation Convention in Albuquerque during the month of April. The Federation Board of Directors would like to thank Albuquerque Chapter 80 who hosted the meeting. Individuals from other Chapters in the Albuquerque area also pitched in to make it successful. Many people gave presentations that educated and informed the members who were present. We heard from several Congressional Offices, Region VII Vice President Martha Leiker, a FEEA representative from Colorado and a member of the National Alzheimer's committee from Arizona. And of course, our own members and Federation officers presented awards and gave mini-workshops. To all of these individuals who so willingly shared their talents; THANK YOU!!! The evaluations of the Convention were very helpful, and indicated that most people were very satisfied with all aspects of the meeting, the facilities and the entertainment.

During the summer while many Chapters are not meeting there is still plenty of work to be done. The 2010 Federation Convention will be held in Taos, and I have (along with NE District VP, Jim Bjurman) met with the Taos Chapter to start the planning for the 2010 event. I toured the meeting facility. It is beautiful and appears to be a well run, friendly place to meet. Taos will be a great host.

The other big concern for every member in New Mexico, and the country, is the up-coming Dues Referendum. Please read the information in the Executive Vice President Report, next column, and be alert for a packet of information that will be sent by the Federation to each Chapter that deals, in detail, with the pros and cons of this action. We need for every member to be fully informed and consulted on this matter, so they can make good decisions when they voice their preference.

Executive Vice President *Sharon Willoughby*

The NARFE National Executive Board (NEB) has announced a "National Dues Referendum". The proposal is a "single payer dues" across the board. In other words, if passed, most NARFE members would pay the same dues, \$40. From the \$40.00, the Chapter will receive \$9.00; the Federation will receive \$4.00; and the National Offices will gain about 91 cents in addition to what they already receive. The referendum ballot is scheduled to be mailed to each chapter secretary sometime around September 1 and must be mailed back no later than December 1. What does this mean to the 22 Chapters of NARFE in New Mexico? For most of our Chapters, your dues will go up; but for some, your dues will go down.

This action requires a change in the National Bylaws, and each Chapter gets a vote! According to the National Bylaws, each chapter will be authorized to cast one vote for each 50 members or portion thereof. This means, if a Chapter has 50 to 99 members they will be authorized to cast 2 votes; 101 to 150 members, 3 votes and so on. However, it will be up to the individual Chapter Boards to determine how to collect and cast their Chapter votes. For example, you could have a meeting taking a vote of the members present and then apportion the Chapter's votes to match the ratio of the results. You could have a meeting asking the members present to allow the Chapter Board of Directors to vote the ballots as a block. Or, you could also do a membership mailing, telephone vote or email vote to vote on the referendum and whether or not to have the Chapter cast the votes as a block or a proportion. However you decide to do it, this will be a **must vote** for all of our Chapters. Your District Vice Presidents will help you through this to make sure each of the New Mexico Chapters has a voice.

(Both of these articles are continued on page 5.)

Northwest District, *Madeline Jennings*

I am still recovering from my April 21st knee replacement (the 3rd one). This surgery was far more complicated than my other knee replacements, but things are going okay. I have a lot more physical therapy ahead of me before I can move on my own, hopefully by mid-summer.

During the April Convention, I gave each chapter recognition for continuing to cope with decreasing member numbers as well as providing support to older members not able to attend meetings. I believe that any chapter that has managed to endure these challenges should be appreciated. Also, while new officers are desirable to provide fresh ideas and energy, we should be grateful to officers willing to continue in their positions each year.

Both the San Juan Valley (Farmington) and McKinley County (Gallup) Chapters face these issues – declining membership and officers without willing replacements. However, we believe that we have to keep trying to keep the chapter alive and well. These two chapters also face very small attendance during their monthly meetings. These two chapters are dark for the summer.

The Belen and Albuquerque 80 Chapters have been very active. These chapters meet year round, and for that we should be grateful. These chapters (*continued page 4*)

Southwest District, *Roy Willoughby*

All of the chapters in the SW District were outstanding! I am pleased to award Certificates of Appreciation to three of the SW District chapters.

