

# STATE ENGINEERING ASSOCIATION



# SEA View

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February/March 2008

**From the  
President**

## Cabin Fever



Does anyone else feel like this has been a particularly long, tough winter? In the Madison area, where I live, we have had record snowfall this season. And, we've had a lot of cold too. Still, we know that the days are getting longer. Spring will eventually come.

We also know that the November elections will finally come and we can put this -- what seems like endless -- political campaign session behind us. Until then, we must listen to candidates make promises, many of which we know will not come true even if the person making them is elected.

Maybe my perceptions are different now, but I don't remember politics being so divisive in the past. There was a time when it seemed that the welfare of the country or the state was what mattered. Now, all that seems important is that some economic interest can get its way by donating large sums to campaigns. Add dirty politics to death and taxes as a certainty in life.

I don't know if public financing of elections is the answer but it seems clear that some method of campaign finance reform is needed. Unfortunately, even with all the talk by both political parties, it never seems to happen. In the meantime, contractors get rich by charging double or triple what it should cost

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*There was a time in politics when it seemed that the welfare of the country or the state was what mattered. Now, all that seems important is that some economic interest can get its way by donating large sums to campaigns.*

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for services. And private donations for campaigns mysteriously appear. Meanwhile, politicians claim that they are shrinking the size of government but total expenditures keep going up.

Winter may end, but I'm not as optimistic that these dirty politics will.

Yet, for some reason, we tolerate this situation. Is it because we feel so powerless to stop this trend? Is there any thing we can do about it? Perhaps we can start by attending May 7 SEA Day (our political action event) and telling those who represent us that we're not going to take it anymore.

While politics may be one thing we've heard we should never speak of with family and friends, dirty politics is not an issue that is attributable to one political party or the other. Perhaps we can start meaningfully discussing this underlying issue even knowing our views and perspectives on other public policies may be different. It is another broken component of the whole system.

### **Bargaining Still Slow**

Anyone who wants a speedy, fair result on our next contract will probably be getting frustrated. But the process can't be rushed. And, here's a surprise: The state is in hard economic times! That's one perennial claim by which you could mark your calendars. Contract bargaining time always seems to coincide with pronouncements about budget deficits.

**Somebody has to pay the bills. Unfortunately, everyone is looking at somebody else -- and predictably, public employees always seem so very visible.**

There should be no wondering why we have deficits. Advocates of zero taxation on businesses think we should allow continued loopholes for firms that set up phony out-of-state addresses to avoid paying taxes on their in-state profits. But the real issue is the same as it is for anyone who's responsible for their family finances. Somebody has to pay the bills. Unfortunately, everyone is looking at somebody else -- and predictably, public employees always seem so very visible.

### **SEA Leadership Training**

Don't forget SEA leader training day on Saturday, March 29 in Stevens Point. We will have discussions on grievance processing and duties of local Section presidents and treasurers. If you have an interest in getting involved in a grass roots organization that advocates for your professional interests, this is an excellent chance. SEA will pay your travel expenses.

Keep up the good work you all do. Your victories can bring fulfillment, and new opportunities. The defeats bring wisdom, strength, determination, and more new opportunities. And so we build on whatever life throws at us.

Respectfully,  
Tom Mugan



## **AN OPEN LETTER FROM A COLLEAGUE**

### **Please get involved**

Dear SEA,

I would like to invite you to help yourselves, by getting involved. For too long many of us have complained about the inequities in our contracts. Many members feel shafted and unappreciated, and there are good reasons to feel that way. What are you going to do about it?

Recently I attended a bargaining session because I wanted to see for myself what was going on. I wondered how I was being represented. It was plain to see that our bargaining team works very hard for all of us. I listened intently as OSER presented what they called an offer. At one point they reasoned that PDT should be taken away in order to boost the morale of other organizations that work side by side with us.

As an observer I could only sit in disgust. I would have liked to talk right then about my morale. I am now determined to do what I can to get involved. Ten specialists at one time recently went to an open door session with management to discuss concerns. Everyone in every classification should do the same all across the state by meeting with every member of management at every opportunity. Not just once but repeatedly and by different members every time.

