

ALABAMA RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
ALABAMA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ADVOCACY LEAGUE

Advantage

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021 | VOLUME XVII, ISSUE IV



- Christmas Open House
- Convention Highlights
- 2 in 2022 Campaign

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SEIB Place 2 | **Robert Pickett**
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021



2 in 2022
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Advantage Magazine is the official publication of ARSEA/APEAL and is published bi-monthly by the association. The Association office is located at 450 S. Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. Telephone (334) 834.9116 or (800) 844.7732. Locate us on the web at www.arsea.org. Any questions concerning this publication or the association can be directed to our office by calling the numbers above or emailing us at retire@arsea.org. Advertisements in the magazine are not endorsements of products and/or services by ARSEA/APEAL unless officially stated in the ad. We shall accept advertising on the same basis as other reputable publications: that is, we shall not knowingly permit a dishonest advertisement to appear in Advantage, but, at the same time, we will not undertake to guarantee the reliability of our advertisers.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our 41st Annual Convention held in Huntsville in September was a tremendous success, and I would like to begin this issue of our magazine by thanking everyone who played

a role in it - our staff and board members, the sponsors and vendors, the speakers and presenters, and all of our members who traveled across the state to join us.

Coming together as an association and renewing our common bonds was refreshing after the events of 2020 forced us to distance ourselves and prevented large gatherings from taking place. As always, our convention gave us a chance to review and evaluate the successes of the past year while making plans and setting goals for the year ahead.

Lieutenant Governor Will Ainsworth, Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon, and a number of lawmakers from every corner of Alabama had committed to attend until an emergency special session of the Legislature was called to address issues within the prison system. Despite the session, Gov. Kay Ivey flew to Huntsville and delivered the keynote address at our closing luncheon.

Few associations in Montgomery receive this kind of respect and attention from the state's most powerful leaders, but because of your active membership and participation, ARSEA/APEAL is among them.

Now it is time to put our political influence to work.

You will recall that the bonus legislation that we introduced in the 2021 regular session failed to pass over concerns that Senate budget committee chairs expressed about possible economic impacts resulting from the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. We were successful in securing a strong commitment from the House and Senate leadership that our bonus legislation would be passed early in the 2022 regular session, scheduled to begin in January.

The 2022 regular session is fast-approaching and now is the time you should reach out to your senator and representative and remind them of the retiree bonus commitment that we secured. Phone calls, letters, emails, and personal, one-on-one contacts when you see them in public are effective methods of conveying our message. Almost all House and Senate members have public social media accounts, so private messaging through Facebook or Twitter can be used as well.

In all cases, it is important to be polite, concise, and appreciative when communicating with lawmakers. Stay on point, and do not confuse the matter by mentioning other issues that have nothing to do with our bonus.

Next year is an election year and because many incumbents have primary opposition your influence is greater now than at any other time. Use that influence and the opportunity that the election cycle presents to contact your legislators and ask them to support the retiree longevity bonus.

The 2022 regular session is fast-approaching and now is the time you should reach out to your senator and representative and remind them of the retiree bonus commitment that we secured.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

NOVEMBER 1, 2021 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

and receive your choice of....



Trail Card



RSA Spa Card



Gift Card

2 IN 2022 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

With 2022 being a state election year, its even more important that we continue to grow and expand our grassroots numbers! We have a campaign too! As an ARSEA/APEAL member, you know there is no other organization working exclusively to protect your pension, insurance, and benefits like we do!

With the 2022 election year legislative session convening on January 11th in Montgomery, now is the time to strengthen our ranks and recruit new members to help fight to pass our bonus legislation and protect your hard-earned benefits.

“We must continue to have a strong, active and growing membership to deal effectively with the Alabama Legislature, city councils, county commissions and other public boards”, said Ken Mays, ARSEA/APEAL President.

Your personal endorsement is by far the most effective recruiting tool. While you may not know of some potential new members in your area right now, in many cases we have referral prospects in your area we can provide, that need your personal solicitation.

There’s something in it for you too! We’re going to make it fun for you by offering your choice of gift cards for every two members you recruit!

Go ahead and sign-up to participate in the 2022 membership drive and we will send you a recruitment packet with materials and instructions to help you. Call us for more information at 334-834-9116 or 800-844-7732 or e-mail retire@arsea.org.

You can get started NOW by handing the application below to a non-member you know.

