Joy Bruck, Helena, State President, AARP Montana

Bruck, a Helena resident, was appointed as State President in January 2008. Bruck, who is retired after serving 11 years as an administrative assistant for Plymouth Congregational Church, has been an AARP member for 15 years. Prior to her appointment, Bruck served on the state's executive council for a number of years and was the Chair of AARP's Capitol City Task Force, which represents AARP Montana's interests at the state Legislature.

Bruck's extensive volunteer experience also includes serving as State President for the League of Women Voters in Montana and 19 years serving as a lobbyist for the League. Her leadership experience also includes serving in the Navy as a Communications Supervisor. Bruck is a graduate of Carroll College and holds a baccalaureate degree in social work.

Boni L. Braunbeck, Executive Council Member, Missoula, AARP Montana

Mrs. Braunbeck joined the AARP Montana Executive Council in 2008. Boni has spent her entire career working in the area of human services, retiring after 25 years from the Office of Public Assistance that serves six rural counties in Central Montana based in Lewistown. She managed staff responsible for the various federal and state programs that help poor families in the region, such as TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid and General Relief. Part of her duties included participating in various state and local councils and advisory groups to improve the lives of low income families. Boni served on the Governor’s Day Care Subcommittee in 1991 that established guidelines for Montana’s Day Care Program, as well as served on the Passport to Health Advisory Council in 1993 that designed Montana’s first Medicaid Managed Care Program. She was raised in Montana and graduated from Oklahoma City University with a B.S. in Business Administration.

As a member of the AARP Executive Council, Boni serves on a variety of local and statewide committees that includes serving as the Lead Volunteer for Social Security and is a trained Diversity and Inclusion Trainer for AARP Montana to help train staff and volunteers on diversity and inclusion issues.
James W Higgins, Executive Council Member, Libby, AARP Montana
Born and raised in Great Falls, Montana, Jim attended and graduated from Great Falls High School. He went to Montana State University for 3 years before enlisting in the Montana Air National Guard where he became an Avionics Technician after several months of training in Denver, Colorado. Upon returning to Montana, he again attended Montana State University where he received a degree in Agriculture. He then was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and attended United States Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training followed by Combat Crew Training School, which gave him the skills to fly the F-102 fighter aircraft.

Jim was appointed as Commander, 120th Fighter Wing where he served for 7 years during Operation Desert Storm and on completion of his tour he became a traditional guardsman and was assigned to Montana Air National Guard State Headquarters as Chief of Staff for Air, serving for 3 years before retiring as a Brigadier General. Jim is currently serving on the Board of Directors of an aerospace company in Southern California, He and his spouse, Ava Higgins moved to Northwest Montana after their retirement and travel regularly to enjoy the company of their daughters and 3 grandchildren. Jim currently serves on a variety of health care and veterans committees in the local community and statewide, as well as participates in regular Congressional Office visits with elected officials and their staff.

Karen Richardson, Executive Council Member, Somers, AARP Montana
Karen Richardson lives in Somers, Montana on the shores of Flathead Lake. She earned her teaching degree from Western Montana College and course work at Northern Montana College. She taught in a one room school house in her early years of teaching, finishing her 32 year career at Kalispell. Mrs. Richardson is very active in her community and is currently serving as Executive Director of the Montana Retired Educators Association, with extensive experience volunteering with her church and community programs benefiting children.

She has experience running for political office and is currently serving on various local community organizations in the Flathead Valley representing AARP. Karen and her husband Ted raised two daughters and enjoy spending time with them and their grandchildren. She currently serves on a variety of local and statewide committees, including taking the lead in Flathead County in representing AARP Montana for on-going visits to Congressional Offices.
Al Ward, Executive Council Member, Billings, Montana
Al Ward has been a volunteer with AARP since 2009 and has served as a lead volunteer on advocacy, consumer protection and Native American issues. Retired, he is a former AARP Outreach Director with a storied career in law enforcement and the military. He is the author of three books and several publications on crime and consumer protection, the recipient of several lifetime achievement awards, a current or former board member of numerous organizations, and as an adult education specialist, he has taught over 700 classes in crime and loss prevention to law enforcement, security, business and general public audiences.

In his retirement, Ward continues his long track record of public service by volunteering not only with AARP, but also with several organizations including the Governor’s Council on Aging, The Montana Crime Prevention Council, the Marine Corps League, the Reserve Officers Association and various Indian tribes and tribal organizations. Ward holds a Masters degree in Adult Education from Seattle University and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of Washington.