We are all being represented, but know that management has its own agenda. Make sure that when the bargaining team brings your concerns to the table that they are taken seriously. Attend SEA DAY and go to open door sessions with management. They need to be bothered. When everyone starts bothering, they will have a problem. When they have a problem, they will care about fixing it.

Hope to see you on the hill,

A fellow member



## Legislative Update

By Gretchen Wheat  
Second Vice President

### SEA Day - May 7, 2008

SEA Day this year will be held later than usual, because the legislative calendar does not have sessions scheduled March 13 to May 6. While the Legislature may convene in April for budget repair, no such sessions are yet scheduled, and so the decision was made to move SEA Day to Wednesday, May 7. This date falls in a limited-business legislative floor period scheduled for May 6-8.

In addition to promoting fair wages and workplace policies, SEA continues to focus on these important issues: campaign finance, election reform, and objective analysis and selection of outsourcing. I believe these issues are at the root of problems in recruitment and retention of qualified employees. SEA's positions on these issues are non-partisan. Of course, each SEA member has his or her own opinion and experiences to share, and no SEA member is asked to convey any message they do not themselves believe in. SEA members are encouraged to document and share their personal experiences. Submissions can be made to your section president or to me directly ([gretchenjake1@netzero.net](mailto:gretchenjake1@netzero.net)).

Please begin making arrangement within your section by letting your president know if you will attend and if you will make an appointment with your state senator and representative (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us>). May 7 could be busy for legislators, so contact them soon. Beginning the day, SEA will meet as a group from 9 a.m. to approximately 10 am, so try to make your appointments for 10:15 a.m. or later. Join your fellow SEA members for SEA Day!

**Continuing education for professional license holders:** Companion bills in the Senate and Assembly moved forward and have been signed by the governor as Act 47. This legislation was requested by the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing (DRL) and provides the DRL with authority to create rules.

No continuing-education requirements are expected to apply to license renewals in 2008. It is not presently known whether continuing education will be addressed for all professional licenses in one rule-making, or on a phased basis. But, it is likely DRL will address licenses most commonly held by SEA members. SEA will continue to monitor rule development.

*State budget crisis: Will budget repair outsource economic development?* Most state employees are aware of the "austerity" message relayed by management, as handed down from DOA and the governor's office. Republican leaders have called on the governor to prepare a budget repair bill. As a relative bystander, it seems to me budget repair is inevitable. But as of this writing the governor has not submitted a budget repair bill.

The end reason for the budget crisis is that tax collections did not increase as planned. I'm sure the hope is collections will catch up in the near future, and that -- in conjunction with reduced operating costs -- the state's financial outlook will improve. But you can expect a very financially difficult period over the next 18 months. Most agencies appear to have instituted a hiring freeze for non-essential positions, and are expected to minimize travel and training costs. That doesn't sound like a change to me, since from my perspective these policies have been implemented for the past 10 years.

Yet, one cost that the state has not done enough to corral involves out-sourcing contracts. Transportation construction contracts in particular are a good place to look for more savings. SEA's position on this is not that



contracting out a project is never a good idea, but that the tremendous move to out-sourcing has bulged the budget like nothing else in Wisconsin history. Ask your legislators what they will do about it.

Senate Majority Leader Russell Decker recently announced an economic development plan (1/30/08, <http://www.wispolitics.com/index.iml?Article=116945>), including “investment in our roads and bridges.” The plan would provide a \$50 million increase in funds for the State Highway Rehabilitation Program and Major Highway Development Program. Part of the package is approval by the state for the KRM commuter line from Milwaukee to Kenosha. State approval and funding are needed to leverage federal funds for the project.

New state revenue would come from eliminating the so-called Las Vegas Loophole. Corporations shield their Wisconsin income from taxes by setting up dummy subsidiaries in states like Nevada that don’t collect corporate income taxes. The corporations then transfer profits from Wisconsin to the dummy operations. Ending the loophole could save the state \$90 million a year. The loophole has already been closed by most neighboring states. Said Decker, “Our plan rewards the good Wisconsin companies that have been playing by the rules.”

I haven’t read how Republican leaders have reacted to the plan, and other economic plans may be offered. Let’s hope these plans can come together for the benefit of Wisconsin’s economy and people.

These issues will likely be debated in the general-business floor period, running through March 13. Contact your legislators to let them know a sufficient number of qualified state employees are needed to properly oversee contracts.

