The Annual Meeting is the place to get the most up-to-date information and opinions from those around the Capitol. If you haven’t attended a SUAA Annual Meeting, we hope you make plans to do so in the future.

- Bill number 2156 which protects pension benefits awaits the Governor’s signature. It allows employees to purchase any time they spent on furlough.

- Bruce Appleby’s term as president of SUAA for the last two years expired, and Larry Alferink was elected the new president of the SUAA for a two year term. The office of president is limited to two years without the ability to be reelected. Dr. Appleby did a tremendous job as president, and all expectations are that Larry will do the same.

- Bylaws committee presented proposed amendments to the bylaws, they were presented to the board, voted on and approved.

- Health insurance is protected by the Constitution because of the Kanerva decision. But the amount of the medical deductible is not.

- Higher education is expensive but it is an investment.

- In order to meet the criteria of the state statutes the state must continue to pay the cost proportion of the health insurance that it now pays and cannot make retirees pay a greater percentage than they now pay. According to the Supreme Court our Health Insurance is protected; it is a protected retirement benefit just as the pensions are.

- Madigan and Cullerton can raise as much money as they want and give it to other politicians. There is no limit to the amount of money they can raise. That is one of the reasons they are so powerful.

- Senate Bill 2156 is a lifeline for human services and should include money for higher education until January 1, 2017. It was sent to the Governor. It is awaiting his signature. But because he signed the agreed-to Stopgap budget he might not sign, and after 60 days it would just become law.

- State legislators need to move from their focus on how much they pay for pensions and instead focus on how they are going to pay for pensions.

- SURS is doing more and more online including check stubs, forms and seminars. The organization is 75 years old and the Gen. Assembly honored SURS on May 3 of this year with a legislative resolution and certificate of recognition from the Illinois House and Senate commemorating the system’s 75th anniversary. SUAA and SURS celebrated this occasion during their Legislative Reception.
• SURS retirement benefits average $3,172 a month. 55% of the monthly benefits are less than $2,706 per month. 79% of the beneficiaries live in Illinois. 58% of the benefits go to staff members and 42% go to faculty.

• Term limits create lame-duck politicians, and since they cannot be reelected, they can do whatever they want without repercussions.

• The necessity of a pension reserve fund is somewhat of a myth because the state can pay the actual cost of the pensions on a month-to-month basis, and are doing so at the present time.