- Las Cruces – Chapter 182: *For Conducting a Comprehensive Contact of All Chapter Members*. This chapter made a very extensive effort to contact each and every member by telephone, e-mail, and/or snail mail. The most pleasing result was the personal connection with each member, demonstrating the fact that the chapter is interested in them personally. Additionally, a significant number of records were updated with current addresses, phone nos., and emails.
- Silver City – Chapter 481: *For hosting a Successful Southwest District Workshop*. This chapter accepted the call to host this year's Southwest District Workshop. The workshop was attended by all of the district chapters and was very informative on subjects of interest to chapters and on many of the NARFE issues.
- Luna county(Deming) – Chapter 1299. *For Close Coordination with Membership and for Working Health Fairs*. This chapter made an effort to contact all their members and insure that their records were complete and that the members were invited to their meetings. They also attended a number of health fairs to represent NARFE in that area.

Northeast District, *Jim Bjurman*

The NARFE Northeast District workshop will be August 10, 2009, in Santa Fe, starting at 9:30 AM at the Kingston Residence of Santa Fe, 2400 Legacy Ct, Santa Fe, (505) 471-2400. The workshop will conclude with a lunch at 1:00 pm. All interested NARFE members are welcome to attend. The cost of the workshop is \$14.00 which includes lunch, tax, and tip. Plus lunch comes with a glass of wine.

The workshop will be divided into two parts. The first part will be devoted to internal NARFE affairs. Federation executive board members will give a short presentation on their area of responsibility. This will be followed by a lengthy discussion on the upcoming single dues referendum. The second part of the workshop will feature legislation as it relates to NARFE. I invited the two US Senators and the Congressmen from districts one and three. If they cannot attend personally, I expect they will send representatives from their offices. The intent is to engage the offices in a roundtable discussion on several topics of interest to NARFE members, such as health care reform, entitlement reform, and effective lobbying.

To aid in the planning of this workshop I need to know by August 3, 2009 how many (*continued on page 4*)

Southeast District, *Thomas J. Anderson*

A majority of New Mexico's 22 chapters do not meet during the summer months. Nevertheless, August is a very special time for us because it is "NARFE Grass-Roots Advocacy Month". This is a period of time when as many of us as possible can, and should get together with our own congressmen and legislators at home and/or in their District office. Please support NARFE Grass Roots Advocacy Month by making contacts between August 1 and September 7.

In the SE District we, of course, have U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall, and two of the State's three representatives, Harry Teague and Ben Lujan. Contact information is on the back of this newsletter. You can also find information for them at our NM Federation web site at www.narfe-nm.net. Information on our 12 State Legislators can be found by accessing Google's "New Mexico Legislators". You can then find them by name, your zip code, or house or senatorial district.

Contact the district office to schedule a meeting. It is best if two or more members can go together, but you need to have a spokesman. Explain what NARFE is, that you are members, and where you are from. Preserving our existing benefits is NARFE's primary mission. You can get specific information from the June NARFE magazine, and our national, regional and federation officers are working on information (*continued on page 4*)

Secretary's Report *Gloria Delgado*

With the start of the NARFE year, we are reminded it is time to set our goals for the coming year. The primary goal for our members continues to be getting acquainted with our Congressmen and letting them know about our issues. It is urgent that we encourage them to co-sponsor and to help pass bills currently being introduced regarding Premium Conversion, Government Pension Offset (GPO), and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). These issues have been and always will be of great importance to all members. We must never give up hope of getting them passed and into fruition. Another most important goal is to continue recruiting to help increase membership and to encourage current members to retain their membership. Remember, NARFE is the only organization looking out for your well-deserved benefits.

The New Mexico Federation Board strives year round to provide guidance to our members and to keep them well informed. One means of accomplishing this effort is through our Annual State Convention. At the 48th NM NARFE Federation Convention April 16-18 in Albuquerque, our members were honored by the presence of Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez and staff members from the Offices of Senator Tom Udall and Representative Martin Heinrich. Convention attendees were encouraged by the messages sent by Senator Udall and Representative Heinrich in support of NARFE issues. Also present was Region VII National Vice President, Martha Leiker, who greeted attendees with well wishes and presented a report from National President, Margaret Baptiste, regarding membership. Federation President, Mary Ellen McKay, presented an agenda filled with important topics of mutual interest on NARFE issues and goals, resulting in an "outstanding" evaluation of the Convention from delegates and attendees. Lee Tomlin, past Federation President, and Sharon Willoughby, Executive Vice President Membership, presented interesting and informative mini-workshops.

