



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXV-II

MARCH & APRIL 2015

www.reokc.org

Phil Franey, President

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



President's Message Phil Franey

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.

The following article was sent by CRCEA (California Retired County Employees Association) to REOKC members and the public in support of public employee pensions.

Differences Between Private & Public Pension Movements

**By Mike DeBord, Co-Chair CRCEA Retirement
Security Committee**

The 1987 movie "Wall Street" demonstrated how the corporate "Greed is Good!" philosophy helped destroy defined benefit pensions in the private sector. Through corporate mergers and acquisitions, the prize was often looting employee pension plans, especially the over-funded plans. Unfortunately, the **real life scenario that occurred over the last 30 years in corporate America has in fact eliminated most private sector defined benefit pension plans.** They were most often replaced with 401(k) savings plans. But when you ask U.S. workers which plan they would prefer for retirement security, they respond with a preference for a guaranteed stream of pension payments provided through defined benefit plans vs. the do-it-yourself 401(k) plans that are subject to volatility, leakage through loans, high fees and often grossly underfunded.

So why did private sector workers let this happen to them? And what are the differences in what happened in the private sector and the pension reform movement in the public sector?

In the **private sector**, the elimination of worker pensions came not only through mergers, acquisitions and bankruptcies but from CEO's simply imposing the changes on their workers. Examples show a pattern of CEO's announcing that there was a problem with the pension fund (which in many cases there wasn't) and advising employees of a new and better pension replacement plan, such as a "cash balance pension plan" or "pension equity plan" and later, the infamous "401(k) savings plan". **Comparisons of the differences between the old and new plan were often not provided to employees or masked** so employees didn't know the full effect of the change until they were ready to retire. Private sector unions that had previously represented worker interests were mostly gone by this time. And for corporate CEO's, it must have been like "taking candy from a baby" and they were richly rewarded through pay-for-performance measures for their actions. The average annual compensation for Fortune 500 CEO's is now \$10.8 million or **257 times average worker pay** (who no longer has a pension).

In the **public sector**, changes to pensions are being attempted through voter initiatives, either to close public pension systems or to eliminate legal protections for pensions. But public sector unions are still in place representing employee interests. And top executive pay in government is closer to **6 times average worker pay** and they are not financially rewarded for duping their employees out of their pensions. But probably the most important difference is that we now have evidence that the 401(k) savings plans that were never designed to replace pensions are becoming a real financial disaster for private sector retirees. The question is: **Why would anyone want to follow a failed private sector strategy (or more appropriately, a gimmick) that is currently producing such devastating financial results for our American workers?** The answer is: **We shouldn't follow; we should fight to protect our defined benefit plans!**

Just a reminder - you need to think about preparing your federal and state income tax returns unless you

(President's Message continued on page 2)

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).

When you receive your monthly payment advice from KCERA, please read the Special Message section and carefully review your payment advice. If you have any questions whatsoever, call KCERA Administration for needed explanation and information. You are also reminded to read KCERA newsletters and any other special communication for information that may benefit you.

More good news for you: a COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) as of April 1st will be seen on your retirement check at the end of April. According to Segal Consulting (KCERA’s Actuary), the COLA amount is based upon a comparison with the annual average CPI (Consumer Price Index) for the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County Area (with 1982-84 as the base period) in each of the past two years, i.e. 2013 & 2014. Our COLA is limited to a maximum of 2.0% pursuant to Section 318760 of the 1937 Act. However the maximum COLA is increased by an additional 0.5% (to 2.5%) based upon the "Ventura Settlement" and funded through the Supplement Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR). Due to the fluctuation of the CPI over the years and dependent upon when you retired your COLA may be affected. If you have not been able to build up a reserve in your COLA account there may not be enough to bring your COLA adjustment up to the maximum of 2.5% when the CPI adjustment falls below the maximum COLA allowance. Based upon your retirement date, the following COLA rates will be applied this year for retirees and beneficiaries:

Retirement Date	COLA
On or before on April 1, 2002	2.5%
April 2, 2002 to April 1, 2004	1.5%
April 2, 2004 to April 1, 2005	1.0%
April 2, 2005 to April 1, 2012	1.5%
April 2, 2012 to April 1, 2015	1.0%

As always, direct all question concerning the COLA to KCERA Administration.

