President’s Message

ROBB

Our mission is to promote the education and earned benefits of all retirees of Kern County, advocate the safeguarding and continuation of Kern County retiree pension and health benefits, provide avenues of support and information for Kern County retirees and beneficiaries, ensure proper and necessary representation on the Kern County Board of Retirement, and participate as an integral contributor in our Kern County communities’ quality of life.

Greetings to our 5000+ members! We, on the REOKC Board, hope you are all doing well, staying healthy and finding ways to be happy and involved. Despite the shutdown and the stay-at-home orders from the State, REOKC is staying active and watching over your interests as stated in our mission statement above.

Your Board has met and we are looking for answers on when we all might be able to start our luncheons up again. Unfortunately, we do not have any answers in this issue since the latest from the State is that groups of over 100 may not meet at this time. They are holding the number to 100 or less. Trying to break our luncheon up into two groups of 100 would probably not work since we might not be able to meet with the folks we go there to see and be with. Social distancing being a requirement would mean we would need a larger area in which to meet.

We have to keep in mind that we are the elderly who are particularly vulnerable and are often alone. We must be very careful in where we go and what we do when we get there. As of this writing, they are starting to open some things up with certain requirements and limita-

ations. As a large group we have special requirements we must consider. So please keep in mind, at this time, we are at the mercy of the State and County governments and their restrictions.

We are also looking into the restrictions of Hodel’s restaurant and insurance that might be needed. We will keep you informed by mail and email of things to come and when we will be able to start our luncheons again. Information will also be posted on our website: www.reokc.org

I have stayed in touch with KCERA (Kern County Employees Retirement Association) to make sure you have access to your retirement information. Their doors are still shut but you still have access to them for questions and other issues through their phone number (661-381-7700), email address (memberservices@kcera.org) and their website: www.kcera.org

In the meantime, I share with you something I saw from the San Diego County group, “…respect the vulnerability that living with advanced age brings us, by avoiding exposure. Stay at home, distance yourself from others, including those you love outside your immediate household – it’s tough not to be able to hug kids and grandkids – and do lots of cleaning and sanitizing.”

I also share with you what I said in my letter in the last TREND newsletter. “You can’t necessarily control what you touch. You can’t control who else touched it. But you can look after your own hands.” Hand-washing, with soap and water, is a far more powerful weapon against germs than many of us realize.

So, do all that you can to be safe and healthy. We want to see you all again at our next REOKC Luncheon – hopefully in the near future.

Have a Wonderful, Healthy and Safe July & August. Happy 4th of July!
“A retirement system board’s duty to the system’s participants and their beneficiaries shall take precedence over any other duty” (Section 17(b) of Article XVI of the California Constitution).

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Memorial Day. I also wish everyone a safe July 4th with family and friends. I know this year is different with the distancing and other health preventative measures because of COVID 19. As we continue to follow medical advice, KCERA also is using the Zoom Meeting platform in conducting Board and Committee Meetings. Again, we encourage everyone to use proper safety protocol during this pandemic.

As a reminder, KCERA retirees and future retirees hired before July 1, 2018 are eligible for benefits including an increase of SRBR Tier 3 purchasing power from 80% to 82% with an inflation cap of 4% and a $21 per month increase to eligible retirees. Beneficiary benefits were adjusted according to current provisions of law. Understand, KCERA administration will provide all official information and answer questions regarding this matter. Your REOKC Board will continue to request additional allocation of available SRBR funds since the reserve balance remains overfunded after implementation of the mentioned changes. Expect more information after this year’s actuarial experience study is released with an updated funding rate.

In May the Finance Committee heard the KCERA 2020-21 budget presentation by Dominic Brown, Executive Director. The $6.8 million budget provides services for more than 19,000 members and over $4.5 billion in assets. The largest budget category of staffing is 66% of the total proposed budget. For 2020-21, staffing required $3.8 million that is $255,985 (4.10%) more than last year’s approved budget of $6.2 million. The increase is primarily the salary and benefits needed for a staff of 32 employees from the 26 of last year. The Finance Committee recommended approval of the 2020-21 budget to the KCERA Board for the June meeting.

The 2020-21 Budget document included a revised organizational chart to reflect another reorganization phase of staffing and operations. With a more focused approach and energy of the Executive Director Dominic Brown and his management team, the leadership continues to accomplish more with the support of the KCERA Board. Chief Investment Officer Daryn Miller is also working with a new investment officer and KCERA Investment Consultant Verus in developing revisions to our investment program. The improved staffing of the investment program and more pension service support staffing are significant upgrades to our restructured operations in addressing the many challenges of pension administration and investing.