Beyond that, there is much money to be saved by having more work done directly by state employees. Excess costs and quality problems tend to occur without proper oversight. Also, conflict of interest exists when one consultant oversees another, and then the consultants’ roles are reversed for other projects. That is not acceptable.

## RETIREMENT FAQs

### HOW TO CHOOSE WISE RETIREMENT DATE

by MEL SENSENBRENNER

*This occasional column answers frequent questions that members have about their retirement. Submit your question to the SEA office or to [sea\\_wis@yahoo.com](mailto:sea_wis@yahoo.com) and we’ll get them to Mel for his expert commentary.*

Follow these steps to maximize your benefits when selecting your WRS retirement date before and after you meet with an ETF retirement counselor:

- Be sure to review ETF’s WRS booklet (printed or on website) about the retirement system.
- Obtain your number of years of service based on your official seniority date including any creditable military service. Note the month and day of your adjusted seniority star date.

The number of years of service will determine your annuity under the WRS formula method (including a fraction of a year).

Your official number of full years of service will also determine the value of your sick leave credit bank for health insurance premiums during retirement.

- Note Appendix D of the SEA contract book for total number of hours.

**After your counseling session with ETF, you will have 60 days to lock in your retirement date (month, day and year).**



## Brain drain threatens WV transportation funds **State staffing shortage upsets feds**

A January letter from the Federal Highway Administration says the West Virginia Department of Transportation's substantial federal highway project funding could be jeopardized by loss of staff knowledge and experience.

"For many years, the West Virginia Department of Transportation and FHWA have worked together in partnership to ensure that highway projects are planned, designed, construction and maintained in a fully satisfactory manner," the letter says. "However, we believe that a recent trend within the WVDOT potentially jeopardizes this ability to continue to satisfactorily deliver the program."

The letter cites a federal regulation requiring states to "be responsible for ensuring that such projects receive adequate supervision and inspection to ensure that projects are completed in conformance with approved plans and specifications."

According to a news story in the Charleston Gazette, the letter said federal reviews in recent years "have noted a significant and substantial loss of knowledge and experience in WVDOT due to retirements and/or resignations. This problem is compounded by the DOT's inability to attract, replace or retain staff with similar experience in a timely manner."

A WVDOT official said the problem has been growing over a number of years, as baby boomers retire. The agency has tried to hire back some retirees as temporary workers and is seeking to raise salaries to "meet competitive standards." An estimated 70 percent of WVDOT's engineers will become eligible for retirement over the next five years.

A WVDOT representative said the civil engineering profession is suffering from too few students entering the field. That's why the North Carolina DOT "will actually hire someone with either CADD skills or engineering skills for technician positions in design, with the expectation they can be trained in the other skill," the representative said. WVDOT, like DOTs in Wisconsin and elsewhere, increasingly relies on out-sourcing public work to private contractors.

Gordon Simmons, chief steward for the West Virginia Public Workers Union/UE Local 170, told the Gazette newspaper that substandard pay was compounded by a state policy "that positions are intentionally left unfilled." He called that **"privatization by stealth."**

The state is "trying to privatize state highway operations by strangling the work force, by not filling vacant positions," Simmons said. "Then they have to turn to private contractors, who cost a lot more than competent people on the state payroll doing the same work."



**NEWS from the SECTIONS: Superior elects new officers**

In January the Superior Section held its elections for local officers. After all ballots were counted the results were: Trustees - Diane Slick and Phyliss Holmbeck; Treasurer - Matt Dickenson; Vice President - Brendan Dirkes; President - Brian Mattson .... DNR Section: The DNR Section will choose new officers and trustees at its annual meeting 4 p.m. April 22 at the Essen Haus in Madison .... Green Bay Section: Members have elected Tony Allard, president and P.F. O'Connor, trustee. The section thanks Ken Hanzel for his past service as trustee .... Madison Section: The annual meeting will be March 13 at the Prime Quarter Steak House in Madison.

