

CAPITOL GO! WINNER PROFILE

Arkansas Auditor of State

MARCH 2019

Inspired by South Carolina's successful physical activity competition as part of A Healthier State House — an initiative that encourages state legislators and agency staff to lead by example through healthier eating and increased physical activity — the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) created the Capitol GO! Challenge in 2017. The challenge, which has alternated between a steps (regular legislative session) and healthy hydration (fiscal session) challenge, aims to engage state policymakers to stimulate local change and advance the priorities of Healthy Active Arkansas — an initiative launched by Gov. Asa Hutchinson in 2015 to encourage and enable healthier lifestyles. The leader of the two-time team winner of the 2018 and 2019 Capitol GO! Challenges, Auditor of State Andrea Lea, took some time to give us insight, motivation, and advice on how to foster healthy habits and encourage staff participation in the challenge.

2019 Capitol GO! Steps Challenge

The Capitol GO! Steps Challenge took place during the 2019 legislative session, drawing 192 participants and fostering friendly competition among teams representing the House of Representatives, Senate, and offices of the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, auditor, and treasurer. Throughout the competition, participants logged their steps using the Walkingspree mobile app, logging nearly 63 million steps. This equates to more than 21,000 miles.

ARKANSAS AUDITOR OF STATE Q&A

Auditor of state since 2014 and a former state representative, Lea has nearly two decades of leadership experience in Arkansas and understands the benefits of making the healthy choice



the easy choice in the workplace. In March 2019, Lea and her staff were awarded the Healthy Active Arkansas Capitol GO! Challenge title belt for the second year in a row, having logged a daily average of 8,141 steps. Adding to the win, one of Lea’s staff took third place in the individual challenge, logging a daily average of 16,773 steps. The previous year, Lea and her staff took top honors in the Capitol GO! Healthy Hydration Challenge with 78 percent participation and an average of 71 percent completion of daily hydration goals.

You have been a fierce competitor in the Capitol GO! Challenges. What makes you so determined to make your team the best?

“Easily, the positive health benefits for everyone on the team. The healthier we are, the better we can do our jobs, and the better Arkansans are served. What I wasn’t expecting is the added benefit of comradery development. We have grown closer as a team, learned more about each other as individuals, and are stronger for it.”

What activities and/or changes have you made in your office to encourage physical activity and participation in the steps challenge?

“We have encouraged each other to take the stairs instead of the elevators, to walk to the restroom across the building, and instead of using the phone, walk through the office. Additionally, all challenge participants are allowed to wear tennis shoes. Every day we take a walk around the block if the weather is nice, and on rainy days we walk in the covered parking deck.”

What have you been doing to generate friendly competition with the other teams and within your own team?

“I’m known as the Larry Bird (trash talker) of the Capitol.”



Tweet by Lea encouraging friendly competition among the teams

Do you have any tips for individuals who are looking for ways to inspire and encourage their team members to participate in the challenge or in physical activities?

"Most encouraging has been the app used to track steps. It provides an element of accountability that we have leveraged to encourage one another. When a team member is having a down day, we can see that reflected on the app so we know to encourage that individual."

Will these activities continue after the challenge ends in March?

"Many of us have discussed how much we have enjoyed the competition and will be sad to see it end. I imagine many of our activities will continue long after it's over. We've jokingly referred to it as off-season training, because we'll be back next year to keep the belt!"



Lea presented with the Healthy Active Arkansas Capitol GO! Challenge title belt in 2018

LEARN MORE ABOUT

- Healthy Active Arkansas: <https://healthyactive.org/>
- Arkansas Auditor of State: <https://auditor.ar.gov/>