ARSEA/APEAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SSN(optional) _____ Birthday(optional) _____

Spouses Name _____ Beneficiary of AD&D _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

By providing my cell phone information, I authorize ARSEA/APEAL to contact me concerning important issues.

ANNUAL RATE

- Single \$81
- Family \$105

MONTHLY RATE

- Single \$6.75
- Family \$8.75

MONTHLY PAYROLL DEDUCTION - THE EASIEST WAY TO JOIN ARSEA/APEAL!

I hereby authorize the Employees’ Retirement System of Alabama to make a monthly deduction equal to that of the monthly rate of the option checked above from my retirement check for payment of my professional dues to ARSEA/APEAL. This continuous authorization may be revoked by me at any time by notifying the Employees’ Retirement System in writing.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Recruited By: _____

Please return application to: 450 S. Union St., Montgomery, AL 36104

FALL MEETINGS

If you are interested in becoming more involved in your chapter or starting a chapter in your area, please call our office and speak with Barry Mask or Sara Phillips at 334-834-9116.

If you would like to send pictures from your meeting to be included here or on the ARSEA/APEAL Facebook page, e-mail them in a digital format to sphillips@arsea.org and include the names of those pictured.

NOVEMBER 10

Houston County Chapter

1:30 p.m.

Houston County Commission
County Courthouse
3rd Floor Commission Chambers
2400 Columbia Way, Dothan

NOVEMBER 12

Huntsville Utilities Retirees

9:00 a.m.

Gibson's Barbecue
3319 Memorial Pkwy SW, Huntsville

NOVEMBER 15

Cullman Chapter

11:00 a.m.

Cullman City Hall, Auditorium
204 Second Avenue NE, Cullman

NOVEMBER 15

City of Montgomery Retirees

1:30 p.m.

Crump Senior Center
1751 Cong W L Dickinson Dr,
Montgomery

NOVEMBER 15

Decatur Members

1:30 p.m.

Turner Surler Center
702 Sycamore St. NW, Decatur

NOVEMBER 17

Tuscaloosa/Northport Members

1:30 p.m.

Tuscaloosa Library
Rotary Room
1801 Jack Warner Parkway,
Tuscaloosa

DECEMBER 1

Elmore County Chapter

11:30 a.m.

Plantation House Restaurant
3240 Grandview Road, Millbrook
(Dutch treat lunch)

DECEMBER 7

Jefferson County Health Department

11:30 a.m.

Brookdale University Park
400 University Park Dr, Birmingham



RSA CEO Dr. David Bronner
pictured with Mike Gillespie

MIKE GILLESPIE ELECTED AS ERS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT LARGE

Mike Gillespie was declared the winner of the Local Government At-Large representative election. Gillespie said, "I deeply appreciate the votes of all who supported me and congratulate both of my opponents for a well-run race. I look forward to working with Dr. Bronner, the RSA team, and the other board members to keep our retirement system fiscally strong and secure."

Senator Will Barfoot (R-Pike Road) spoke to the Central Alabama DPS Chapter at their October meeting



MEMBERS RECOGNIZED DURING AWARDS CEREMONY

ARSEA/APEAL recognized several members for their dedicated service and contributions to the success of our association during the awards ceremony which took place at our 41st Annual Convention in Huntsville.

President Ken Mays said, "Our association has been fortunate to have so many members who are willing to devote their time, energies, and efforts. We congratulate each of the recipients for the honors they received."

Richard Cater of Montgomery earned the Member of the Year Award for his on-going efforts to review, revise, and update the by-laws that govern ARSEA/APEAL and its operations. As chairman of our new By-Laws & Governance Committee, Cater has selflessly volunteered his skills as a noted attorney to update our association's governing documents.

State Rep. Rex Reynolds (R - Huntsville), State Rep. Proncey Robertson (R - Mount Hope), and State Rep. Randall Shedd (R - Fairview) were jointly awarded our Legislators of the Year Award for their successful efforts to block a resolution that created a commission tasked with studying the possible reduction and privatization of retirement benefits, among other issues. SJR55, which passed the State Senate but died in the House, would have created the State Employee and Teacher Compensation Joint Interim Study Commission, tasked with reviewing, studying, and recommending changes to the "salary, retirement, health insurance, bonuses, and other benefits" provided to state agency and public education employees and retirees. Reynolds, Robertson, and Shedd - who are all dues-paying members of ARSEA/APEAL - had the resolution carried



Judge Jerry Fielding (right) was recognized for his service as ARSEA/APEAL President 2020-2021 pictured here with President Ken Mays (left) at the Awards Ceremony on September 29th



Ceal Link received the Distinguished Service Award pictured with President Ken Mays



Representative Rex Reynolds (R-Huntsville), ARSEA/APEAL Governmental Affairs Manager Evans Brown and Representative Proncey Robertson (R-Mount Hope)

over on the regular session's second-to-last day and blocked from consideration on the last meeting day.