The May and June KCERA Board meetings approved the consent agenda items (routine and noncontroversial items); heard presentations for trustee education; heard presentation and approved 1st Quarter Hedge Fund Portfolio Review ending March 31, 2020 by Alborne America LLC; heard staff presentation and approved 2020-21 Budget; and heard presentation and approved 1st Quarter Investment Performance Review ending March 31, 2020 by Verus Investment Consultant.

During the KCERA Board meeting the Verus presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending March 31, 2020 as follows:

Total Assets - $3,963,044,819 and the following returns net of fees:

- 1 Year – 3.8%
- 3 Years – 2.5%
- 5 Years – 3.2%
- 10 Years – 5.5%

As of June 30, 2017, the most recent assumption rate is 7.25% (expected long-term return) with a funding ratio of 63.2% (% of fund assets available to pay liabilities).

As of December 31, 2019, membership was 18,220: active - 9,442; retirees - 7,285 (REOKC has more than 5,100 of those members); and deferred vested and reciprocal - 1,493; non-membership: survivor - 999; alternative payee - 219; and deferred non-vested - 1,491.

More detailed information and reporting may be obtained from the KCERA website at www.kcera.org.
REOKC Members,

These last few months have been hard on everyone. Most of us haven’t experienced being made to stay home since we were grounded by our parents many, many years ago.

Rest assured, the work goes on by the members of your REOKC Board who are working hard to resume the monthly luncheons/meetings. Monthly reports are still being prepared and new members continue to be added to our dues list.

You will be kept informed by mail and email of changes and updates as well as postings on our website www.reokc.org

Mary Lou Bennett, TREND Editor

---

**UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS**

**FUTURE PROGRAMS WILL BE POSTED HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

---

**LUNCHEON MENU AT HODEL’S**

**REOKC LUNCHEON DEDUCTIONS HAVE BEEN STOPPED EFFECTIVE WITH THE APRIL PENSION PAYMENTS.**

**DEDUCTIONS WILL RESUME ON THE SECOND MONTH AFTER LUNCHEONS HAVE BEEN REINSTATED.**

---

**QUOTES**

“The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don’t want, drink what you don’t like, and do what you’d rather not.”

~ Mark Twain

“If life was fair, Elvis would be alive and all the impersonators would be dead.”

~ Johnny Carson

“The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking spaces.”

~ Will Rogers
PAYROLL DEDUCTION FORM

To sign up for (or stop) payroll deduction, check the box(es) below, complete the form, and submit it to REOKC.

REOKC Luncheon Payment
By checking this box, I authorize KCERA to deduct $6.00 per month from my pension benefit as an additional elective payment to REOKC. This deduction shall begin with my next pension payment.

(Sign up for the luncheon payroll deduction and save $1.00 per meal!)

REOKC Membership Dues
By checking this box, I authorize KCERA to deduct $2.00 per month from my pension benefit as dues for my REOKC membership and to pay that organization. This deduction shall begin with my next pension payment. I understand my authorization and REOKC membership are voluntary and may be revoked by me, in writing, at any time.

Name (print)___________________________________
Address___________________________________________________________________________
City_________________________________________ State___________________ Zip___________________
Phone_______________________________________
Email (optional)________________________________
Dept. from which retired________________________
Full Social Security #___________________________
Signature_____________________________________
Date_________________________________________

Clip out completed form and send to:
REOKC / PO Box 2592 / Bakersfield, CA / 93303

STOP DEDUCTION(S)

☐ Check box to stop your deduction for the luncheon.

☐ Check box to stop your deduction for REOKC membership dues.

---

“WELCOME!”
NEW MEMBERS OF THE RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF KERN COUNTY

AGRICULTURE & MEASMT: Jacquelyn K. Bressler
ASSESSOR: Lee Smith
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECO.: Cynthia Coe; Gina L. Gonzales
DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Lance Isen; Renee L. Peterson
ELECTIONS: Abbe Shugart
FIRE: Helen Des Pois; Tony Diffenbaugh
GENERAL SERVICES: Frank J. Domingo
HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: Divina Delrosario
HUMAN SERVICES: Young R. Kim
KERN MEDICAL CENTER: Richard J. Contreras; Ann Hutchings
PROBATION: Marc J. Bridgford
PUBLIC HEALTH: Stephanie Agalos; Sally A. Watt
SHERIFF: Kavin Brewer; Timothy W. King, Sr.; Zuzet Medina Bittle
SUPERIOR COURT: Linda G. Crissman

REOKC wishes all Kern County retirees a long and happy retirement!

REOKC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Scholarship Committee has completed the review of all the submitted applications and has determined that REOKC will be awarding (7) seven $2,000 scholarships this year.

The applicants have all been informed and the scholarships will be sent out as soon as their fall registration information is received.

Look for more information about the recipients in our September & October issue of the TREND.
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE NOTICE

If you know of any of our members who could use a get-well or sympathy card, please contact

JOSIE DE LA TORRE at (661) 348-4222

Thank you!

