

Georgia retirees helping each other



Special Photo

Georgia State Retirees Association and the local NE Metro chapter at our legislative day at the Capitol in February, with Governor Nathan Deal.

By Mike Murdock

As the Baby Boom generation "matures" a large number of Georgia citizens are retiring after a career of service to Georgia state government. They have continued their tradition of service to others by forming an educational and advocacy organization called the Georgia State Retirees Association (GSRA). The GSRA, organized in 2007, is a statewide organization of some 4,400 state government retirees in 24 regional chapters throughout the state. Gwinnett County and several surrounding counties are represented by the Northeast Metro Chapter of the GSRA with about 450 members.

The GSRA purpose is to enhance and promote the welfare of the community of state government retirees by advocating for the community on developments related to insurance benefits or pension plans administered by the State of Georgia. The GSRA also provides access to various benefits and education through the Association of Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA). Included in the AMBA program is special pricing for dental and vision plans, electronics products, travel, and long term care. All this is provided for a \$20.00 annual membership. The Northeast Metro Chapter, along with the other local chapters, serves to amplify the activities of the statewide GSRA organization and allow expanded opportunities for member participation.

The Northeast Metro Chapter officers and members are retirees who volunteer their time to support other local retirees in maintaining their health and quality of life. The chapter hosts four functions per year including a luncheon,

two business meetings, and a group night to watch the Gwinnett Braves at Coolray Field. The chapter has assembled and circulated a list of pricing discounts available to seniors from various retail businesses around the state. There is also a discussion group centered in Snellville that meets monthly to informally discuss any issue of importance to retirees. Topics can range from health care, to pension issues, to local neighborhood concerns, and family issues (as well as the quality of pastries at the coffee shop/meeting place!).

The GSRA represents the interests of retirees to the General Assembly, Employees Retirement System, and the Department of Community Health (DCH). In February officers and members assembled at the state Capitol to meet with their elected representatives and deliver the GSRA message. The members received a cordial reception with photo-ops with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House. At GSRA urging legislation was introduced to allow retirees an advisory role to DCH in the making of health insurance policies. The bill did not get a vote this year but GSRA is looking forward to re-introducing it in the next legislative session.

GSRA membership is open to all retired and active state government employees and educators. More information about GSRA and the local chapters is available on-line at www.MyGSRA.com. Persons interested in the Northeast Metro Chapter may contact Chapter President Mike Murdock at Murdock1@mindspring.com.

All Georgia state retirees should join to make their voices heard where it counts.