Carrie Williams of Mobile received the Outstanding Service Award for her 20-years of service including her tenure on the ARSEA Board of Directors and the six years she served on the Foundation Board. In addition, Williams served 10 non-consecutive years on the Nominations & Elections Committee.

Robert Pickett of Montgomery was also honored the Outstanding Service Award for his 16-year tenure on both the ARSEA Board of Directors and the State Employees' Insurance Board.

Pam Gilmore of Guntersville, Peggy Harris of Cullman, Harold Hammond of Prattville, Ceal Link of Columbiana, and Mickey Robinson of Fairhope each received our Distinguished Service Award for providing exemplary service to our organization as outgoing members of the Board of Directors.

Jerry Fielding of Sylacauga was honored with the Outgoing President's Award as the 2020 - 2021 ARSEA/APEAL state president. In spite of one of the most challenging and unique years in our association's history, Judge Jerry Fielding enjoyed a successful and productive term last year. Thankfully, he will continue to serve as Immediate Past President as well as part of our Past Presidents Council so we will be able to draw upon his insight and wisdom for many years to come.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

The Medicare Open Enrollment season is upon us, which means your mailbox gets bombarded with advertisements and your television is filled with commercials about Medicare Advantage plans. For most Medicare retirees, October 15th – Dec. 7th is, by far, the most confusing time of year, but ARSEA/APEAL stands ready to assist you through this period.

State retirees covered under the State Employees Insurance Plan (SEIB) and local government retirees covered under the Local Government Health Insurance Plan (LGHIP) - No action is necessary on your part.

Your Medicare coverage is managed by the SEIB or LGHIB under a self-insured group plan. They have selected UnitedHealthcare (UHC) to offer a custom UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) plan for all eligible retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents. If you have questions, please call SEIB at 866-836-9737 or LGHIB at 866-836-9137, and they will provide the necessary answers.

For all others on Medicare we strongly advise you to consult with your medical providers (doctors, pharmacy, etc.) and review your current Medicare plan during this annual enrollment period to make an informed choice.

If you need further assistance, please contact the SHIP in your area through your local Area Agency on Aging or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463).

For assistance in making informed choices about your Medicare options, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) provides insurance counselors. SHIP is a partnership with the Centers for Medicare, the Alabama Department of Senior Services, and the Area Agencies on Aging.

SHIP counselors are committed volunteers, many of whom face the same issues you do as Medicare retirees. The counselors are not affiliated with any insurance companies and will not attempt to sell you insurance. All counseling records are strictly confidential.

If you need further assistance, please contact the SHIP in your area through your local Area Agency on Aging or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463).



**ALABAMA
SHIP**

STATE HEALTH INSURANCE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 41ST ANNUAL CONVENTION IN HUNTSVILLE

Members from across the state recently gathered for the 41st Annual Convention, which was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel & Spa in Huntsville.

Representatives from the Retirement Systems of Alabama, the State Employees' Health Insurance Program, United Healthcare, the Alabama Securities Commission, AMBA and Hear in America joined us for the two-day event to answer one-on-one questions and provide attendees with information on the services they offer.

The Opening Reception and Dinner, which was hosted by our Friends of Retirees and Employees Political Action Committee and sponsored by United Healthcare, featured a political forum with candidates for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by the retiring Sen. Richard Shelby.

Former Trump administration ambassador to Slovenia Lynda Blanchard, former Business Council of Alabama CEO Katie Britt, businesswoman Jessica Taylor, and military veteran Mike Dunn were among the Senate candidates who attended the event.

Congressman Mo Brooks, who was in Washington, D.C. for a series of scheduled floor votes, and Brandaun Dean, former mayor of Brighton, Alabama, sent video messages that were played for the audience.