This year's NM NARFE Federation Executive Board is looking forward to serving our members by efficiently performing our duties and keeping all of you informed of pertinent and urgent issues.



Legislative News *Russ Boor*

August is NARFE's Grass-Roots Advocacy Month

The Federation recommends chapters begin planning for NARFE Grass-Roots Advocacy Month – formerly known as "Lobby Month." The goal of Advocacy Month is to use the summer recess, August through Labor Day, September 7, to conduct visits with every Member of Congress. More information about the August Grass-Roots Advocacy Month will be sent by the National Office to chapter presidents and legislative officers.

Legislative Staff Visit Convention At our state convention in Albuquerque this last April, Federation President McKay introduced Anna Callahan, representing NM Senator Tom Udall, and Stephanie Russo, representing Albuquerque District 1 Representative Martin Heinrich. Both read letters from the Congressmen expressing support for NARFE and its issues of concern. So far, Congressman Heinrich has not signed on as a cosponsor of either the Premium Conversion bill or the Repeal of WEP and GPO bill. NARFE members may wish to remind the Congressmen that they have voiced support, and ask them to sign on as cosponsors.

Legislative Conference Nadine and I attended the NARFE Legislative Training Conference held in Crystal City, Virginia this past March 7 – 9 which included a visit to Capitol Hill on the morning of March 9. On Saturday, March 7th, we registered, received our conference notebook, and that evening, attended a get together buffet dinner. The next morning, Sunday, the conference convened, and we met for the next two days. The program consisted mainly of presentations by nationally known speakers and five, one hour breakout sessions, each presented by members of NARFE's Legislative Department. The breakout (BO) sessions, as listed below, formed the central theme of the conference. The power point presentations which accompanied each presentation can be found on NARFE's web page, www.narfe.org, under the Legislative Department.

- BO Session 1 - Grassroots Organizing: Being an Effective NARFE Advocate
- BO Session 2 - Sowing the Seeds of Grassroots: Contacting Congress
- BO Session 3 - Health Care Issues
- BO Session 4 - NARFE-PAC: The Federal Worker and Retiree Defense Fund
- BO Session 5 - The U.S. Budget

(continued on page 5)



← 2009 New Mexico Federation Convention
"The Entertainment"

Treasurer's Report – FY 2007
(01 January 2009 – 31 March 2009)

Rick DeMello

Beginning Balance		\$10,813.29
Income		\$7,447.40
Interest	\$60.53	
Per Capita Assessment	\$5,234.70	
10% Monies	\$2,152.17	
Expenses		(\$5,039.54)
Officer Vouchers	\$4,120.43	
Nat'l Legislative Conf.	\$800.00	
Newsletter	\$119.11	
Balance		\$13,221.15

Southeast District (continued from page 2)

for the job. Chapter Presidents and the legislative chairs should work together on this.

By the way, did you read the article on "Computer Connections" in the June issue. What a wonderful way to keep in touch with family and friends. And those little cameras are only around \$20. The magazine is always worth reading.

On April 16, the federation board met in Socorro. Everyone was present except NW District Vice President Madeline Jennings who is recovering from knee replacement surgery. We certainly wish her well. One of the highlights of the meeting was a report from Jim Bjurman on the convention evaluation responses. See Evaluation, page 4) Eighteen Chapters were represented by 111 members. Congratulations President Mary Ellen. I want to brag on the SE District because five of the 6 chapters were represented by 28 of the 30 voting delegates. Candidates for all federation offices are now being sought. If it is your turn for any of the offices including district vice presidents, please make your interest known.

Around the first of September, every member will receive a referendum ballot for a unified NARFE Dues. We will have about three months to make a decision and vote on having a single member dues of \$40 per year. In my opinion, this is a win-win situation as it will provide much needed revenue to both the national and federation operations. New Mexico's federation has been losing money for several years. And we will be able to tell prospects anywhere exactly what the dues are. Our President Margaret Baptiste has a very informative open letter on this in the June magazine. Please read it, and be prepared to cast your ballot.

