

Blue Ridge News

SEANC District 3: Serving Avery, Mitchell & Watauga Counties

Record-Breaking Golf Tournament!

The D3-sponsored 17th Annual Golf Tourney raised over \$7,500 for scholarships and community service.

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What Has SEANC Done for Me?

The answer may surprise you! Read for yourself and decide if you think your SEANC membership is worth it or not.

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\$4,000 in Scholarships Awarded

Scholarship Chairperson

Robin Greene released the names of the following awardees:

>Category I (Financial Need):

Aaron Ricker (2-yr) \$700*

>Category II (Merit):

Iris Westerman \$1,000*

Grace Horine \$700

Peyton Walton \$600

Cristian Hamilton \$500

>Category III (Member Only):

Holden Hartzog \$500

*Applicants selected for SEANC Scholarship Foundation judging:

Aaron Ricker(2-yr)

Merit: **Iris Westerman**

Member Only: **Holden Hartzog**

Retiree Grandchild—Merit: **Grace Greene**



Peyton Walton is a rising senior at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is studying to receive a BA in Drama and minor in Dance. After graduation, she has high hopes to pursue her performing arts dreams and inspire the next generation!



Aaron Ricker is a recent graduate of Avery County High School. Throughout his high school years, Aaron was known for his friendly demeanor and strong work ethic. He actively participated in sports, particularly Football, where he demonstrated leadership skills as a team captain. Outside of school, Aaron enjoys volunteering at his church and spending time with family and friends. Aaron plans to pursue a degree in Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology at McDowell Technical Community College, where he hopes to continue making a positive impact both academically and within his community.

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Why SEANC Insurance?



* SEANC group rates ensure low costs and the ability to offer payroll deduction, making the purchase convenient.

* Insurances offered by SEANC are open enrollment policies, meaning you can apply at any time of the year.

* The insurance products are portable, meaning you can continue with the policy after retirement from state employment

* Many of the plans allow you to cover your domestic partner.

* No waiting periods—enroll by the 1st of the month, and the plans will become active the following month.

* SEANC has their own insurance department with full-time licensed agents to answer questions and help to select the best policy or make changes to your existing policy.

* Applications and forms are available online at seanc.org or click on the QR code above.

17th Annual Tourney a Success



1st PLACE TEAM: Tommy Miller, Scot Tabel, Gary Drinnon, and Rick Doty

The 17th Annual Lois W. Forrester Memorial Golf Tournament, sponsored by District 3, was held May 9, 2024, at Boone Golf Club. The tournament is named in memory of Lois W. Forrester. Lois was very active in SEANC at the state level and locally in District 3, and she was the founder of District 3's annual golf tournament. Lois courageously battled cancer, and this tournament is named in her honor to memorialize her commitment and love for her family, friends, community and to SEANC.



It was a record-breaking event, with 56 hole sponsors, and even with a rainy start, all 15 registered golf teams were present.



2nd PLACE TEAM: Chris Lynch and Shane Pursifull

Record Broken for Amount of Funds Raised for Scholarships and Community Service Projects

Events such as this support local community service activities and the local and state SEANC scholarship fund. This fund provides scholarships, locally and across the state, to active and associate SEANC members, their spouses and children, to attend technical schools, community colleges, trade schools, junior colleges, or four-year colleges or universities on a full-time basis. After all of the bills were paid, **over \$7,500 was raised for scholarships and community service activities of SEANC District 3.**



HIGH COUNTRY CUP WINNER: MOUNTAINEIRE GOLF CLUB
Bob Gibbard, Kevin Kennedy, Morgan Gibbard, Nick Friedman



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Scholarships Awarded (cont'd)

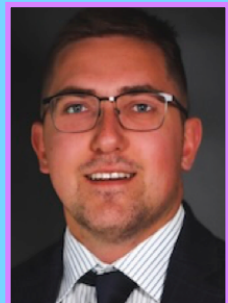


Nominating Committee Chairperson Kim Overcash presents scholarship award to Iris Westerman

Cristian Hamilton is from Boone and graduated from Watauga High in 2022. He is starting his junior year at UNC-Asheville with a major in Environmental Studies and a minor in Spanish. He is a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and is planning on studying abroad in Sevilla, Spain in the spring of 2025. His mother is a graphic designer for Appalachian State University and his father is the Watauga County Extension Director.



