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National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)

To: NARFE National Executive Board
From: Susan Boswell, Staff VP, Communications
CC: Barb Sido, Executive Director
Date: February 23, 2018
Re: Communications Department Update

This memorandum serves as an update for the National Executive Board regarding the NARFE Communications Department's key areas of focus.

Readership Survey

The *narfe* magazine readership survey was completed in November/December 2017, and was sent to 65,000 email addresses, yielding a 4 percent response rate with 2,596 responses. The survey examined several key areas: value of membership, readership satisfaction and technology use.

As we consider our communications strategy, key findings that are being looked at include:

- **Why they join:** Three key reasons rose to the top: To receive information and guidance on retirement/health benefits (74%), to support NARFE's legislative fight for earned benefits (71%), and to receive *narfe* magazine (50%).
- **Why they renew:** The desire to support NARFE's legislative fight for earned benefits became the top reason for renewing (72%), followed by the ability to receive information and guidance on retirement/health benefits (62%), to read *narfe* magazine (52%), and to retain affiliation with the federal community (33%).
- **What benefits are important:** Survey respondents gave the highest rating to the following member benefits in this order: lobbying (77%), magazine (55%), and one-on-one assistance with federal benefits (30%).

- **Member satisfaction:** The vast majority (94%) of members said membership met their expectations and 57% were “very likely” or “likely” (30%) to recommend NARFE membership to a friend, colleague or spouse.
- **Avid readers:** 84% of members said they read 10-12 of the last 12 issues of the magazine, and 53% said they spent a half-hour to an hour reading the magazine, while 33.5% said they spent an hour to 1.5 hours reading the magazine.
- **What do they like to read about:** Most readers indicated satisfaction with the magazine’s editorial coverage of topics, although some readers would like more information on two key topics: FEHB and health coverage, Q&A on federal benefits.
- **Moved to action:** Readers took action after reading the Q&A section (66%), Bill Tracker (53%), and For the Record (49%). They saved the issue (48%), made a decision based on what they had read (47%), or used the NARFE Action Center to contact their legislator on an issue (50%).
- **What special sections are valued:** Of the survey respondents who gave the highest rating, they valued the Open Season Report (55%), how they voted (49%), state-by-state record on key NARFE votes (42%), and state tax roundup (40%).
- **Online behavior:** Most readers go online everyday (82%). While online, they shopped (89%), did online banking/financial services (73%), visited publication websites (49%), accessed social media (46%), or accessed mobile apps (34%). However, when it comes to *narfe* magazine, the majority (96%) preferred to read it in print.
- **Demographics:** Gender: 57% are male and 38% are female; Age: 46% were 65-74; 21% were 75-84; 20% were 55-64. Membership: 21% have been members for 10-14 years, 21% have been members for 5-9 years. Membership: 14% have been members for 15-19 years. When they joined: 51% joined after retiring, 45% joined before retiring.

Preparation for a magazine redesign launch in 2018 will be underway later this year, pending vendor identification and budget feasibility.

Hybrid Print/Online Elections Process

For the first time in 2018, each NARFE member had one vote. The Communications Department developed materials to implement the hybrid print/online election in collaboration with a vendor to provide an impartial, secure election.

- March magazine—published candidate statements and federation election contact information.
- April magazine—published the Bylaws and Resolutions report, and developed a Bylaws and Resolutions PDF book that could be downloaded from the NARFE website (www.narfe.org/2018Balloting) or requested by phone. Federation annual meetings were also published.
- May magazine—Article on preferential voting.

- June magazine—ballot will be inserted into the magazine, with randomized voting (A-Z) on half of the ballots and (Z-A) on half of the ballots. Instructions for online and print voting will be provided, along with legally required information, and bylaws and resolutions. All of those who are members as of March 15, 2018 will be eligible to vote. A member ID and unique PIN number are required for voting.

The vendor will host a secure online voting website, which will launch on May 10, approximately the same time members will receive their magazine, although magazine receipt will vary by about a 1.5 weeks, depending on geographic region. For each individual member, the order of candidate presentation (A-Z or Z-A) on the online ballot will be identical to the magazine ballot. Those who have email addresses on file with NARFE will receive an email announcement about the voting website and instructions.

Website

On January 16, 2018, NARFE launched redesigned and enhanced webpages accessible to nonmembers and the general public at www.narfe.org. The website features a redesigned masthead and user-friendly navigation with content organized into five sections under a drop-down menu: federal benefits, advocacy, membership, events and communication. Each section features a redesigned landing page directing the reader to content in that section. The website also has content about NARFE, the federal community and encourages visitors to support NARFE.

Content has been revised to provide more information about the benefits of joining NARFE, the role the organization plays in advocating for federal benefits and the products, services and events offered by the organization. The members-only section of the website and OAM remain the same.

The website features responsive design, allowing it to be viewed on any device, from a desktop to laptop to tablet or mobile phone.

The website was created by the organization-wide Web Team, with representatives from departments across the organization, who came together to develop these new webpages.

In 2018, the Web Team will explore options for a new website content management system (CMS) to host the webpages. This will allow NARFE to move the website off a platform that is becoming technologically obsolete and facilitate a redesign of the entire NARFE website utilizing more contemporary principles of website design and further enhancing the site's architecture, navigation and usability. As a prerequisite, a new association management system (AMS) will need to be selected, to ensure full integration of technology platforms.

Enewsletter migration and relaunch

Currently, NARFE has two key, large-circulation e-newsletters: NARFE NewsWatch (delivered every Tuesday) and Hotline (delivered every Friday). In 2018, NARFE will lay the groundwork to integrate these two e-newsletters into a single e-newsletter that

provides the latest advocacy updates as well as news from across the organization, driving readers to the NARFE website for further information. This e-newsletter will provide greater return on investment through advertising revenues and will be hosted on an e-marketing platform that provides robust analytics and marketing automation features, benefiting organization-wide marketing efforts. The e-newsletter platform will need to be compatible with the association management system (AMS).