**Retirement and Health Insurance Report**

by Melvin B. Sensenbrenner SEA Retirement & Health Insurance Representative

**STATE OF WISCONSIN INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING – Feb. 13, 2008**

SWIB Performance – January 31, 2008

	<u>Nov. 30, 2007</u>	<u>Dec. 31, 2007</u>	<u>Jan. 31, 2008</u>
Core Fund:	+9.3%	+8.8%	-3.7% (B.M. -3.7%)
Variable:	+9.5%	+5.6%	-6.5% (B.M. -6.7%)
Core Fund:	81.315B	80.863B	77.871B
Variable:	7.159B	7.070B	6.610B
	\$88.474B	87.933B	84.481B

Dave Stella, Secretary of ETF, gave SWIB his estimated credits for active employees in the WRS and the retirees estimated dividends for 2007 effective May 1, 2008.

Active’s Core Fund Credit	+13.1%
Active’s Variable Fund Credit	+6.0%
Annuitant’s Dividend Core Fund	+6.0%
Annuitant’s Dividend Variable Fund	0.0%

Human Resources Director Ledell Zellers next reported on covering compensation increases, recruitment, and succession planning. She discussed staff salary increases, promotions and progression adjustments. Forty staff progression and promotions have been made. The board members are concerned about staff compensation to fill vacancies and retain present staff.

David Villa, Chief Investment Officer, has begun the process of developing internal index fund investments. In 2007, he initiated the index manager position search which continued with interviews in February 2008. In April, the new index manager starts work. In July and August, the manager will start bringing external index funds back internally with \$1 - \$2 billion, and potentially \$10 - \$12 billion by the end of 2009.



Because of excellent performance, private equity funds are being increased from \$75 million to \$400 million. The real estate equity also performed above benchmarks in 2007, and they are getting good offers on their Michigan Avenue holding in Chicago.

Jane Hamblin, Chief Legal Counsel, provided the annually required Fiduciary Responsibility and Duty Briefing to all SWIB Board members and SWIB staff to end the Board Meeting.

The next SWIB meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2008.

### **GROUP INSURANCE BOARD MEETING – FEB. 12, 2008**

The board elected officers. The same officers were chosen, as follows:

Chair:	Steve Frankel
Vice-Chair:	Cindy O'Donnell
Secretary:	Esther Olson

The second item was Bill Kox's report on proposed changes to Guidelines for Uniform Health Care Benefits and the time line for the review and approval by the board. In page 2 of the report, Kox has listed the possible areas in the guidelines that may need revisions.

Marty Beil proposed that the GIB do something about health care in the far northwest part of the state before the Legislature changes laws and takes control away from the ETF. I have provided a copy of the above Kox memo to all the SEA Board members for your review and comment.

Tom Korpady reported on the Navitus Drug Program, which was over 99.3% effective and doing very well.

The GIB then went into closed sessions to discuss (1) Re-bid of the long-term disability insurance and income continuation insurance contract and (2) the Wisconsin Physicians Service contract bid.

The next Group Insurance Board meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2008.

### **JOINT MEETING OF WCOA AND ETF ANNUITANT ROUND TABLE – FEB. 5, 2008**

The new director of ETF Communications and Legislation, Matt Stohr, was introduced by Sari King.

The next item was the SWIB report by Sandy Drew and Bill McCorkle, Large-Cap Portfolio Manager and Internally Managed Domestic Equities Manager, respectively. McCorkle presented a detailed report with graphs showing what has happened from the 1980s through January 2008 in various areas of the stock market along with SWIB performance for 2007, as I have included in SWIB articles in SEA View issues.

Sandy Drew gave us an update on legislative changes for SWIB: the nine-position increase to support the SWIB modernization to increase internal fund investments. There will be another round of position increases submitted to the Finance Committee in June 2008.

SWIB's proposed changes to investment restrictions, A.B. 623, was passed out of committee on a 10-0 vote. The Senate Joint Committee was to take it up on February 13, 2008.



It was also noted that sub-prime mortgages make up 12% of the market, approximately \$500 billion.

