



T R E N D

(Thinking Retired Employees Need Direction)
Retired Employees of Kern County

Volume MMXX-V

September & October 2020

www.reokc.org

Robert Seibly, President

M. L. Bennett, Editor (mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net)



President's Message

ROBB SEIBLY

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.

I say again, greetings to our 5000+ members! All of us on the REOKC Board hope you are doing well and staying healthy and finding ways to be happy and involved. Despite the long shutdown and the stay-at-home orders from the State, REOKC is staying active and watching over your interests.

As I stated in the last TREND newsletter, "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 on this issue yet..." We will keep you informed of things to come and when we will be able to start our luncheons again, on our website: www.reokc.org

We continue to stay 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) and website: www.kcera.org

For our new members, and some members that have been with us for years, I have put together information about our website (www.reokc.org) that might be of interest and help you find information on what is available to members of "Retired Employees of Kern County" (REOKC):

The Retired Employees of Kern County was organized in response to the desires of former employees of Kern

County and those on the threshold of retirement, to preserve the benefits earned by and promote the general welfare of all retired employees of Kern County and their beneficiaries.

You will find on our website items like News & Information – covering REOKC Luncheons, Annual Health Fair, Strata Recycling Events (dates), Special Notices, Articles on Pension Initiative, Board Meetings Notices, Board of Supervisor's Agendas, and REOKC Board Members.

There is a list of Helping Hands that head up the areas of: CRCEA Delegates, Eyeglasses collection, Greeters, Book Exchange Program, Raffle Tickets Sales, Publicity, Sunshine Committee, and TREND Editor. Membership Benefits is an important area: Dental, Vision, Legal, Accident & Travel, ID Theft, Pet Insurance, Personal Accident & Secure Travel, Home Insurance, Car Insurance, Health and Wellness. Other Benefits such as Vacation Travel, Annual Health Fair, and Scholarship Program.

You will be able to find archived newsletters plus our latest TREND, Special Notices, KCERA Board and Committee Meeting information. Also, Retirement information on: California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA), State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS), California Association of Public Retirement Systems (CALAPRS), and Retired Public Employees Association Inc.

There is information on Supplemental Insurance Benefits, information on Credit Reporting Agencies, National Hotlines for information or To Report Fraud Complaints. There are also Affiliates like the Cruise Port, and Strata Credit Union information sites.

So why did I spend time telling you this?

It seems to me that we all seem to stay so busy with life that we sometimes forget what valuable information is available to us. Being retired we sometimes lose track of how easy it is to find a person or website or just up-to-date information on things we need. So now you know where you can find just about anything quickly and without a lot of digging and hunting.

We all miss our luncheons together, and hope sometime soon we can start them up again. Take care and stay well!



KCERA Retirement Board

By

Phil Franey, KCERA Retiree Trustee

“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 July 4th and as you approach the Labor Day weekend with family and friends that you remain safe. Unfortunately, we are experiencing these holidays and most other life moments under the environment required by the Coronavirus disease for yourself and the protection of others. As with other things, the business of KCERA must continue in safeguarding the benefits of our many members. This article will be discussing the Actuarial Tri-Annual Experience Study, Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Tier 3 revisions and other August Board Meeting agenda items.

You may or may not have received the notice of the KCERA Actuarial Tri-Annual Experience Study with the 7.25% current assumption rate for the retirement fund. Every three years an experience study is prepared by the KCERA actuary (Segal Consultants) to measure the assets, liabilities, assumption rate, funding ratio, and numerous other factors. The actuary recommends to KCERA the contribution rates that the County, member agencies and employees must pay for pension benefits. Other than employee contributions, the County and member agencies have the burden of funding their legal promise to pay the remaining pension benefits after investment income has been exhausted. Understand that over time the investments provide much of funding benefits.

The annual assumptions rate is an estimate of the coming years’ investment income rate to fund pension benefits. The lower the annual assumption rate the more the employers must contribute to fund pension benefits. Other actuary assumptions are also prepared using demographic and economic factors. The funding ratio (adjusted periodically) demonstrates the ability to fund pension benefit liabilities. As a result of the 2020 actuary experience study, the assumption rate will remain at 7.25% and a funding rate of 63.49%. Inability to meet assumption rates, a significant financial market correction, enhanced pension programs, member increased longevity, and mass baby boomer retirements are some of the factors that create the current 63.49% funding ratio. Leading to the obvious conclusion that the County and other KCERA member agencies will most likely be experiencing increased contribution rates for many years to come in addressing underfunded pension liabilities approaching 40% of assets. In performing its fiduciary duty, the KCERA Board must rely on the expertise of the actuary.