It is time to begin planning the SE District workshop which will be hosted by Chapter 731 in November. I am leaning toward having Chapter Presidents present information on how their chapter operates and ➔

2009 NM Federation Convention Evaluation

At the conclusion of this year's state convention, all attendees were asked to complete a short evaluation of the convention. Fifty one completed forms were received, slightly more than half the number of attendees.

Survey Questions: Did you like the hotel setting for this convention? Was the time used well for the convention? Were the topics covered helpful to you as a NARFE member? Were the mini-workshops built into the agenda time well spent? Did you have a good time? Overall, did this convention meet your needs?

The responses received were very positive. Convention goers liked that the convention facilities were all contained in one building. The feeling was that time was well spent at the convention, although it was noted that the agenda could have been a little more tight. The topics and mini-workshops were well received, especially Lee Tomlin's presentation on the duties of a chapter treasurer. Any criticisms of topics or workshops were directed at the presentation skills of the speaker, and the troublesome microphone that would not stay in place. Finally, the vast majority of respondents had a good time and responded that the convention met their needs. This information has been shared with the Taos Chapter planning next year's convention.

Congratulations to Chapter 80, Mary Ellen McKay and all others responsible for the planning and presenting of a successful state convention.

Northwest District (continued from page 2)

Chapters are doing well and keep all members well informed via newsletters. I again wish to thank Chapter 80 for a great 2009 Federation convention.

I am happy to represent the chapters and am glad we are four chapters "strong".

Northeast District (continued from page 2)

plan on attending. Please respond to: Kathleen Kerr, (505) 471-1752, ri56_ktkerr@q.com or James Bjurman, (505) 890-4407, jimbjurman@msn.com.

In closing, I would like to thank the Santa Fe Chapter 186 for graciously agreeing to host the workshop. I look forward to seeing you on August 10.

◀ *Southeast District (continued from column 1)*

special activities, perhaps with a round table discussion. Anyone with suggestions, ideas or concerns is asked to present them to Chapter Presidents or District Vice President.

I am also preparing for this year's chapter visits. President Mary Ellen and I will meet together with as many chapters as possible in an effort to increase meeting attendance. We hope inactive chapter members will take the time to attend.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

I am continuing visiting Chapters that meet in the summer and working with SE District VP, Tom Anderson, on the closing of the Clovis Chapter. Closing a Chapter breaks my heart, because I know that local Chapters are the center of effective action in NARFE. If anyone, who on reading this news has a way to secure officers for that Chapter, we would be overjoyed to hear from you. We are taking some very preliminary steps in developing a Chapter in the Dulce/Chama area. If you know anyone in that part of the state who is a Federal Employee or Retiree, please give me a call.

I want to ask each of you who have an e-mail address, and want to get NARFE information including this newsletter, GEMS, reports and forms from National Headquarters, to PLEASE share that address with your Chapter and National. We are in the 21st Century and have all of these wonderful ways to speed communication. E-mail is just one of the easiest ways to facilitate communication.

I am looking forward to doing the work of NARFE this summer and the rest of my term of office, but I'm also going to get in some vacation time with my husband and our families in NM, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Florida. My phone has an answering machine that I check daily while traveling and I'll be taking my lap-top with me. I wish you good health and a happy summer.



2009 New Mexico Federation Convention
President Mary Ellen McKay

Executive Vice President (continued from page 1)

There will be more information coming to each Chapter President from the Federation. Present the information to your Board and make sure they understand the implications to your Chapter. There is also information in the NARFE Magazine. We will also post information on the NARFE NM web site.

Please look at all of the information sent to you so you and your board can make an informed decision. Keep in mind if this referendum passes and you want to raise your dues you will have to do it within the chapter, National will not collect them for you. Depending on the impact to the Federation, you may want to petition the Federation to lower or eliminate the per capita dues.

If you want a copy of the National Bylaws, please contact any Federation Board member.

Legislative News (continued from page 3)

The following 11 issue papers were included in the conference book and can be found on the NARFE web site.

- Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP)
- Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)
- Premium Conversion
- Medicare Part D and Employer Subsidy
- Medicare Part B Premium Means-Testing
- Medicare Part B Penalty
- Long-Term Care Insurance Tax Relief
- Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision
- Increased Survivor Benefit Option
- Adjusted Deferred Benefits for Federal Employees
- Part-timers Annuity

Data and statistical information were also presented:

- By state, the number and amount of annuity paid for both civilian and military retirees
- By state, the state tax treatment of federal annuities in 2008
- Civil Service COLA history
- 2009 Social Security reference chart
- Understanding GPO
- Understanding WEP

At 8 AM on Tuesday, the last day conference attendees were bussed up-to-the-hill where they fanned out to visit their two Senators and Representative. Prior to our visit to the hill all were given three Issue Papers on the following subjects to leave with each Congressman visited:

1. Retirement Equity for Federal Civilian Workers and Retirees - Basic message "Do no harm".
2. Premium Conversion to Ease the High Cost of Health Care for Federal Annuitants and Military Retirees - Basic message "Cosponsor and Support H.R. 1203 or S.491"
3. The Social Security Offsets: Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) - Basic message "Cosponsor and Support H.R. 235 or S 484"

Our first stop was the office of Senator Bingaman where we spoke to Annie Chavez, Legislative Assistant. Next stop was the office of Senator Udall (*continued on page 6*)

New Mexico Conference on AGING

Nadine Boor

The 31st annual New Mexico Conference on Aging will be August 25- 27, 2009 at the Sandia Resort and Casino in Albuquerque. Registration packets will be sent to Chapter presidents and District VPs. Please share this information with your members.

Program will include Keynote Speakers, Workshops, Reception/Dance, Sports and Fitness Fair, Roundtables sessions, Engage NM Volunteer Fair, and Whole Body Health Fair. Hope to see you there!

Legislative News (continued from page 5)

where we spoke to Jeanette Lyman, Legislative Assistant now replaced by Fern Goodhart, who will be handling federal employee issues. Third on the list to visit was the office of Representative Harry Teague where we met with the Congressman and Arturo Terrazas, Legislative Assistant. From there we went to the office of Representative Martin Heinrich and met with Amelia Thomas, Executive Assistant. Because of time restraints and plane schedule, we were unable to visit Representative Lujan's office. At each office visited we were courteously met and none indicated the Congressman was opposed to supporting any of the three NARFE issues discussed.

Where do our Congressmen now stand on the NARFE supported bills now in Congress?

- Premium Conversion - **Representative Teague** and **Senator Tom Udall** have signed on as cosponsors. Please thank them and ask they also cosponsor support repeal of GPO and WEP.
- Repeal of GPO and WEP - None have signed on

What's has NARFE done for us lately?

1. In response to NARFE's urging, BC/BS dropped their ill conceived new requirement for the \$7,500 non-participating physician co-payment for those standard option enrollees who are also covered by Medicare.
2. NARFE was instrumental in supporting a legislative fix that ensures all CSRS annuitants without SS income will be offered a \$250 stimulus relief - like other seniors covered by SS.
3. With NARFE's urging, the recent Ryan substitution amendment to the 2010 budget resolution in the House was defeated. This amendment, if adopted, would have directed consideration of proposals such as cutting or cancelling COLAs, basing future retiree annuities on the highest five years of salary, shifting FEHBP premium costs to workers and retirees and/or requiring employees to double their TSP contribution to receive full government share.
4. NARFE was instrumental in urging the House to approve legislation allowing FERS employees to credit their unused sick leave toward retirement.
5. NARFE also was instrumental in urging the House to pass legislation to allow automatic enrollment of newly-hired federal employees in the TSP and add a Roth-style investment option to the TSP program.
6. A NARFE supported bill has been approved by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee which if passed, would provide federal employees paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

What can Chapter leadership do in New Mexico?

Chapters can continue to organize and make preparations to defend members entitlements and benefits by: ➤

Senator Udall Signs on to WEP and GPO repeal

On May 14th, Sen. Tom Udall was made cosponsor of repeal of WEP and GPO S. 484, sponsored by Sen. Diane Feinstein.

This would be a great time to say "Thank You!" The common courtesy of a thank you message is now a rarity. Said over the phone, by postcard, e-mail or fax would show your Senator that you are watching closely. The NARFE paid toll free number for the Capitol switchboard is 1-866-220-0044. Ask for your Representative my name. The best postal address for any Senator is The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510.

The two easiest ways to send an e-mail are:

- 1) the NARFE Legislative Action Center, <http://capwiz.com/narfe/dbq/officials/>, or
- 2) the Senate gateways to individual Members' "web forms" (www.senate.gov).