The next presentation was by Matt Stohr of ETF who replaced Bob Conlin as the Communications and Legislative Director on Jan. 14. He previously was the lobbyist for the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Matt Stohr gave the group a five page report on the following topics covered by LRB 3211/6. This bill draft dated Feb. 5, 2008 will make the following changes to the operation and administration of the WRS:

- Definition of Internal Revenue Code
- Appeals to the Group Insurance Board
- Distribution of Act 11 credits for employers
- Unfunded accrued actuarial liability (UAAL)
- Interest on refunds
- Interest on moneys owed to department
- Beneficiaries
- Accelerated annuity
- Life insurance
- Abandonment of life insurance benefits
- Death benefits
- Disability income verification
- Amortization period
- Attachment of benefits for tax liabilities
- Waiver of WRS benefits

Stohr also mentioned that this legislative session will end March 13, 2008, and they only passed 50 bills in this two year session.

The next presentation was by Roy Raush, an ETF retirement counselor from the Madison and Waukesha offices. He reviewed the list of topics covered by the counselors before and during the counseling sessions:

1. Background check of data to be sure it is correct
2. What your income average is
3. Choosing an annuity option (60 days); then you are locked in. Additional contributions will be reviewed.
4. Direct Deposit vs. mailed check
5. Tax withholding, both State and Federal
6. Choosing your date of retirement
7. Reviewing your ETF life insurance and ETF health insurance (sick leave conversion)

Next on the agenda was Jeffrey Hanson from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue reviewing the Federal Alternative Minimum Tax.

Then, Bill Ford from the Legislative Council presented and provided copies of the 2006 Comparative Study of the 85 Major Public Employee Retirement Systems. Anyone interested can review the document on the Legislative Council website. This document provides the best information on Public Retirement Systems and was developed by Blair Testin, the State of Wisconsin's first Retirement Research Director back in the late 1970s.



The WRS is the only retirement system that provides dividends that protects the employers and reduces their contribution rates.

The next Round Table is scheduled for May 6.

### **WISCONSIN COALITION OF ANNUITANTS (WCOA) MEETING – Jan. 16, 2008**

The meeting consisted of election of officers as follows: Chair: Ed Kehl (one more year); Secretary: Dick Kratz; Treasurer: Mike Held.

Kehl presented the 2007 financial statement and turned the books over to new treasurer Held. Other items discussed:

- WREA supplemental dental insurance for any retirees of WRS. If you become a member of WREA, they will waive the membership fee.
- Who should WCOA present the Blair Testin award to at the Annual WCOA Conference in May 2008. Bill Ford was recommended.
- Matt Stohr has been hired by ETF to replace Bob Conlin as the Legislation and Communications Director at ETF. He came from the Wisconsin Counties Association.
- Dues notices will be sent out by the treasurer.

The next WCOA meeting was a joint meeting with the ETF Annuitant Round Table on Feb. 5, covered above.

## February 16, 2008 Board Meeting Summary

Meeting held at East Towne Suites, Madison  
By Duane Hubeler, Secretary

**Attendance:**

**Executive Board:** Tom Mugan – President, Leroy Stublaski – First Vice President, Gretchen Wheat – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Duane Hubeler – Secretary, John Bolka - Treasurer

**Board Members:**

Tom Peronto, Wisconsin Rapids President  
Dawn Marshall, Southeast President  
Tony Allard, Green Bay President  
Sandy Anderson, Central Office President  
Jeremy Tomesh, La Crosse President  
John Lund, Rhinelander President

Mohamad Hayek, Eau Claire President  
Larry Legro, State Agencies President  
Brian Mattson, Superior President  
Khader Abu al-eis, Madison President  
Bob Schaefer, DNR Madison President

**Specialists:**

Willie Haus, Attorney  
Mel Sensenbrenner and Dan Joyce, Health & Retirement

Sandy Henke, SEA Office  
George Mickelson, Compensation Chair



Ron Legro, Communications Specialist

Tim Hanley, Demands Formulation Chair

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**Meeting Begins:**

Tom Mugan called meeting to order at 8:39 am. Introductions were made. Sandy Henke stated that she needs a roster of attendees for the March 29 President, Treasurer and Grievance Training in Stevens Point. She needs the total number attending and the number of overnight rooms by Feb. 28.

**Approvals:**

The Jan. 12, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed. One change was made. Under the SE section items, it was noted that there is no election meeting scheduled in March. Gretchen Wheat moved to accept the minutes with the correction. Jeremy Tomesh seconded. Motion carried. The Correspondence Report was reviewed. Tom Mugan accepted the Correspondence Report.