Holden Hartzog is currently completing the MBA program at Appalachian State University while working in the University Controller's Office. He is a born and raised Boone native, so he is proud to not only be working in the town that he has called home for almost his entire life but also proud that he is able to complete his graduate studies at the same university where he works.



Golf Tourney (cont'd)



WOMEN'S LONGEST DRIVE:
McKenna Anderson



SENIOR'S LONGEST DRIVE:
Gary Drinnon with Scholarship Chairperson Robin Greene



#8 CLOSEST TO THE PIN:
Adam Winebarger with Auditing Chairperson Karen Krider



#3 CLOSEST TO THE PIN:
Marc Strickland with Greene



#16 CLOSEST TO THE PIN:
Blake Dillman with Krider



MEN'S LONGEST DRIVE:
Tommy Miller with Krider



#11 CLOSEST TO THE PIN:
Tommy Miller



Insurance Checklist

You can prepare for life's uncertainties and gain peace of mind by finding a SEANC Insurance program that fits your needs and your budget. Whether you are expecting your first child or retiring from a lifetime of public service, a big change can influence how much financial protection your family needs. Start today and take advantage of SEANC's group rates! Payroll deduction is available through most state agencies and the state retirement system. To find out more, you can explore the insurance FAQs, see an overview of all SEANC insurance programs, or select the plans you're interested in by going to the SEANC Insurance website: <https://www.seanc.org/insurance> Or call 1-800-222-2758

- Accident
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- Auto/Home
- BenExtend
- Critical Illness with Cancer
- Dental
- Disability
- Final Expense/Whole Life
- Home Health Care
- Legal Plan
- Identity Theft
- Long-term Care
- Pet
- Permanent/Whole Life
- Teladoc
- Term Life
- Vision



**THANK YOU TO OUR HOLE SPONSORS AND BUSINESSES/DONORS WHO SUPPORTED THE
17TH ANNUAL LOIS W. FORRESTER MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT---May 9, 2024**

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Ronnie Forrester
Rudy & Teresa Johnson in Memory of
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Spangler Restoration
The Gym 24/7
Troy’s 105 Diner – Corporate Gold Sponsor
Wayne Holliday

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Cane Patch Driving Range
Captain Hooks Miniature Golf
Casa Rustica
Coyote Kitchen & Lost
Province Taproom
Domino’s Pizza

Elevation 3333
Elizabeth Smythe
Friendship Honda
Goodnight Brothers
Harris Teeter
High Country Vending Inc.
Jungle Safari Miniature Golf
Jurassic Miniature Golf
Karen Krider
Kim Overcash
Lost Province Brewing Co.
Mountain Aire Golf Club
Mountaineer Golf Center
NAPA Auto Parts

O’Reilly Auto Parts
Pepsi
Red Onion Café

Republic National Distributing
Company – Ryan Krider
Robin Greene
Sassy & Company Hair Salon
SEANC District 3 Executive
Board
Shipwreck Miniature Golf
The Peddler Steak House
Troy’s 105 Diner



Bob Gibbard, Membership Chair, speaking with AppState new employees at a SEANC District 3 sponsored lunch. The new employees have the opportunity to hear about all the many benefits of becoming a SEANC member. SEANC is their voice in Raleigh to ensure their pay increases, benefits, low-cost supplemental insurances and discounts.

District 3 makes donations each year to support Hospice in Watauga, Avery, and Mitchell Counties, counties served by D3.



Smith presents a check to a rep from Medi Home Health & Hospice in Boone

Community Service Projects

District 3 supports a community service project every month in Avery, Mitchell, and Watauga Counties. In addition, clean and empty medicine bottles were given to the Hunger and Health Coalition for their pharmacy to use. The bottles have been collected by SEANC members for the past several months.