On another matter, the actuary has determined that there are 138 members entitled to an increase in their SRBR Tier 3 benefits starting on July 1, 2020. SRBR Tier 3 is a benefit that maintains 82% purchasing power protection. Mostly, members retired in the 1960s, 70s and 80s; possibly new beneficiaries of such members who elected 100% continuation may be entitled to this benefit; and new beneficiaries of deceased members who elected the temporary annuity option. Any questions concerning SRBR Tier 3 need to be directed to KCERA administration.

During the August KCERA Board meeting, the Board approved the consent agenda items (routine and non-controversial items); heard and approved presentations on: 2020 Actuarial Experience Study by Segal Consulting; Private Market Fund investing by staff; Mainstream Energy RFP by Verus Consulting; 2nd Quarter Investment Performance Review for the period ending June 30, 2020 by Verus; Hedge Investments by Alborne America LLC; SACRS slate of candidates by staff; KCERA SACRS voting delegation by staff and Actuarial Audit service by staff.

During the August KCERA Board meeting the Verus presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending June 30, 2020 as follows:

Total Assets - \$4,413,487,625 (Net of Fees)
1 Year – 3.3%
3 Years – 5.3%
5 Years – 5.5%
10 Years – 7.6%

As of June 30, 2020, the actuarial assumption rate was stated at 7.25% (expected long-term investment return) and current funding ratio of 63.5% (% of fund assets available to pay liabilities).

More detailed information and reporting with supporting documentation may be obtained from the KCERA website at www.kcera.org. All members are encouraged to attend Retirement Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month.

QUOTES

“Worrying is like paying a debt you don’t owe.”

~ Mark Twain

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

DO YOU HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

TREND EMAIL LIST CONTINUES TO GROW!

Thanks to all of you who have signed up for membership in the TREND Email list. We are almost up to saving **\$3,475.00 per year** and that's not chump change!

We need to keep this "trend" going. :)
So, if you have internet access, please email Mary Lou Bennett to sign up and help our budget.

To receive the TREND newsletter electronically:
Send an email to mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net with your name, current mailing address and your email address. (Subject: TREND mailing list).

KCERA UPDATE

Dominic Brown, KCERA Executive Director, has been attending REOKC General Meetings with updates for our members from KCERA. Since we've been unable to schedule meetings, he's providing us with a written update:

Dear REOKC Members,

Despite the challenges of the current environment, KCERA staff is continuing to work hard for our members. The portfolio remains in a strong position, ending the fiscal year at approximately \$4.4 billion. The fund withstood very volatile markets and returned a net of 3.0% for the fiscal year. Although this is less than the assumed rate of 7.25%, KCERA was ranked in the 18th percentile compared to our peers. The Board of Retirement approved changes to the asset allocation earlier this year, and those changes led KCERA's actuary to recommend that we keep the assumed rate the same for the next three years. If the assumed rate of return had moved to 7.0%, Kern County would have been required to pay an additional \$50 million in contributions over the next three years.

Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, KCERA's lobby remains completely closed and nearly all employees are working exclusively from home. Fortunately, technology has allowed us to continue providing services to our members almost completely uninterrupted. The best way to contact KCERA is to email memberservices@kcera.org. If members do not have email, it is still possible to leave phone mess-

ages at the office. Our average response time right now is one to two business days. If a matter requires personal attention, KCERA staff can assist members by hosting a video conference meeting on Zoom, and may even schedule a live appointment in the office if it becomes necessary to do so.

As a reminder, please continue to update KCERA as circumstances in your life change. The KCERA portal is a great way to update most information, including address changes. This will help make sure your 1099 is delivered on time and to the right place. It is also important for members to periodically review designated beneficiaries and make changes when appropriate to do so.

As always, it is a pleasure for the employees of KCERA to serve you. When REOKC luncheons resume, I look forward to seeing you there!

Dominic D. Brown
Executive Director, KCERA

(Our thanks go out to Mr. Brown for this report!)



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.**

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.



BENEFICIARY: Suzanne R. Hernandez;
Nancy C. Phillips

HUMAN SERVICES: Yahne Adams

PROBATION: Richard Kom

PUBLIC DEFENDER: Laurie MacGillivray-Mason

SHERIFF: Mike C. Brown

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



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

James Acord—General Services
James Brammer—Sheriff
Frank Chmiel—Planning & Comm. Devel.
Iris Combs—Library
Ronald Duckett—Probation
Mary Dunaway—Human Services
Anita Edwards—Human Services
Marcella Fader—Kern Medical Center
Charles Hernandez—Parks & Recreation
Louise Jones—General Services
Kathlyn Kline—Aging & Adult Services
Marie McNamee—Beneficiary
Sally Morrison—Beneficiary
Joe Nunez—Kern Health Systems
Robert Pendleton—District Attorney
Loren Phillips—Probation
Marilyn Richardson—Human Services
John R. Roberts—Probation
Ruth Schmitt—Beneficiary
Julian Simmons—Animal Services
Barbara Starkey—Kern Medical Center
Dana Stockton—Probation
William Sutor—Transportation Mgmt.
Michael Sullivan—Fire
Thomas Sweeney—Solid Waste Ent. Fund
Dorothy Swift—District Attorney
Johnnie Tenney—Fire
Robert Walker—Fire
Mary Williams—Sheriff
Pat Young—Human Services