Pensions & Investments, The International Magazine of Money Management, listed the largest retirement funds in the United States as of September 30, 2014 with KCERA ranked as number 440 out of the top 1,000. So how about some more current information on KCERA as of Decem-

ber 31, 2014: total assets - \$3,687,814, 000 (yes, billions), with a membership of 17,353 (active - 8,536; retirees and beneficiaries - 7,615 (REOKC has more than 4,800 of those members); and deferred and reciprocal - 1,204.

All members are encouraged to attend Retirement Board Meetings (see page 3 for dates and times).

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE continued from page 1

have already filed. There are free services for the elderly and for simple returns by some tax preparation and filing services including the County Office of Aging and Adult Services. As you are reminded to change the batteries in your home smoke/fire alarm at daylight saving time changes, you need to perform a few important tasks at the same time you prepare and file your personal income taxes. You need to request a free annual credit report at www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228. This report is available for free once a year – do not pay for it unless you want a report more often. This annual checkup of your credit is just one of many measures you can take to minimize your risk of credit fraud. You also need to review and update all your important documents at this same time - will, trust, banking, investment, pension and deferred compensation beneficiary designations, etc. and make sure your advance health care directive is current.

As an ongoing reminder to save publishing and mailing costs, all of our 4,800 plus members are encouraged to request placement on REOKC’s email list by contacting Mary Lou Bennett at mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net to receive the TREND and timely notices concerning important retirement matters. You also may access past TREND issues and other important retiree information at reokc.org.

Don’t forget our next luncheon will be on March 10th with serving by table number beginning at 11:30 A.M. The general meeting will begin at 12:00 Noon. Your REOKC Board also wishes you a healthy and happy St. Patrick’s Day and Easter, I leave you with the following quote:

***“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild,
to pick up a book and read to a child.”***

Dr. Seuss

*“There is nothing wrong with America that the
faith, love of freedom, intelligence and energy of
her citizens cannot cure.”*

Dwight D. Eisenhower

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).

Host/Hostess Project

During the month of December 2014, 30 volunteers worked 90 hours assisting 997 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of January 2015, 29 volunteers worked 87 hours assisting 963 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

Since 1992 our volunteers have worked over 27,400 hours assisting more than 335,000 visitors to the County Administrative Complex at 1115 Truxtun Ave.!

There is always a need for volunteers; please contact Barbara Goodlow at 304-0677 if interested.

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!

UPCOMING TRIPS:

Alaska Trips - on sale now—Call for promotional rates

Table Mountain Casino—Wednesday, March 4, 2015
(RSVP by Monday, March 2, 2015)

Tachi Casino -Tuesday, March 24, 2015
(RSVP by Monday, March 23, 2015)

Call **Julie** at **The CruisePort**, (661 324-6910) with any questions or to make reservations for these or other trips.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10 REOKC Board Meeting 10:00 am
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

March 10 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon
General Meeting 12:00 noon
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

March 11 KCERA Board Meeting:
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

April 8 KCERA Board Meeting:
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

April 14 REOKC Board Meeting 10:00 am
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

April 14 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon
General Meeting 12:00 noon
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS

March 10, 2015:

Robert Rodriguez from the California Highway Patrol will be speaking on safe driving tips for seniors.

April 14, 2015:

Katie Claborn with the Victim Advocate Volunteer Program, District Attorney's Office, will be speaking on elder abuse.

LUNCHEON MENUS

March 10th, 2015

Corned Beef and Cabbage
Red Potatoes and Carrots
Napa Salad—Rolls
Pumpkin Pie with Cool Whip
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



April 14th, 2015

Lasagna—Garlic Bread
Buttered Corn
Santa Maria Salad
Lemon Cake
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



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 \$4.00 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) _____

Social Security # _____

Signature _____

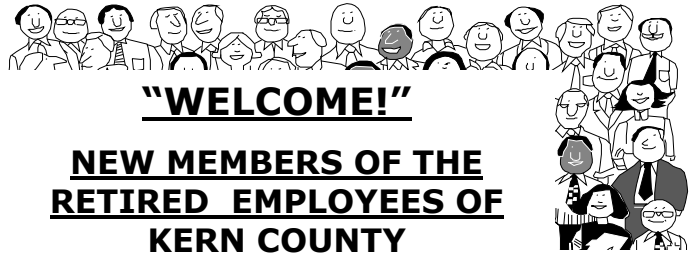
Date _____

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

AGING & ADULT SERVICES: Joan S. Curtis

ASSESSOR: Marsha Harwardt

BUILDING INSPECTION: Steven Brennan

COUNTY ADM. OFFICE: Adel Klein

COUNTY COUNSEL: Antoine Escobar

EMP. TRG. RESOURCE: Christina Berry

ENVIRON. HEALTH SERVICE: Brian Pitts

FARM & HOME ADV.: Kimberlee Willey

FIRE: Emil Alvarado; Don Brady; Michael W. Cody;