A number of State Senate and House members are usually in attendance at our FOREPAC dinner, but a special session on prison issues required them to remain in Montgomery. Several local officials, including Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle, were among those at the event.

The dinner ended with our 2021 FOREPAC Raffle.

This year a draw-down event was held in which 1000 tickets were sold, and an electronic program randomly eliminated numbers until five winners were awarded \$100 gift cards, and a grand prize winner received \$500.

During the convention's second day, members heard annual business reports and listened to remarks from Jo Moore, the newly appointed Deputy Director of Administration of the Retirement Systems of Alabama. She shared her experiences at RSA and detailed the importance of providing stable, long-term benefits to the state and local government retirees and employees who participate in the Employees' Retirement System.

The President's Luncheon, sponsored by the Alabama Securities Commission, featured an awards ceremony (detailed on page 6) and wrapped up with our keynote speaker, Governor Kay Ivey, who took time away from the special session to travel to Huntsville for our meeting.

Our thanks go out to the sponsors who helped bring the rest of the events together, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Carr, Riggs and Ingram, ServisFirst and Hear in America.

GOV. IVEY THANKS MEMBERS FOR SERVICE

"The work that each of you have done on behalf of our state, undoubtedly you have had a significant impact, and your involvement here today shows your commitment to remaining involved," Ivey said. "I applaud you for that."





Norris Green, representative on the RSA Board of Control and newly appointed RSA Deputy Director Jo Moore listened to reports at the Annual Meeting on September 29th.



ARSEA/APEAL Board Members Cynthia Dillard representing District 19 and Pat Wise representing District 1 enjoyed visiting at the FOREPAC Reception



Etowah County Commissioner Johnny Grant and Public Safety Retiree Cecil McElvaine catch up at the FOREPAC Reception.

Samuel Greene attended the Opening Dinner with Madison County Commissioner Violet Edwards (District 6)

ARSEA/APEAL President Ken Mays

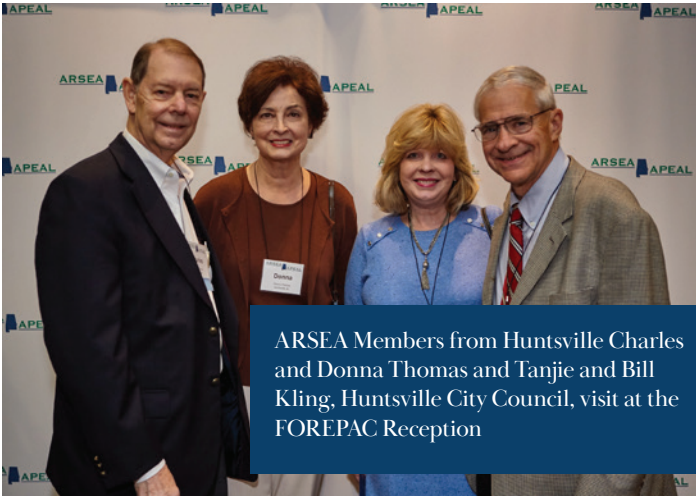


Katie Britt, candidate for U.S. Senate



Barry Mask was emcee for the FOREPAC Draw-Down Raffle held as part of the festivities at the Opening Dinner, pictured here with FOREPAC Board Member Tony Dozier.





ARSEA Members from Huntsville Charles and Donna Thomas and Tanjie and Bill Kling, Huntsville City Council, visit at the FOREPAC Reception



Past President Kathleen Holt and Executive Director Liane Kelly



Camillia Ratliff-Eatman, District 16 Representative on the ARSEA/APEAL Board James Coman, and Nancy Robertson all retired from Regional Councils of Government



Jo Hellmich of Foley (standing) pictured with FOREPAC DAC Tommy Langham of Bay Minette



President Ken Mays (left) pictured with prize winner Stan Skipworth



Jessica Taylor, candidate for U.S. Senate



Mike Gillespie gave the FOREPAC report at the Annual Meeting



Thomas Moore, ARSEA/APEAL Board member from District 9 visits with exhibitor SEIB Benefits Advisor Kerry Schlenker during the break



Mayor Kerry Underwood of Tusculum, Mayor Tommy Battle of Huntsville and Mayor Ralph Hellmich of Foley visited at the FOREPAC Reception



Executive Director Liane Kelly with Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle



Huntsville Utilities was represented by Jimmie Butler, Lisa Statum, Dr. Kris Brown, Erica Hobbs, Dr. Harry Hobbs attended the FOREPAC Reception



Lynda Blanchard, candidate for U.S. Senate, visited with Bob and Susan Childree at the Reception

The Past Presidents' Council met on September 29th. Attendees included (left to right back row) Peggy Grubbs (2016-17), Jerry Fielding (2020-21), Gene Brown (2017-18), Jim Fibbe (2006-07), Bob Childree (2018-19), Ronald Griffith (2011-12), (left to right front row) Kathleen Holt (2000-01), Jimmy Rowell (2012-2013), Jane Griffin (2014-15), Clyde Sellers (1997-98).