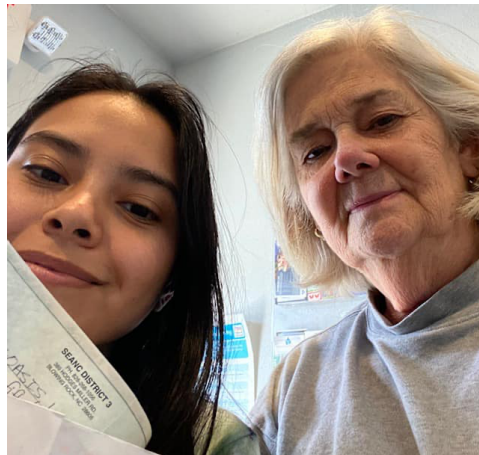
One of the community service projects District 3 has supported 10+ years from proceeds of the annual golf tournament is OASIS (Opposing Abuse with Service, Information, and Shelter). This year, OASIS, Inc. celebrated 45 years of serving Watauga and Avery

County survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

This milestone was recognized by holding Midnight at the OASIS on Thursday, July 27, 2023.



Sponsors, OASIS Board of Directors, employees and supporters gathered at the Appalachian view venue in Newland, NC. **Teresa Johnson**, D3 Chair, and **Karen Krider**, D3 Audit Chair, attended the event.



Janice Smith (right), D3 Vice President, presented the District's annual donation to a representative of OASIS in Avery County.



Smith presents a check to **Joe Donadio** of Appalachian Ski Mountain to support the Heroes on the Mountain event. The 8th annual event treated 80 U.S. military disabled combat veterans to a fun-filled day of skiing and snowboarding.



Smith (right) presents a yearly conation to **Carol McKinney** for Hospice & Home Care of Blue Ridge serving Mitchell Co.



Smith presents an annual donation to **Lareeca Johnson** for Medical Home Hospice of Avery County. Johnson plans to purchase food for an elderly man who lost his parents years ago on Christmas Day and who is now living alone.

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District 3 Annual Meeting

On June 18, 2024, SEANC District 3 held its Annual Meeting at the Dan'l Boone Inn in Boone. Along with DBI's famous family-style food being enjoyed, scholarship winners were recognized, committee reports were delivered, District awards were given, and officers and delegates were elected for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.



District Chair Teresa Johnson (aka Mama T) welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting



Iris Westerman (right) received her Certificate of Scholarship Award from **Kim Overcash**



Janice Smith received the Chairperson's Award



Johnson (right) delivered the Member of the Year Award to **Robin Greene** the next day



Aaron Ricker (left photo) and **Holden Hartzog (right photo)** received their Certificate of Scholarship Awards



Community Service (cont'd)



Last November **Janice Smith** and **Robin Greene** dropped off items donated by District 3 that were needed to support the Watauga County Sheriff's Office's "Santa for Seniors" project.



Greene presents check to **Jennifer Maxwell**, Sustainability Program Manager at Mountaineer Food Hub & Free Store, as volunteers look on



Left to right: **Smith** gives check to **Amber Lowery** of Mitchell County Animal Rescue; **Greene** gives check for the SNIPS program to Watauga Humane Society Executive Director **Justin Vander** as a volunteer & dog available for adoption look on; **Smith** presents check to **Charlene Moore** and **Elsa Delgado** of the Avery Humane Society

WHAT HAS SEANC DONE FOR ME?

TWELVE YEARS OF SEANC LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES!



- 2023**
 - A 4% pay raise in 2023 and a 3% raise in 2024 for most state employees. Including non-certified school personnel and UNC employees.
 - A 4% one-time supplement for retirees in 2023.
 - A 5.5% pay raise in 2023 for employees on a step-pay plan and an additional 3% in 2024.
 - NCDPS Juvenile Justice Step Pay Plan implemented.
 - Labor market reserves for agencies to use to address certain position salaries to bring them more in line with similar positions.
 - Funding for State Health Plan and Retirement System.
 - An average of 2% for bus drivers in addition to the 4% across the board in 2023.
 - State employee personnel records still maintained as private.
 - No increase in State Health Plan premiums for sixth year in a row.
 - Extension of GLP-1 weight loss drugs through April 2024
 - Longevity pay maintained.