Donald Davis; Milton Delano; Robert Doty; Janice

Hayes; Brenda Miller; Fermin Torres

GENERAL SERVICES: Danny Dillard

HUMAN SERVICES: Elena M. Acosta; Jess Castaneda;

Jerrilyn Davis; Pauline Davis; Judy De La Cruz;

Deanne Estes; Bonnie Grady; Robert V. Jones;

Sandra Matlock; Randi L. Patrick; Michelle D.

Sebresos; Colleen Smith; Avon Thompson

INFO. TECH. SERVICES: Margarita Hale

K.C. WATER AGENCY: Florn R. Core

KERN MEDICAL CENTER: Mary Aquirre; Jill E.

Borgsdorf; Donald Fawn; Carol Gates; Frances

Harris; Connie S. Lee;

PARKS & RECREATION: Robert D. Phillips

RECORDER: Jeanine Meinzer

RISK MANAGEMENT: Ralph Korn

ROADS: Royce Edmiaston; Jack Forbes

S.J. VALLEY UAPCD: Denise Holmes; Stephanie Shaw

SHERIFF: Mark S. Banducci; Laurie Kay Freeland;

Cheryl R. Longwith; Natalie Marion; Virgil G. Miller;

Charlene Powers

SUPERIOR COURT: Ronald Deabenderfer;

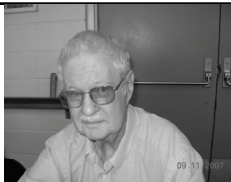
Barby Morse; Angelina O. Salazar

BAKERSFIELD HOMELESS CENTER

Throughout the years, at our regular monthly meetings/luncheons, donations for the Homeless are made by our REOKC members.

This last year on December 23, 2014, REOKC presented the Bakersfield Homeless Center with a check for **\$343.00** which was the total donated by our members in 2014. Thanks to all of you who made this donation possible!

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



PARTISANISM

By **WALTER E. STEWART**

Let's look at our Machiavellian political behavior and recognize our partisan intolerance. A substantial part of our country is governed by many close-minded constituents who will not admit to the culpability stated in this writing. There's an old saying, "If the shoe fits, wear it." Our brainwashed populace (that's most of us) are corrupted by partisanism. Republicans blame Democrats. Democrats blame Republicans. The blame game goes on and on.

A plurality of the Senate and House appear to be an aggregation of affiliated partisan dogmatists who refuse to collaborate with their colleges across the isle and thusly, if for no other reason, arguably curtail legislation owing to sectarian malice.



Stop the partisanism

Americans mostly vote prejudicial partisan doctrine and shun bipartisan open-minded amicability and analytical rationalization. If you are offended when you hear a person make derogatory accusations about your political persuasion, stop and think—do you do the same thing? After all is said and done, The United States is the greatest nation. We are free to criticize our leaders and make fools of ourselves by expressing our intolerance. To characterize our deportment in Shakespearean vernacular, what fools we mortals are.

Opinions expressed are that of the author and not that of REOKC.

Walter E. Stewart

Kern County District Attorney's Victim Advocate Volunteer Program

Join our Team and Help Make a Difference: Volunteers are an important part of the Victim Services Unit in Kern County. Volunteers may assist Victim Advocates by providing support to victims, answering questions and by assisting in the preparation of Temporary Restraining Orders.

Volunteers must be willing to commit to a minimum of six months, work at least 8 hours per week (can be split between two 4 hour days) and complete and pass a background check. Participation in the 40 hour Victim Services Volunteer Training Program is mandatory.

Contact: Katie Claborn, Victim Advocate—661 868-7617

kclaborn@co.kern.ca.us

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.

