

## FSMSSA Administrator meets with Prior Service Trust Fund Administration

In November 2016 Alex Narruhn, FSM Social Security Administrator, along with the Prior Service Trust Fund Administration (PSTF), Jerry Facey, Advisor to PSTF, and Brendan McCann, consultant to PSTF, embarked on a week of meetings in Washington, D.C. The goal of the annual trip was to meet with those directly responsible for the future of PSTF's funding but also, more specifically, to discuss PSTF funding needs in 2017 and thank them for all that was accomplished in 2016.

2016 was a monumental year for PSTF. Due to a similar D.C. trip by Alex, Jerry and Brendan in 2016, the PSTF received enough funds from the Office of Insular Affairs, under the Department of Interior, to implement a \$50 minimum monthly beneficiary payment and a 20% cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) correction for not having received one in nearly two decades. Further, the PSTF was also able to implement a 3% COLA increase on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 which they anticipate reoccurring every October 1<sup>st</sup> as long as the PSTF is in existence.

On behalf of the PSTF beneficiaries, Alex, Jerry and Brendan thanked all those staff members in Washington, D.C. who had a hand in ensuring the increases occurred. While meeting these same staff members, Alex, Jerry and Brendan also initiated discussion on what the anticipated 2017 needs would be as well. These meetings included those responsible for appropriating money from U. S Congress to the Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Grant Program, as well the managers of the Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Grant Program in the Department of Interior who then award the funds to PSTF. Alex, Jerry and Brendan also made sure to meet with the Congressional delegation members from the Insular Affairs territories and Insular Affairs Embassies in D.C. to keep them abreast of our efforts and garner their support as well.

The meetings were productive and insightful for the PSTF team and there was no abject objection to what we anticipate will be the 2017 funding request. By the last meeting the PSTF team left encouraged by the future funding prospects. While no guarantees or promises were made, PSTF was proud of the presentations they made in the various meetings before the various staff responsible in the process of getting PSTF their funding. While it remains to be seen how successful the week of meetings were for Alex, Jerry and Brendan, the team expects to receive a formal response from the Office of Insular Affairs via their funding amount sometime in April.

## FSMSSA holds 4th Regular Board meeting

FSMSSA Board of Trustees had its Fourth Regular Meeting of 2016 beginning December 5. Every year, the Board of Trustees met four times, one meeting each quarter. These meetings are foremost very crucial for the sustainability of the program. The Board and Administration are thus the backbone of the system, with the support of all staff. It was in the board meetings that updates are shared from Administration to Board and were discussed, and as well where every single operation lies beneath. The Board of Trustees held a great bond upon FSM Social Security Administration's growth.

At its Fourth Regular, all Board members were present including Chairman Nakama Sana, Vice Chairman Vincent Tafileluw, Trustee Kalwin Kephas, Trustee Jack Harris, Trustee Mathew Chigiyal, and Ex-Officio Alexander R. Narruhn. Deputy Francky Ilai was as well present. The meeting's agenda on current activities of the program was about the budget., whereas, board discussed adjustments that could be made adjustable as possible regarding the needs of the program and its people, as well as staff and administration. Presentation of the budget was then unanimously adopted. Deferred businesses from the previous board meeting was also discussed, whereof, deferred appeal cases were entertained and taken care of. One other deferred issue was the reorganization of the Board which came out with Speaker Jack Harris as the new Board Chairman and Trustee Vincent Tafileluw remains the Vice-Chairman. The Board had time to review pending policies in which they discuss and made fair decisions to. At every Board meetings, updates from program divisions were always given for understanding purposes for instance Financial and Tax Reports, as well as investment status.

The FSMSSA gladly moves forward with a full house of its Board of Trustees, Administration and staff and looks beyond to serving the system at its best abilities.

## FSM Social Security Administration holds its Biennial Conference

Beginning December 12, 2016, FSMSSA held its one week Biennial Conference in Pohnpei at the Headquarters Office. The purpose of its biennial conference was to again educate, recall, update and learn more about FSMSSA operations. This year's conference was indeed productive to all FSMSSA staff, for a lot of information were shared and learned through presentations from many of the staff, which made it a very interesting one to many. As mentioned by many of the staff through discussions, this year's conference came out better than the previous ones due to the specific topic presentations touched specifically on all divisions. The five day of hard work listening, discussing, and obtaining information came out very educational to all FSMSSA staff and administration. Presentations were given by Administration, branch managers, division heads, branch members and HQ staff. Various topics were presented specifically inclusive of claims, accounting, tax, operations and information. The most helpful part of the conference came about when questions were raised after each presentation for better understanding and clarification especially for the new employees. It was indeed a benefit to all, refreshing mind of long time employees and helpful to those who were first timers.

At its finale, FSMSSA concluded by celebrating the happy season together as one post under its umbrella, and enjoyed Christmas joyously.