If you phone, e-mail or write your Senator today, please let us know using cfarrell@narfe.org and place your **SENATOR's NAME** in Subject.

Legislative News (continued from column 1)

1. Taking an active part in NARFE's Grass-Roots Advocacy Month by planning for and conducting visits with every Member of Congress during the Congressional summer recess, August 1st through Labor Day, September 7th. Please don't forget to thank those Congressmen who are supporting our causes and have signed on as co-sponsors of bills of vital interest to NARFE members such as Premium Conversion.
2. Keeping the members informed on status of adverse legislation and what they can do to help.
3. Assembling telephone trees and calling committees so members can be contacted within 48 hours to make calls to their members of Congress.
4. Convincing members to provide their email addresses to NARFE. Nationally only 42,000, (one fifth) of our members can now be contacted thru NARFE's GEMS (Hotline) email notification system. To record your email address in the NARFE database, either go the NARFE web site and enter it yourself or send an e-mail to memsrvcs@narfe.org listing your NARFE ID number, name and email address.
5. Redoubling efforts to retain and recruit members
6. Encouraging members to volunteer help in local Congressmen's office and/or become involved in political campaigns.
7. Emphasizing the necessity of members donating to NARFE-PAC
8. Reminding members that "All politics are local"

NARFE

New Mexico Federation of Chapters

Northwest District

Albuquerque Chapter 80
Belen Chapter 1462
McKinley County (Gallup) Chapter 1380
San Juan Valley (Farmington) Chapter 1179

Northeast District

Duke City (Albuquerque) Chapter 1411
Española Valley Chapter 1423
Las Vegas Chapter 886
Rio Rancho Chapter 1381
Santa Fe Chapter 186
Taos Chapter 1401

Southwest District

Grant County (Silver City) Chapter 481
Las Cruces Chapter 182
Luna County (Deming) Chapter 1299
Sierra County (Truth or Consequences) Chapter 1341
Socorro Chapter 1402
Statewide Charter – Chaparral Chapter 2341

Southeast District

Alamogordo Chapter 698
Carlsbad Chapter 796
Curry County (Clovis) Chapter 1357
Pecos River (Ft. Sumner) Chapter 1455
Roswell Chapter 731
Tucumcari Chapter 1387

2009 NM Federation of Chapters Convention Highlights

The 48th Annual Convention was held in April in Albuquerque, NM. 18 of the 22 NM Federation Chapters were represented at the Convention. 95/159 authorized delegates and two alternate delegates were present. 110 members attended the Convention.

Alzheimer's Report: During 2008, NM NARFE members donated over \$9,000.

NARFE-PAC Report: In 2008, NARFE-PAC gave campaign money to Sen Udall (\$5,000); Rep Heinrich (\$2,000); and Sen Domenici (\$2,000). Nationally the contributions were \$52,000.

Federal Employee Emergency Assistance (FEEA): he For the period from May 2008-March 2009, NM contributed \$50 to the Disaster fund. Disaster Fund and Scholarship Fund grants are available to all current Federal employees and/or NARFE members.

Resolutions: No resolutions were submitted.

The 2010 NM Federation of Chapters Convention will be in Taos, April 15-16, 2010.

2009 New Mexico Federation Convention Photos



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) New Mexico Federation of Chapters *Voices*

Published Quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, & Winter)

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NARFE

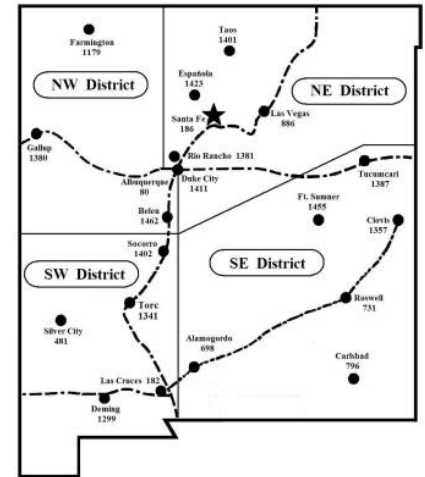
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*You Need NARFE
and
NARFE Needs You!*

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2009 NARFE Region VII Biennial Conference October 1 – 3, 2009 Cheyenne, Wyoming

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