**Legislative Report:** *By Gretchen Wheat*

The current legislative session ends on March 13 and the state will probably need a budget repair bill. The state could end up paying more to borrow money due to the national credit crisis. This could have an effect on state budgets. There is another limited session scheduled for May 6-8. After considerable discussion, May 7 was chosen as this year's SEA Day. We'll do a special mailing of the newsletter. Articles will be due to Ron Legro and Gretchen by the end of March.

**Grievance Report:** *By Leroy Stublaski*

Note: P-xxx indicates personal grievance  
A-xxx indicates an Association grievance

- A-307 (filed 5/3/99) – DOT D2 – Denied work time to take PE exam.
- A-351 (filed 7/19/01) – DOT D4 – RLS exam reimbursement. Consolidated with others.
- A-361 (filed 10/30/01) and A-362 (filed 10/31/01) – DOT D1 and D2 – Assignment of scheduled overtime. Arbitration pending (Date selection).
- A-369 (filed 1/2/02) – DNR Water – Add-on as part of year-end leave cash out option. Arbitration pending.
- A-378 (filed 8/14/02) – DOT D1 - Not being paid appropriate mileage rate. Filed at Step 4.
- A-394 (filed 8/1/03) – DOT D1 – Discipline Reassignment. Filed at Step 4.
- A-395 (filed 5/3/03) – DNR NER – PE Exam Reimbursement. Consolidated with others.
- A-402 (filed 3/25/04) – DOT-DTID – Discipline without just cause. Filed at Step 4.
- A-405 (filed 4/5/04) – DOT D5 – PE Exam and licensing fee reimbursement. Consolidated with others.
- A-410 (filed 6/29/04) – DNR Water – Granting of Restoration Rights. Filed at Step 4.
- P-414 (filed 11/9/04) – DOT D2 – Administrative Leave/Discrimination. Filed at Step 4.
- P-415 (filed 11/17/04) – DOT D2 – Administrative Leave/Discrimination. Filed at Step 4.
- A-419 (filed 12/23/04) – DNR Water – Add-on is part of year end cash out option. Filed at Step 4. Consolidated with A-369.
- A-420 (filed 1/27/05) – DOT – Turndown Mileage Rate. Filed at Step 4.
- P-421 (filed 2/09/05) – DOT D2– Administrative Leave/Discrimination. Moved to Step 4.
- P-422 (filed 2/09/05) – DOT D2– Administrative Leave/Discrimination. Filed at Step 4.
- P-424 (filed 3/18/05) – DOT D2– Demotion without cause. Moved to Step 4.
- P-425 (filed 4/14/05) – DOT D2– Mental Torture/Investigation Meeting. Filed at Step 4. (Meeting 5/4/05).
- P-426 (filed 5-16-05) – DOT D2 – Suspension w/o Just Cause. Filed at Step 4.
- P-427 (filed 7-27-05) – DOT D2 – Termination w/o Just Cause. Filed at Step 3.
- A-430 (filed 4-27-05) – DOT D5 – PE Exam Reimbursement. Consolidated with others.



