District 19 Member Chosen North Carolina Educational Office Professional of the Year

Kay Daniels, Orange County Schools Administrative Associate for the Office of Instruction, was named the North Carolina Educational Office Professional of the Year by the North Carolina Association of Educational Office Professionals (NCAEOP). Daniels was honored recently at a banquet in Greensboro.

Before earning recognition at the state level, Kay Daniels was named Educational Office Professional at both the local and district levels. The national Educational Office Professional will be named at the conference in Arizona.

Dr. Kathy Osborne, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, said, “Kay is highly deserving of this recognition. Her skills and experience are a major asset in the success of Orange County Schools.”

Daniels has been with Orange County Schools for 28 years. She has also been an active member of SEANC for many years, serving as Secretary and, most recently, as Auditing Chair of District 19.

SEANC Organizes Very Successful MAT Lobby Day

Nearly 150 SEANC Member Action Team (MAT) members went to Raleigh on May 11 for the MAT Lobby Day. They met one-on-one with senators and representatives to promote the plight of working families. The MAT program is a strategic step in SEANC’s legislative process this year. It differs from SEANC lobbies in the past, serving as a more targeted and tactical effort to influence legislators from the grassroots level. The day began with breakfast and an orientation session regarding SEANC’s top issues. After being transported to the Legislature Building, MAT members met individually with their representatives and senators to discuss five percent pay raises, additional State Health Plan funding to prevent benefit cuts, and support for retirees, including a 3.2 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and a $33 million payback to the retirement system from funds escrowed in 2001.

The MAT program was a directive of the SEANC Board of Governors during its February meeting when a “Fairness for Working Families” legislative/budget campaign was born. MAT members received intensive training at five regional workshops in March. Ruth Lewter attended a workshop and went to Raleigh on May 11, representing District 19. She reported that she received positive feedback from the legislators she visited.

2005 Policy Platform Objectives

The policy platform objectives set forth at the 2004 convention include the following:

• Seek continuation of a fully paid individual health care benefit for all active and retired State employees.
• Request that the General Assembly fully fund pay plans prior to considering other appropriations.
• Seek restoration of the employer’s contribution to the retirement system at 9.35 percent.
• Oppose privatization and downsizing of North Carolina government services.
• Oppose legislation that would remove State employees from the protections of the State Personnel Act through the Office of State Personnel.

Employees Can Earn Credit for Military Service

State and local government employees who are “called up” to military duty are eligible to earn free credit for that service in the retirement system, if they return to employment in state or local government within two years after they are discharged. They can return to employment with any North Carolina agency and receive credit.

For Late Breaking Legislative News

Call the SEANC Hotline at 888-732-6242 or go to the SEANC web page at www.seanc.org.

Mission Statement

SEANC District 19 is a professional organization committed to representing employees of all State agencies, dedicated to protecting and improving rights and benefits, increasing visibility and public awareness of the services provided by State employees, and encouraging high work standards and safe working conditions.
Our Annual Meeting Was Full of Great Surprises

District 19 held its annual meeting on June 21, 2005 at the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA). Guests included Steve Lawson, the Piedmont District Services Representative, and Chuck Stone, Director of North Carolinians for Health Care, as well as Charles Clark and Katie Foster representing the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Steve Lawson reported on what was happening in the General Assembly and gave a status update on the budget as of June 21. The House recommended a $1,086 across-the-board raise for State employees and a two percent raise for teachers. Chuck Stone painted a bleak picture of health care for State employees. The cost of health care is escalating and made worse by projected Federal cuts to Medicaid, which could result in a $68 million expense for North Carolina. The possibility of doing away entirely with health insurance for retirees has been a topic of discussion by the legislature, since there is no specific funding in place to pay for retiree health insurance.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has given $1.35 million to SEANC. They have shown us how to run a political campaign and target races. In return they are given access to our members who benefit from the information they supply on issues of concern to both SEIU and SEANC. North Carolina is the least unionized state in the nation and SEIU wants to change that. SEIU is the fastest growing union in the country.

SEANC awarded scholarships to three winners, who will now compete on a statewide level. Cathy Harrison, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, presented scholarships to Ashlee Knight, Laura Curry and Samantha Everette. Ashlee will attend Winston-Salem State University in the fall. She is the daughter of Cathy Knight, who works at UNC’s Housekeeping Services. Laura Curry, a Program Assistant at UNC’s Office of Human Research Ethics-Biomedical, is seeking an A.A. degree in Business Administration from Vance-Granville Community College. Samantha Everette is a junior at North Carolina State University, specializing in art design. Her mother, Mary Everette, is employed by UNC’s Department of Biostatistics. We’re proud of our scholarship winners and we wish them great success.

Pamela Siler presented awards for outstanding service to several very surprised and happy District members: Anthony Weaver, Karen Thompson, Claire Miller, Cathy Harrison, Peggy Cotton, and Ruth Letworker.

The election of officers and delegates for 2005-2006 was held. Ruth Letworker, a former Chair of District 19, will be our new Chair. Marie Tate was re-elected 1st Vice Chair and Martha Fowler was elected 2nd Vice Chair. Muzetta Pettiford continues as EMPAC Chair. Beverly Leake will be Auditing Chair, Hazel Lunsford Bylaws Chair, Janie Jones Policy Platform Chair, and Cathy Harrison Nominating Chair. Mariah McPherson continues to serve as Chair of the Retirees’ Chapter.

Major Changes in the State Health Plan Began in April

George C. Stokes became the Executive Administrator of the State Health Plan on April 25, replacing Jack Walker. In the past Stokes managed two other HMOs, Kaiser Permanente and Doctor’s Health Plan, and was praised as the best candidate for the appointment by Insurance Commissioner Jim Long, who oversaw the selection committee’s hiring decision.

The State Health Plan unveiled an updated web page, with improvements in place to make the site more user friendly and to offer a broader range of information for Plan members. The redesign began more than a year ago.

One special feature on the web page details North Carolina HealthSmart, the ‘healthy living initiative’ created to encourage healthy members to stay that way and to help other members in managing chronic health problems.

District 19 Held Raffle in March

District 19 held a raffle on March 15 to benefit its scholarship program. Prizes included a $50 dinner for two at Spice Street at University Mall in Chapel Hill, an autographed UNC women’s basketball, and the Michael Jordan Carolina jersey. The winning tickets were held by Claude Hooker from Carrboro, Randolph Forh from Raleigh, and Kevah Jones from Chapel Hill.

Special thanks go to everyone who supported us in this fund-raising effort.

Mark Your Calendars

District 19 meets the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., at the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA), 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro. There is plenty of free parking and refreshments are served. All State employees are welcome.

August 16, 2005 Monthly Meeting
September 8-10, 2005 Annual Convention, Greensboro
September 20, 2005 Monthly Meeting

The Retirees’ Chapter meets on the fourth Tuesday morning of each month at 8:30. All retirees are welcome. For information, call Mariah McPherson at 732-2583.