TRAVEL TIPS

REAL ID deadline has been postponed until Oct 1, 2021.

Passport processing is delayed. There are a few offices opened for life or death emergency processing. Renewals are being accepted by mail, however there is a delay in processing as the office has not opened yet. What would normally take 2 to 4 weeks could take up to 2 months or longer.

The fall cruising schedule is in full swing. Many people are booking Canada New England cruises, Coastal cruises on the West Coast, Mexico cruises and Caribbean Cruises. Many of the cruise lines have opened bookings for the entire year of 2021 and through the Spring of 2022. Many promotions are being offered. Many cruise lines have in place a policy to cancel cruises within 30 days to move your cruise to another date with no penalty.

Hawaii is another destination that many people are traveling to via cruises or flight to the islands and staying in a hotel. Quarantine orders expire July 31, 2020. Many of the Caribbean Islands are open now and the remaining will be open by the end of July 2020.

During this time many of the Hotels have opted to renovate. So your favorite hotel may be closed longer to complete the process.

Travel insurance is a way to protect your investment. Not only will it cover cancellation penalties for a covered reason, but it will also cover additional costs for rebooking your trip. It also offers medical issues and transportation costs back home.

I have been in the office the entire time and have worked very hard for my clients to get their refunds processed or to get their Future Travel Credits.

Thank you for the phone calls and emails of support! I am truly blessed working with REOKC!!!!

Julie Salazar– Garcia (661) 324-6910

REOKC USEFUL CONTACTS

KCERA Administration 661-381-7700 www.KCERA.org
- Retirement Check
- Withholding Forms
- Beneficiary Change
- Address Change (& REOKC) *
- Retirement Board Meetings

Retiree Health Benefits 661-868-3182
- County – Health Insurance Div.

Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.
- Supplemental Insurance Plans Available at Discounted Rates 1-800-511-9065

REOKC Other Related Services
- TREND Editor
- Membership
- Address/Email Change *
- Scholarship Program
  Mary Lou Bennett 661-871-5270
  mbennett36@sbcglobal.net

- Sunshine (Cards of Expression)
  Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222

KCERA Board Retiree Member
- Phil Franey – franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—Robb Seibly - seiblyrl@gmail.com

Kern County District Attorney’s Office
- Elder Abuse: 661 868-2400

Kern County Aging & Adult Services
- 661 868-1000

Change of Address Form

If your address has changed, in order to receive the TREND newsletter and other important notices from REOKC, you must complete this form and send it to REOKC, PO Box 2592, Bakersfield, CA 93303:

Name_____________________________________
(print)
NEW Address______________________________
City, State, Zip______________________________
OLD Address_______________________________
City, State, Zip______________________________
Signature___________________________________

KCER
A Administration 661-381-7700
KCERA Board Retiree Member
- Phil Franey – franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—Robb Seibly - seiblyrl@gmail.com

Kern County District Attorney’s Office
- Elder Abuse: 661 868-2400

Kern County Aging & Adult Services
- 661 868-1000
Reminder: The surviving spouse of a retired Kern County Employee is eligible for REOKC membership. Just complete the Payroll Deduction Form on Page 4 and mail to:

REOKC, PO Box 2592, Bakersfield, CA 93303

NOTICE: All views and opinions expressed in the TREND are solely the representation of each writer. REOKC’s only intention is to fairly inform our membership. The information presented in the TREND is believed to be from reliable sources. REOKC does not sell or disclose information about our members to third parties.
Brighter Days Are on the Way and We Can Help

Until then, our financial relief products can offer the help you need – right when you need it most.

www.stratacu.org
661.327.9461
ATTENTION—REOKC MEMBERS AND FAMILIES!

REOKC LUNCHEON DEDUCTIONS HAVE BEEN STOPPED EFFECTIVE WITH THE APRIL PENSION PAYMENTS.

DEDUCTIONS WILL RESUME ON THE SECOND MONTH AFTER LUNCHEONS HAVE BEEN REINSTATED.

YOUR REOKC BOARD WANTS YOU ALL TO KNOW THAT ITS MAIN PRIORITY IS THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF ITS MEMBERS.

AS WE ALL KNOW, THE CORONAVIRUS HAS MADE A VERY DRAMATIC IMPACT ON EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES.

AS A RESULT, WE ARE TRULY SORRY THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO SCHEDULE ANY LUNCHEONS OR MEETINGS FOR OUR MEMBERS AT THIS TIME.

WE KNOW THE CURRENT CONDITIONS WILL CHANGE AND AS SOON AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO SCHEDULE A LUNCHEON, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED BOTH BY MAIL AND EMAIL.

TAKE CARE AND BE WELL!