- 2022**
 - Secured an additional 1% pay increase for most state employees resulting in a 3.5% total increase in 2022.
 - Secured an additional 1% supplement for retirees resulting in a 4% bonus in 2022.
 - Minimum wage increase for non-certified school employees to \$15 per hour in 2022.
 - Longevity pay maintained for active state employees.
 - Protection of employee personnel records.
 - State Health Plan was fully funded. No premium increase for the fifth consecutive year.
 - Teachers and State Employees Retirement system fully funded. Employer contribution is now 17.38%.
 - Opportunity for employees to use or cash in special bonus leave benefits that accrued.

- 2021**
 - Secured a 5% pay increase (2.5% in 21 and 2.5% in 22) and bonuses for most state employees.
 - Secured a 5% supplement for retirees (2% in 21 and 3% in 22).
 - Gained an experience-based step-pay plan for correctional officers and probation parole employees.

- 2020**
 - Served as employees' voice as the COVID-19 pandemic caused major disruption throughout the world.
 - Played an integral role in securing COVID-19 tests for all state employees.
 - Fought and won hazard pay for employees on the front lines of the pandemic.

- 2019**
 - Released a report on prison safety that led to the creation of a legislative task force aimed at making our prisons safer for employees.
 - Secured a 2.5% pay raise in each of the next two years and five days bonus leave for most state employees.
 - Secured supplements of up to \$7,500 for correctional personnel serving in prisons with high vacancy rates.

- 2018**
 - Successfully lobbied for \$15 per hour minimum wage for most state employees. The first such minimum for state employees in the nation!
 - Most other state employees received a 2% raise.
 - Doubled the line-of-duty death benefit and secured a 4% raise for correctional officers.

- 2017**
 - Stopped mass privatization of DOT.
 - Secured a commitment from State Treasurer Dale Folwell to hold State Health Plan premiums steady for four years.
 - Procured a \$1,000 pay increase and a 1% cost-of-living adjustment for retirees.

- 2016
 - 1.5% increase + 0.5% compensation bonus.
 - Saved the 80/20 option and spousal coverage under State Health Plan from cuts.
 - Defeated a bill to implement a minimum retirement age for state employees.
- 2015
 - \$750 bonus for active state employees.
 - Fought back and attack on SHRA protections.
 - Stopped massive Department of Transportation position cuts.
 - Maintained State Health Plan benefits for retirees.
- 2014
 - \$1,000 bonus for active state employees.
 - Secured the first ever audit of the retirement system.
 - Secured the return to five-year pension vesting from 10 years.
 - Won autism treatment coverage in the State Health Plan.
 - Maintained due process rights for employees covered by the SHRA.
- 2013
 - Saved 3 prisons that were slated for closing.
 - Saved the DHHS Oral Health Division services.
 - Protected personnel files from being made public.
 - Saved 400 prison maintenance jobs from privatization.
 - Permanently secured three days of vacation at Christmas.
 - Won 5 bonus leave days.
- 2012
 - 1.2% across-the-board increase and five bonus days for active state employees.
 - Stopped privatization of inmate health care services and N.C. Zoo employees.
 - Successfully lobbied for the Whistle Blowers Protection Act.

PROTECTING THE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

SEANC is the state's leading advocate for a strong and healthy retirement system and has been at the forefront of several key battles this decade to make sure your money is safe. We conducted a forensic audit in 2014 to prove that hundreds of millions of dollars were going to Wall Street money managers, and we helped elect a State Treasurer in 2016 to end this practice. We fight each year to stop attempts to kill the defined benefit pension system, and make sure it is fully funded each year by the legislature. A SEANC Member currently serves on this board!

PREVENTING PRIVATIZATION

Almost every year, regardless of what party is in charge, we see attempts to sell off functions of state government to the highest bidder. SEANC is your only voice fighting to stop privatization and outsourcing of your job. In the last decade, we've thwarted attempts to privatize prison maintenance and health care, the state's information technology services, the state ferry system and even the N.C. Zoo, to name a few.

MAINTAINING AND INCREASING YOUR PAY

Pay raises for state employees and retirees are always at the top of the list of our legislative priorities. We work tirelessly with legislators during the state budget process to ensure the sacrifices that state employees and retirees make are properly recognized. Along with raises, longevity pay is an important tool to honor that dedication and retain a strong workforce. Teachers lost their longevity pay in this decade, but SEANC has been able to protect it for state employees.