REOKC Endorsed Insurance and Other Supplemental Benefits

- Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.
1-800-817-8838
1-800-511-9065

REOKC Other Related Services

- Trend Editor
- Host/Hostess - Volunteer Program
- Membership
- Address/Email Change *
- Scholarship Program

Mary Lou Bennett 661-871-5270

mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net

- Luncheon Reservations
Brenda Preston 661-835-0294
- Sunshine (Cards of Expression)
Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222

KCERA Board Retiree Member

- Phil Franey –
franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—John De Mario
jjdmario@aol.com

Kern County District Attorney's Office

- Elder Abuse: Katie Claborn
661-868-7617 or kclaborn@co.kern.ca.us

REOKC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



In 2012, REOKC's Board of Directors established a scholarship program for our members' children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews who are in their senior year of high school.

For the past three years, REOKC has awarded two (2) scholarships of \$750.00 each to relatives of our members. We are now accepting applications for the 2015 scholarship awards which again will be \$750.00, awarded to two students who qualify and will be attending an accredited trade school or university/college.

Detailed application information/forms are available on our website: www.reokc.org. Forms must be completed, printed, signed and mailed no later than April 15th.

Each applicant will provide verification of school attendance and a GPA of 2.5 or better. Each applicant will submit a typed, double spaced, 200-300 word essay which will include the following as appropriate:

- Community service they have performed
 - Service clubs in which they have participated
 - Career goals and further educational plans
- Three letters of recommendation from teachers or community leaders will be required.

Essays and application information will be judged by a panel of three REOKC members, at least one of which will be a member of the REOKC Board of Directors. These judges have been appointed by the REOKC President with Board approval. Each application will be given a number so the identity of any applicant will not be known to the judges. Annual scholarships to be limited to one member per family.

SMILE

- If you didn't begin the day with a smile, it's not too late to start practicing for tomorrow.
- Smile when you're angry. It'll confuse your brain.
- Want to waste an entire day? Don't laugh.



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

Betty Berg—Kern Medical Center
Floyd Bosworth—Roads
Opal Brown—Human Services
Mary Buchanan—Sheriff
Nellie Cheatham—Development Services
Barbara Cherek—Child Support
Nancy Combs—Library
Carolyn Glass—Human Services
Carmen Gomez—General Services
Kelly Graham—Human Services
Tomas Guerrero—Roads
Betty A. Harrison—Airports
Richard Hayes—Fire
Frank Hue—Public Defender
Bonnie Hutcheson—Human Services
Donald L. Jones—General Services
Margaret Jones—Human Services
Marian Jones—District Attorney
Robert W. Knight—Probation
Michael Lefebvre—Probation
Eunice Marshall—Sheriff
Phyllis McQuilliams—Health Department
Barbara Norbury—Kern Medical Center
Dixie Owens—Kern Medical Center
Victoria Pendleton—Probation
Deborah Pike-Spradley—Kern Medical Center
Richard A. Priddy—Fire
Ruby E. Rawlins—Human Services
Verlon Robinson—Fire
William K. Robinson—Airports-Ent. Fund
Nancy L. Sherman—Kern Medical Center
Margie Tessener—Human Services
Cindy Thum—Kern Medical Center
Daniel Trost—ER Medical Service
Varlene Turner—CA Children Services
Augustina Urrutia—Human Services
Martha Walters—Health Department
Eugene White—Fire
Bertha Young—Parks & Recreation

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.

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* One rate for all balances transferred. Rate offer good for the life of the transferred balance. Rates for additional purchases and charges subject to standard terms and conditions.

** APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Balance transfer rates start as low as 5.90% and are based on qualification. The rate for new balance transfers received after 3/31/2015 will be the rate disclosed in your Account Opening Disclosure. This credit union is federally insured by NCUA.



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

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

**March & April 2015
Time Dated Material**

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

March Luncheon Reservation

March 10th, 2015—11:30 to noon, Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD**. If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801**. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (03/04/15). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 204-4386 or Mary Thorp at (661) 832-5578 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00) _____ Spouse (\$5.00) _____
Member's Phone No. (required) _____ Email _____
Guest (\$8.00) _____ Total tickets _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

April Luncheon Reservation

April 14th, 2015—11:30 to noon, Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD**. If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801**. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (04/08/15). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 204-4386 or Mary Thorp at (661) 832-5578 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00) _____ Spouse (\$5.00) _____
Member's Phone No. (required) _____ Email _____
Guest (\$8.00) _____ Total tickets _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____