



**Nevada
Area
Health
Education
Centers**

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Johnson elected board chairman, outlines AHEC goals

Jim Johnson, a longtime Fernley resident, was unanimously elected to head northern Nevada Area Health Education Centers' board of directors at their last meeting, held in Elko.

Johnson, a resident of Nevada for 30 years and a member of the board since its pioneering days over a year ago, said, "Through AHEC, we intend to continue bringing much-needed educational and people resources to our rural health care providers."

AHEC, a federally-funded program through the University of Nevada School of Medicine, provides support services to health professionals in rural and other medically-underserved areas of Nevada. AHEC's services includes continuing education, library services, student recruitment and conferences on current health issues. The program has an office in Reno, a center in Elko and one planned in southern Nevada to be opened in Las Vegas next year.

Johnson said he believes the AHEC program has been successful so far in working with the University of Nevada School of Medicine to provide rural health care professionals access to education and other support services.

Johnson, also a member of the School of Medicine Advisory Board, said that while shortages of rural health care professionals have been helped by the School of Medicine's aggressive program of placing medical students in rural areas, which AHEC coordinates, still more needs to be done and he said AHEC is a good starting point.

The AHEC board, which is the decision and policy-maker for the northern center, serves two functions, Johnson said.

"Not only do we serve to bring in education and health resources, but the board also gives the communities a forum that didn't exist before," he said. "We provide links to services."

He added, "We need to make sure we're as sensitive as possible to the true needs of health providers and see that those needs are being fulfilled. We've got AHEC moving in a good direction. We're spending our money wisely and getting resources out to the areas that need them."

He also noted that a three-year funding clock has begun ticking for the northern center.

"The fact is we have to replace our federal funding with state funding," he said. "If AHEC is really as worthwhile as we believe it is, we can't cease to exist."

Johnson, who has more than 20 years of experience in private banking, spent over two years as the superintendent of banks for the state, as well as a three-year tenure as the executive director for the Nevada Banker's Association. He was also the president and CEO for Security Bank of Nevada. Johnson, now retired, is kept busy as a board member for the University of Nevada Bureau of Business and Economic Research and the Salvation Army of Reno, in addition to his involvement with the School of Medicine.

Johnson and his wife Micky live in Fernley.