STRENGTHENING THE STATE HEALTH PLAN

Health care is one of the largest expenditures most working families make each year. SEANC is the only organization watching over the State Health Plan and fought successfully to move it to governance by an independent board. We also ensure that it is fully funded each year. Currently, we are fighting to implement the Clear Pricing Project to bring transparency and cost savings to the plan for state employees, retirees and taxpayers. A SEANC Member currently serves on this Board!

SEANC POLICY PLATFORM

2023-2024

FOUNDATION STATEMENTS

Compensation

- I. Consider salary increases prior to other appropriations. (2017)
- II. Provide equal pay increases for all classifications of state employees. (2017)
- III. Seek compliance with and enforcement of laws, policies, and regulations governing equitable pay. (2016)
- IV. Seek standard policies for reimbursement for state employees who use personal vehicles on the job. (2017)

Health Care

- I. Expand the drug formulary for preferred prescription drugs. (2017)
- II. Re-establish a premium free healthcare benefit equivalent to the 2017-2021 80/20 PPO and restore retiree health insurance for employees hired on or after January 1, 2021. (2021)
- III. Link hospital reimbursement rates to Medicare rates. (2017)
- IV. Reimburse members for bank fees arising from State Health Plan errors. (2017)
- V. Provide a Medicare Supplement Policy or PPO 80/20 option for Medicare retirees. (2017)
- VI. Limit PPO options out-of-pocket maximums to \$5000 annually per covered member. (2017)
- VII. Reduce generic co-pays to a maximum of \$10 per script. (2017)

Job Security

- I. Oppose legislation that removes state employees from the protections of the State Human Resources Act. (2017)
- II. Oppose privatization and downsizing of state government services. (2017)
- III. Limit the distribution and/or publication of state employees' personal information. (2017)
- IV. Support legislation that enables public employee collective bargaining. (2016)
- V. Protect dues deduction rights from state payroll and pension systems. (2016)

Retirement

- I. Support the continuation of a defined benefit retirement plan for current and future state retirees. (2018)
- II. Support continuation of the employer's contribution to the retirement system that at least matches the employees' contribution. (2018)
- III. Extend Bailey Act state income tax exemption to all state employees. (2017)
- IV. Oppose the transfer of any unfunded liability for retiree health insurance to the retirement system. (2017)
- V. Provide Social Security Disability Compensation as existed before the Faulkenbury decision. (2017)

- VI. Seek an increase in the accrual rate to 2.0 for all members of The Teachers and State Employees Retirement System. (2016)
- VII. Seek annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for retired state employees. (2016)
- VIII. Apply return to work laws equitably to all members of The Teachers and State Employees Retirement System. (2017)

FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

- I. Seek additional training and equitable treatment for NCDAC staff who fail annual firearms training before considering termination. (2026)
- II. Seek legislation to have the EAP (employees Assistance Program) be provided for 12 months after retirement or if an employee leaves state government. (2026)
- III. Seek legislation to continue to provide 8 hours Holiday pay and provide managerial leave equivalent to normal scheduled working hours when an employee's regular schedule is more than 8 hours per day. (2026)
- IV. Change the state employee disciplinary action time frame from 18 months to 6 months from the date of incident. (2026)
- V. Seek to have policy written for all state employees to be provided with appealing disciplinary written warning procedures. (2026)

CAPSTONE OBJECTIVES

- I. When a career state employee, covered by the State Human Resources Act (SHRA), is notified of his/her separation by reduction-in-force (RIF) would have priority and an available position is vacant at the same or lower level, this employee, if qualified, must be offered the vacant position over employing anyone who is not a current career state employee. (2017)
- II. SEANC will seek to modify G.S. 126-34.1(a.1) to include reduction-in-force (RIF) as a ground for appealing grievances to The Office of Administrative Hearings. (2018)
- III. Seek permanent status for temporary employees defined as those who are employed on a recurring basis, yet are terminated for 30, 31 or 32 days each year. (2019)
- IV. Seek to extend the period for RIF priority re-employment rights from 12 months to 24 months for state employees with 5 or more years of service. (2017)
- V. The SEANC Government Relations staff shall work with members of the General Assembly to introduce and pass legislation that will ensure no state employee can be discriminated against due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. (2017)