THE ARSEA FOUNDATION

The ARSEA Foundation has a mission to promote and financially support activities, projects and programs dedicated to improving the quality of life for older Alabamians. We proudly support worthy organizations such as the Alabama Department of Senior Services, Alabama Silver Haired Legislature, the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, and the UAB Center for Aging. **But in order to continue serving these important programs, we need your financial assistance.**

The ARSEA Foundation is a certified 501(c) (3) charitable organization. All of your donations are 100% tax deductible under IRS regulations. Monetary donations are acknowledged with a letter which can be used for tax purposes.

There are many ways to support the ARSEA Foundation, and we hope you will consider making a contribution in one of categories listed below:

General Donations – We appreciate any donation, no matter how big or small. Every contribution helps! The generosity of our members allows us to achieve our mission more effectively.

Silent Auction-Shop for Me – We will purchase items for the Annual Silent Auction held in December with your monetary donation or you may make an “in kind” donation of a unique or popular item such as electronics, home accessories, gourmet foods, power tools or Christmas themed items.

End of Year Giving – Federal law now permits a deduction for cash contributions made to charitable organizations for individuals who don’t itemize their federal income tax returns. Individuals can claim a deduction of up to \$300 and married couples filing together can claim up to \$600 in 2021.

In Remembrance – More families request donations to a favorite cause “in lieu of flowers” after a loved one passes. Flowers fade, but a donation will help someone who is living. Should you choose to donate in memory of someone, their family will receive a card notifying them of your gift. The monetary amount is not shared with the family.

THE
Foundation

Honor Someone – Donating in someone’s name is a unique and meaningful way to honor an extraordinary person or commemorate a special occasion. An honorarium is also a unique gift idea for the person that has everything or a simple “thank you” to someone special. The honoree will receive a card notifying him or her of your gift. The monetary amount is not shared with the honoree.

Plaza of Memories – Leave a forever legacy by purchasing an engraved brick in the “Plaza of Memories” as a permanent part of the landscape at our office complex in Montgomery. These bricks are a lasting memorial to honor those who have contributed to the growth and development of ARSEA/APEAL. The cost per brick is \$125.



*To make a donation please complete the form below and mail with a check to:
 The ARSEA Foundation, 450 South Union, Montgomery, AL 36104.
 For other payment options or for more information, please call 334-834-9116 or 800-844-7732.*

- General Donation \$ _____
- Silent Auction “Shop for Me” \$ _____
- End of Year Giving \$ _____
- *In Memory of _____ \$ _____
- *In Honor of _____ \$ _____
- *Plaza of Memories _____ \$ _____ 125.00

**An “Additional Information Needed Form” will be sent once we receive your donation.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____



ARSEA/APEAL
Christmas Open House
 and
Silent Auction

Wednesday, December 15, 2021
 Noon - 6:00 PM

450 South Union Street
 Montgomery, AL 36104

To receive an auction bid sheet,
 e-mail retire@arsea.org or call 334-834-9116

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AND SILENT AUCTION

The Annual Silent Auction held in Conjunction with our Christmas Open House is the ARSEA Foundation's major fundraiser each year.

Please join us on Wednesday, December 15th, from Noon until 6:00pm. Our Christmas Open House is the perfect opportunity to meet and mingle with other members and leaders from across the state. There will be goodies to nibble and wonderful items to bid on to help support the ARSEA Foundation.

A list of Silent Auction items will be available after the ADVANTAGE goes to press. Items that will be available for bid will include:

- Overnight stays at hotels and resorts in Alabama
- Tickets to popular destinations
- Framed and unframed artwork
- Hand crafted items
- Christmas/Holiday décor
- Useful appliances/tools/electronics

You may make a monetary or an "in kind" donation to the auction. If donating to the auction, please do so by December 13th. Refer to the ARSEA Foundation article on page 13 for more information.

