



## Note from Martha Deahl, President, NRLN Arizona Chapter

The message below was emailed to former Telephone Retirees Association of Arizona members in mid-February 2013. Because it is recognized that not all TRA-AZ former members have email addresses the message is being published in this first issue of the NRLN Arizona Chapter Newsletter.

### **Announcing Formation of NRLN Arizona Chapter**

The Board of the Telephone Retiree Association of Arizona (TRA-AZ) currently part of the Association of US West Retirees (AUSWR) ceased operations on December 31, 2012 and has chosen to dissolve by June 30, 2013. AUSWR has had a dual approach to being an advocate for retirees. One was litigation against company actions harmful to retirees. The other has been working with the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) to get legislation enacted to protect retirees' interests. A group of current TRA-AZ Board members and advisors (Martha Deahl, Susan Olson, Ken and Jen Gornall, and Roger Sanger) have volunteered to start the NRLN Arizona Chapter. These leaders have been very active in the TRA-AZ organization for many years and are familiar with the past issues dealing with US WEST, Qwest, and CenturyLink.

Today, we are concerned about what has happened to some retirees of Verizon and how it may affect all retirees in the future. If you are not aware, Verizon sold some of its retirees' pension fund for Prudential annuities. Therefore, the retirees moved to Prudential annuities without their permission and lost their Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) protections for their pension benefits. What Verizon and also General Motors have done is part of a bigger scheme being sold by investment companies like Prudential. This scheme has been labeled "de-risking".

The NRLN is preparing a White Paper with proposals that would advocate passage of laws and federal regulations that would prohibit or restrain pension plan "de-risking" like Verizon accomplished. If federal laws aren't strengthened, companies will still prey on what's left of our benefits and courts will continue to make decisions that negatively impact retirement security. In addition, we need someone we can trust fighting to protect our Social Security and Medicare benefits.

The NRLN, the Arizona Chapter's parent organization is the only nationwide organization solely dedicated to representing the interests of retirees and future retirees. The NRLN develops legislative proposals to address concerns of more than 2 million retirees represented by 31 Retiree Associations and individuals who retired from 131 U.S. companies and public entities. Each year the NRLN prepares a Legislative Agenda. Then, the Legislative Agenda is prioritized into the top six to eight initiatives that are supported by detailed White Papers and brief Executive Summaries or Position Papers that are posted on the NRLN website at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org). A set of one-page Talking Points is also developed for each of the Top Priorities and they are used as a lobbying aid in Washington, D.C. and will be used by the NRLN Arizona Chapter members who will dedicate their time to visit with local Congressional Offices in Arizona.

### **The 2013 NRLN Legislative Agenda Includes:**

Protection and Enhancements of Retiree Income: Pension Asset Protection Proposal, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation Reform, Bankruptcy Reform, Protection of Retirees in Merger and Acquisitions, and Social Security Protection.

Protection and Enhancement of Retiree Health Care Benefits: Protection of Medicare Benefits, Maintenance of Cost Protections "MCP", Medicare Buy-in for Ages 54-64, Inclusion of Catastrophic Coverage in Medicare, Legislation Necessary to Reduce the Cost of Prescription Drugs and Other Cost Reductions for Retirees.

Retiree Income and Health Care Benefit Tax Reform: Taxes Affecting Retiree Income Sources and Taxes Affecting Retiree Health Care Benefits.

The concept of Chapters is new to the NRLN. The NRLN Arizona Chapter is the first, but a number of other Chapters are in the early development stage across the country.

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### The NRLN Arizona Chapter Benefits:

- Members will receive an NRLN FOCUS Newsletter three times a year with a dedicated page for news specific to Arizona.
- Members have a dedicated website for ongoing news and events accessible from the "Chapters" tab on the NRLN website at [www.nrln.com](http://www.nrln.com).
- Members will receive CapWiz Action Alerts and other pertinent information from the NRLN President.
- Chapter Leaders will be available as a resource for questions and assistance.
- Dedicated Lobbyist located in Washington, D.C. meet regularly with key Congressional committee members to advocate the NRLN's legislative initiatives.
- Professional representation because the NRLN is the only national organization that deals with the whole spectrum of retiree issues (Pensions, Health Care, Social Security, Medicare, and Prescription Drugs).
- The Chapter will have representation on the NRLN Board of Directors.
- Chapter Grassroots volunteers are provided with handout booklets to share with Arizona Congressional Leaders during the visits in Arizona and Washington, D.C. These booklets identify size and intent of the NRLN Network. Visits are made to Congressional offices to request sponsors or co-sponsors for legislation needed and follow-ups continue throughout the year.

This year we need to be in front of our new Arizona Congressional Leaders. On the Arizona Chapter website you will find names, addresses and Congressional Districts for your Representatives and Senators. Also, you will be asked at various times throughout the year via NRLN CapWiz Action Alert email messages to send letters to your representative requesting them to take action. Arizona has 9 Congressional Districts and there are four new Representatives and one new Senator, therefore it is important to look for these "NRLN Action Alerts" and do your part in protecting our benefits!

If the AUSWR-AZ has money left in their treasury at the end of June 2013, the NRLN Chapter Leaders have asked the AUSWR-AZ for a donation to the NRLN Arizona Chapter to continue the fight for legislation that will preserve and protect the pension and benefits you earned. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Thank you,  
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### Two Chapter Leaders Talk with Rep. Kyrsten Sinema and Staff Member

NRLN Arizona Chapter leaders Martha Deahl and Susan Olson attended Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema's swearing-in and open house on January 30 at her new office in Phoenix. A long line of constituents was waiting to meet with the new Congresswoman.

Martha and Susan had the opportunity to briefly speak with the U.S. Representative for Arizona's new 9th Congressional District. A more extensive conversation about the NRLN and its legislative agenda was held with one of Congresswoman Sinema's staff members. The NRLN was not known to him so it was explained in more depth what the organization is all about, and he was quite interested. Martha left her contact information with the staff member. Talking with Congresswoman Sinema and her staff member made the meeting worthwhile for the Arizona Chapter and the NRLN.



Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema (center) takes time for a photo with Martha Deahl (left) and Susan Olson