



North Carolina National Guard Association

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A Look Back and A Look Ahead

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The dust has settled in Raleigh now that the General Assembly adjourned on July 10. While it was the worst fiscal shape the State has been in many years, the budget was actually passed on time. There was no appetite for any tax increases during this legislative session and none were passed. Agency budgets were slashed. The North Carolina National Guard was fortunate to have not suffered any severe cuts. On the positive side, the General Assembly appropriated \$1,000,000 for maintenance and operation of the Guard's ninety-seven armories. In a very creative move, the Tuition Assistance program picked up almost \$350,000 by transferring the TAP to the State Education Assistance Authority. The National Guard has much support in the General Assembly, and this was a way for them to help in a very tight budget year. Looking further back, the Association has had many successes at the General Assembly in recent years including increasing the retirement pay for its members during those years when the budget picture was brighter.

Looking ahead, North Carolina will have a very important election on the State level in November. The major political parties will be fighting for control of the State House and State Senate. One major prize at stake is the party that wins the fall election will control the redistricting process, and those districts remain for ten years. All indications are that these battles will be very competitive. Our members should exercise their rights to vote and support the candidates of their choice. In the end, however, the Guard is fortunate to have strong supporters on both sides of the isle.

As the N. C. National Guard Association membership looks at its future, it can be excited that John Thompson is the new Chairperson of the Legislative Committee for the Association. John has been a active member of this committee for several years and knows and understands the legislative and political process. He follows some very effective chairs including immediate past chairman Fisk Outwater. With John's leadership and hard work, the N. C. National Guard Association can continue to make a difference at the General Assembly. He was one of the movers in developing the Association's grass roots organization that has made a big difference in our legislative outcomes. This grass roots effort is a big key to any future successes the Association may have.

The next session of the General Assembly begins January 26, 2011. The revenue picture for our State once again looks bleak. The Association, however, must work hard to get its message across to the members of the General Assembly. Please contact John or other members of the Legislative Committee and let them know that you will be glad to contact your House and Senate Representatives. These contacts mean so much when the folks in Raleigh go to the legislators and ask for their support on key Association issues.