If you are unable to attend in person, bid sheets and rules for proxy bidding will be available in the coming weeks before the event. When you make a proxy bid, you are designating a maximum amount that you would be willing to bid on an item and you authorize ARSEA staff members to bid on your behalf. To receive a bid sheet, call us at 334-834-9116, 800-844-7732 or e-mail retire@arsea.org. You may also follow us on our Facebook page @ARSEAAPEAL.

Winners who are not present will be notified beginning December 16, 2021, by email or phone call.

BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS

It is time once again to solicit nominations from members for service on the ARSEA Board of Directors.

"It's important to take an active role in this selection process by nominating qualified members that will best represent your interests," President Ken Mays stated.

All potential candidates must be principal members in good standing. Vice Presidents must reside in the regions they represent and district board members are required to live within the districts they represent. Please refer to the map.

The Nomination and Elections Committee will consider a number of variables in selecting candidates for the board including demonstrated leadership ability and the capacity to contribute to ARSEA/APEAL's overall goals and purposes.

If you are interested in serving on the ARSEA/APEAL Board or if you have someone else in mind, please contact Sara Phillips at sphillips@arsea.org or (334) 834.9116 or (800) 844.7732. We will provide information regarding the roles of board members and officers as well as terms, eligibility and nomination procedures.

All nominations must be received by noon on December 10, 2021.

The terms of office will begin July 1, 2022.

President Elect - 3-year term

Vice President North - 2-year term

Vice President South Central - 2-year term

District 1 – Pat Wise eligible for re-nomination

District 2 – Ella Jones eligible for re-nomination

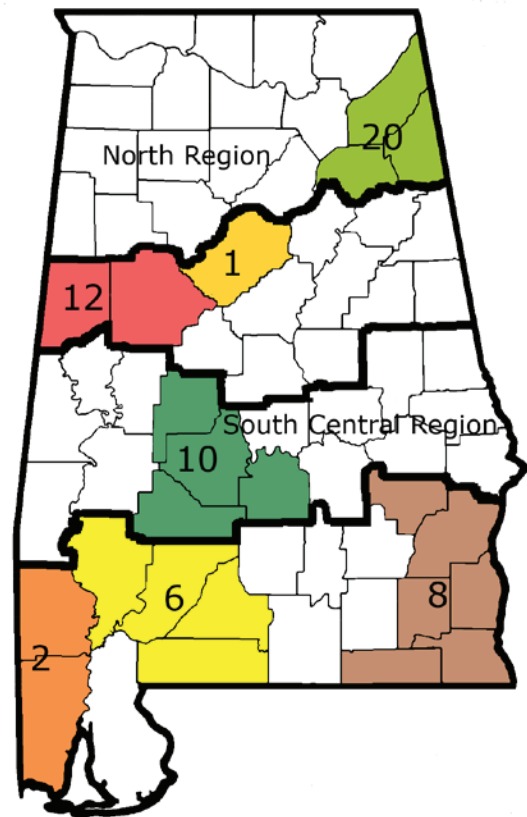
District 6 – Rebekah Cornelison eligible for re-nomination

District 8 - Open

District 10 – Jackie Peake eligible for re-nomination

District 12 - Open

District 20 – Open



HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING YOUR WEEKLY UPDATE E-MAILS?

*Send us your contact information today. Complete this form and mail it to us at:
ARSEA, 450 South Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36104*

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



THE FOUNDATION
450 SOUTH UNION STREET
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104

Nonprofit
PRST STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit no. 342
Montgomery, AL



BENEFITS STILL FIT?

CONSIDER ADDITIONAL INSURANCE COVERAGE

As your life changes, consider some of these benefits and discounts from **ARSEA/APEAL & AMBA**:

- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long Term Care & Home Health Care Insurance
- Medical Air Services Association (MASA)
- Cancer, Heart & Stroke, Accident, & Disability Insurances
- Medicare Solutions
- Final Expenses Whole Life & Guaranteed Acceptance Life Insurance
- Annuity
- Start Hearing, Inc.
- Hospital Stay Coverage
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

Learn More: **1-877-556-4582**

myambabenefits.info/arsea

ARSEA/APEAL - Alabama Retired State Employees' Association/ Alabama Public Employees' Advocacy League