- A-431 (filed 4-27-05) – DOT D5 – PE Exam and Licensing Fee Reimbursement. Consolidated with others.  
A-432 (filed 4-27-05) – DOT D5 – PE Exam and Licensing Fee Reimbursement. Consolidated with others.  
A-436 (filed 11-18-05) – PE Exam and licensing fee reimbursement. – Consolidated with others.  
A-439 (filed 11-29-05) – DNR - Extra Mileage. Filed at Step 4.  
A-440 (filed 11-09-05) – DOT D1 - Lunch Money. Filed at Step 4.  
A-444 (filed 3-14-06) – DOT D2 – Individual Bargaining. Filed at Step 4.  
A-446 (filed 2-14-06) – DOT SW – PE exam and licensing fee reimbursement. Consolidated with others.  
A-447 (filed 3/27/06) – DOT NCR – Fleet vehicle assignment & utilization. Filed at Step 4.  
A-448 (filed 5/12/06) – DOT NCR – HAM used on current state employee in promotion. Filed at Step 4.  
A-451 (filed 7/10/06) – DOT NWR EC – Discipline w/o just cause. Filed at Step 4.  
A-453 (filed 8/18/06) – DOT NER - PE Exam and licensing fee reimbursement. Waived to Step 3.  
A-455 (filed 10/27/06) – DHFS-Reimbursement of surcharge for over 2000 miles. Filed at Step 4.  
A-456 (filed 9/13/06) – DOT NER - PE Exam and licensing fee reimbursement. Waived to Step 3.  
A-460 (filed 12/12/06) – DOT NWR EC - Discipline w/o just cause. Moved to Step 4.  
A-463 (filed 4/18/07) – DOT NER – PE for CE-Adv positions. Filed at Step 4.  
A-464 (filed 6/5/07) – UW - Termination without just cause. Filed at Step 3.  
A-465 (filed 8/27/07) – DHFS - Transfer opportunity did not follow contract. Filed at Step 3.  
A-467 (filed 7/30/07) - DOT NWR Eau Claire - Termination w/o just cause. Filed at Step 3.  
A-469 (filed 8/20/07) – DOT NER – Mileage reimbursement rates. Filed at Step 2.  
A-472 (filed 12/04/07) – DOT NCR – Denied standby pay for 25-hour shift. Moved to Step 3.  
A-473 (filed 1/8/08) – DOT NCR – Denied 2 hours call-back time. Filed at Step 1.  
A-475 (filed 2/7/08) – DOT SE – Involuntary reassignment. Filed at Step 3.

Specific issues discussed at this meeting:

For A-463, we need to know from section presidents how many people are affected by this DOT policy.

Attorney Haus has gotten a lot of documentation to sift through for A-464.

A-465 was settled in our favor and the Board voted to end it.

A-451, A-460 and A-467 will be combined, since they all involve a termination. Attorney Haus will give us his recommendation at the next Board Meeting.

For A-472, the Board voted to send it to Step 4 and to request the umpire process.

**Bargaining:** *By Tim Hanley & George Mickelson*

Tom Mugan reported that we have two bargaining dates reserved. They are Feb. 22 and 29. No other bargaining unit has reached an agreement yet, although a few say they are close. There are no details on what those other offers have been. We are currently working on economics. We have made our first counter-offer to the state's initial proposal but have not heard a response. George Mickelson made a presentation on HAM (Hired Above Minimum) issues and current private sector market conditions.

**Health and Retirement Report:** *By Mel Sensenbrenner*

Mel introduced Dan Joyce to the Board and proposed to begin splitting duties with Dan. Dan is a recently-retired engineer from the DNR section. A recent audit of state pension systems gave a great review to Wisconsin's system because it is very well run and has almost 100% funding for its foreseeable liabilities. Mel distributed a memo that contains talking points for the Group Insurance Board to discuss possible changes to the Uniform Health Benefits for 2009. Mel briefly discussed AB 801 which would provide for direct payment of health insurance premiums out of ETF pension funds. If passed, this bill would put a huge strain on ETF staff and resources. A motion was made by Schaeffer, with a second by Hayek to pay for membership in the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants (WCOA) for 2008. Motion carried.



**Communication Report:** *By Ron Legro*

Ron has found an outside consultant who should be able to perform an analysis on the effects of Act 89. Ron will write up a work proposal for the consultant to follow. Section presidents have to discuss examples of wasteful outsourcing with their management. These examples have to be documented and need a human face. We need anecdotes as well as numbers of tax dollars wasted.

**By-laws Changes**

Due to the length of the meeting, the By-laws discussion was postponed.

**Miscellaneous Items/Updates**

Grievance training, along with training for section presidents and treasurers is scheduled for Saturday, March 29 at the Ramada Inn (formerly Country Springs Motel) in Stevens Point. The training will run approximately from 9:00 until 3:00. Leroy Stublaski will send an agenda to section presidents.

A motion was made by Schaeffer with a second by Wheat to pay Tim Hanley's expenses to attend a labor-management meeting at DOT in Madison.

**Section Reports:**

*Madison* — Two new engineers have been hired. The annual meeting will be March 13 at the Prime Quarter Steak House in Madison. There are concerns about bargaining.

*Southeast* — Specialists are concerned that they are not being replaced or promoted. A labor-management meeting was held in early February. There are issues with discipline and due process.