*“A Life well-lived leaves behind
a beautiful bouquet of memories.”*

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. Bakersfield office is closed. 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 renewal office has not opened yet. What would normally take 2 to 4 weeks could take up to 2 months or longer. Hold on to your passport until the offices are open. The rule for renewal is if the passport had been issued within the last 15 years.

Princess Cruise Line - Coastal 14 day Alaska cruise roundtrip from LAX. July 3 - July 17, 2021 Sun Princess Depart from San Pedro, Ketchikan, Icy Strait Point, Juneau, cruise Hubbard Glacier, Skagway, Sitka, Prince Rupert British Columbia and back to Los Angeles. Balcony Cabin from \$3,887.88 per person including Premium Beverage Package, Wi-Fi, Gratuities and Vacation Protection Insurance. Offer may expire at any time.

Alaska 10 day Cruise roundtrip from SFO. June 10 - 20, 2021. Ruby Princess - Depart from SFO, Juneau, Skagway, Endicott Arm & Dawes Glacier, Ketchikan, Victoria-Canada and SFO. Balcony Cabin from \$2,756.33 per person including Premium Beverage Package, Wi-Fi, Gratuities and Vacation Protection Insurance. Offer may expire at any time.

Did you ever want to cruise the Mississippi River? We now have 2 cruise lines cruising and in 2022 we will have 3! American Queen Steamboat Company and American Cruise Line are both offering many discounts and themed cruises. How about a Kentucky Derby Cruise and attend the Derby for a full day of events! Or a Holiday Cruise! 4th of July, Christmas & New Years are offered!

Julie Salazar- Garcia (661) 324-6910
The Cruise Port, 1800 Oak St., Suite D, Bakersfield, CA

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 _____

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
mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net

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

KCERA Board Retiree Member

- Phil Franey –
franep@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**

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- ~ There's no compensation for work that can equal the love of doing it.
- ~ Happiness isn't always found in searching for it. It can come quietly when you are serving others.
- ~ Some folks may succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to.
- ~ You can never do a kindness too soon, because you never know how soon it will be too late.
- ~ If we fill our hours with regrets of yesterday and with worries of tomorrow, we have no today in which to be thankful.

REOKC AWARDS SEVEN \$2,000 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2020

REOKC is proud to announce the awarding of seven \$2,000 scholarships; one to each of the following graduating seniors this year:



Breanna Bailey will be attending:
California State University
Bakersfield.

REOKC member:
Eva Bailey Nugent, Grandmother

Shane Ball will be attending:
University of Colorado, Boulder

REOKC member:
Anthony R. Brent, Grandfather



Eleni Keith will be attending:
Texas Tech.

REOKC Member:
Joan Salem, Grandmother

Caitlyn McMillian will be
attending: University of
Washington at Seattle
REOKC member:
Linda McMillian, Grandmother



Myka Norton will be attending:
California State University
Bakersfield.

REOKC members:
Debbie Black & Lloyd Norton,
Grandparents

Cassie Varley will be attending:
Bakersfield College

REOKC member:
Lois Varley, Grandmother



Frankie Hernandez-Walker
will be attending:
Bakersfield College

REOKC member:
Lorraine Hernandez,
Grandmother

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.



NEED A LAPTOP, COMPUTER OR TABLET?

Get up to \$1000 for
a new computer,
laptop or tablet with
STRATA
CREDIT UNION'S
0% APR* Computer
Loan.

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. For a \$1000.00 loan at 0% APR for a term of 18 months, the monthly payment will be \$55.56. This offer applies to the purchase of a home computer, laptop or tablet. Purchase order or bill of sale is required and funds will be paid directly to the merchant. Loan is subject to credit approval.

**100% financing is available to a maximum loan amount of \$1000.00. Strata Credit Union membership and a share savings account with a minimum deposit of \$5.00 is required. Federally insured by NCUA.

STRATA
CREDIT UNION

www.stratacu.org
661.327.9461

**Retired Employees of Kern County
P.O. Box 2592
Bakersfield, CA 93303**

**PRSRT-STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BAKERSFIELD, CA
PERMIT NO. 349**

**September & October 2020
Time Dated Material**

**Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.**

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!