*Green Bay* — There will be a section meeting with elections on February 27th at the Stadium View. Members have concerns over HAM hires in the progression series. There are continuing concerns over the continuing education for PE's and the PE policy for CE-Adv positions.

*Wisconsin Rapids* — There is one new SEA member due to a reclass. There was a recent labor-management meeting. There are still concerns over vehicle assignments and the fate of the CADD Specialists.

*La Crosse* — Members are concerned about the cost of continuing education for PE's.

*Eau Claire* — The TSS Chief and PDS Chief were flip-flopped.

*Rhineland* — John Lund attended a labor-management workshop on February 22. There will be a meeting in April with elections.

*Superior* — A few members are upset about the new continuing education requirement for PE's.

*Central Office/PSC* — A section meeting was held and a new VP and Secretary/Treasurer were elected.

*DNR* — There will be an annual section meeting on April 22 with elections. There is a meeting scheduled for February with the Secretary's Office on labor/management issues. There is a new process for getting reimbursement for safety shoes.

*State Agencies* — DHFS is hiring two new people in the radiation program. There are two new hires at the Department of Commerce and UW.

**Financial & Membership Reports:** *By John Bolka*

John moved to accept the January, 2008 Membership Report. Anderson seconded. Motion carried.

John moved to accept the January, 2008 Treasurer's Report. Hayek seconded. Motion carried.

John submitted the Board Meeting Vouchers and moved for approval to pay them. Schaeffer seconded. Motion carried.

07-136 => 07-152	\$1586.11
M-055 => M-067	<u>\$2800.00</u>
	\$4386.11

**New Business:** No new business was brought forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm. The next Board Meeting will be on March 15, 2008, in Madison.

## PUZZLING PUZZLER: Path to the White House



The U.S. Constitution lists four requirements for anyone seeking to become president. The candidate must be at least 35 years of age, must have been born in the United States, and must have lived in this country for at least 14 years. What is the fourth requirement?

*Email your answer to our contest address: [puzzlesea@yahoo.com](mailto:puzzlesea@yahoo.com). The answer and name of the first person who came up with the correct answer will be in next month's SEA View.*

**Last issue:** At the headquarters of the Topeka, Toledo & Tomah Railroad, chief engineer Big John McBob was telling a tale to his fellows. "We blew a cylinder head an hour after moving out. We were only able to keep pulling freight at 60 percent of our beginning speed -- which, of course, is why we got in two hours late." Chief McBob added: "If the engine had malfunctioned 50 miles later into our run, we'd have arrived 40 minutes sooner." Your mission: Calculate the distance in miles between stations.

**Solution:** If the train takes  $x$  minutes to cover 50 miles then its full speed would be  $50/x$  miles per hour and its speed after blowing one of the cylinders would be  $50/(x+40)$  miles per hour. Therefore,  $(3/5)$  of  $(50/x) = 50/(x+40)$  gives  $X=60$  minutes or one hour; i.e. the full speed of the train was 50 miles per hour and its three-fifths speed was 30 miles per hour. Suppose, the train needed to cover  $y$  miles when the cylinder blew. Then,  $\{(y/50)+2\}$  hour =  $y/30$  hour gives  $y=150$  miles. Since the train already had covered 50 miles at full speed before the cylinder blew, the run between the stations was  $50+150=200$  miles.

Congratulations to **Thomas E. Palionis, Air Management Engineer with the DNR in Madison**, for being the first of several contributors to get the right answer. In fact, Thomas was so fast out of the gate that here at SEA View our, ah, *train* of thought was that he must have considerable experience working with Einstein's original relativity thought experiments involving trains. Either that, or Thomas owns a DeLorean sports car with optional time-travel flux capacitor.



**WANTED: Your comments, calendar items**

What's going on in your area? Are members in your section doing great things, either at work or off hours? What's going on in your neck of state government? SEA View readers want to know. **Share your ideas, opinions and suggestions. SEA View will print guest columns from members as space allows.** We're also interested in your feedback and suggestions. How are we doing? Got a take on an issue of interest to members in general? Email [sea\\_wis@yahoo.com](mailto:sea_wis@yahoo.com).



***Moving?***

Since we no longer send many copies of SEA View through the mail, it is difficult to track members who have moved. If you have a new address, please contact the SEA office so we can continue to send you mailings.