



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXIII-IV

July & August 2013

www.reokc.org

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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.

In this article I will provide an update on the May KCERA Finance Committee Meeting agenda item to change SRBR funding, REOKC second annual Scholarship program, REOKC third annual Health and Wellness Fair, and REOKC 21 year Volunteer Program. I hope you realize that your REOKC Board of Directors is making every effort to fulfill our mission to protect our benefits, educate our members on important retirement issues, and advocate for maintaining our quality of retirement life.

During the May 23, 2013 KCERA Finance Committee (Committee) Meeting, an agenda item was presented by the KCERA Actuary to change the funding of the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR). The Actuary only addressed changes to SRBR accounting, not matters relating to law. According to California Law, the SRBR calculation method mandates that any KCERA fund excess earnings be equally divided, 50% of the total to the County to fund the County's retirement liability and the other 50% to the SRBR for funding retiree benefits. **According to law, the sole purpose of funding SRBR is to provide benefits for retirees and beneficiaries to offset the loss of purchasing power due to annual inflation.** SRBR currently provides various categories of supplemental retiree benefits as follows:

- Tier 1 – \$35.50 per month payable to retirees who were hired on or before July 1, 1994.
- Tier 2 – Three additional monthly stipends payable to retirees:

- a. \$1,372 per year of service for Members who retired prior to 1985. This was granted July 1, 1994.
 - b. \$5,470 per year of service for Members who retired prior to 1985. This was granted July 1, 1996.
 - c. \$10,276 per year of service for Members who retired prior to 1981. This was granted July 1, 1997.
- Tier 3 – Additional benefits to maintain 80% purchasing power protection.
 - Death Benefit – A one-time payment of \$3,000 to a Member's beneficiary is made upon the death of the Member.
 - The Retirement Board has set aside a portion of the SRBR Reserve to help pay for an additional 0.5% COLA adopted under the Ventura Settlement. By now you should have noticed a new Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for 2013 pension payments.

According to California law, the KCERA Board must send reasonable notice to REOKC and allow a reasonable time for REOKC to comment on any proposed changes to retirement benefits. Before the May Committee Meeting, our REOKC attorney submitted a letter to the Committee addressing our concerns about the KCERA Board's legal authority, fiduciary duty to retirees and beneficiaries, and past efforts to change the **funding of SRBR - clearly protected by the California Constitution**. Our attorney's letter (posted on REOKC.org) included a supporting opinion by John Kennedy, KCERA's fiduciary counsel. Coincidentally, John Kennedy's opinion was submitted and presented previously to some of the same Committee members during a KCERA November 2012 Board meeting. His opinion stated that **according to law the primary obligation of the KCERA Board is to participants and beneficiaries, not to the benefit of plan sponsors (such as the County), and to the detriment of participants and beneficiaries**. Otherwise, this would be a breach of the KCERA Board's fiduciary duty. During the May meeting and after the Actuary's SRBR presentation, the Committee held an executive session (non-public) to be advised by John Kennedy, as fiduciary counsel, in this matter. Following the Committee's executive session with John Kennedy, the Committee returned to public session and announced that no action would be taken at that time. Interestingly, the Committee declined to request another fiduciary counsel opinion (a standard practice in such matters), either before or during the meeting. The obvious reason for such political interest in SRBR

(President's Message continued on Page 2)



YOUR RETIREMENT BOARD

by **Norman Briggs**

Greetings - Summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere on June 20, 2013, at 10:04 PM (PDT), the first day of summer—the summer solstice bringing associated rise in temperatures. Let's hope the market continues its record setting pace.

At the last board meeting on June 10th several items of interest were on the agenda. On the consent agenda item 19, was a letter from REOKC's attorney regarding proposed changes to the Interest Crediting policy which would affect SRBR (Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve fund). Item 33 was a presentation by our Chief Investment Officer reporting on 2013's 1st Quarter performance. Some highlights were:

- total assets up from \$3.10 to \$3.17 billion
- the plan outperformed the policy index by 90 basis points
- ranked in the 63rd percentile of the BNY/Melon Public Fund universe
- our plan's one, three, and five year gross of fee returns were 9.8%, 8.1% and 3.7% respectively

To view these items in detail, please copy and paste these links in your browser:

http://www.kcera.org/pdf/Agendas_2013/2013_06_10_special_board/Item19.pdf

http://www.kcera.org/pdf/Agendas_2013/2013_06_10_special_board/Item33.pdf

My column is being kept short so the President's excellent column could be accommodated. Stay cool and have a nice summer, see you July 9th.

Norman

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—Continued from Page 1

funds is that the County is intent on using SRBR funding for its retirement liability. Fortunately, the KCERA Board has been advised for many years of its legal, fiduciary duty that clearly mandates that SRBR funds, allocated and unallocated, must be used solely for the benefit of retirees and beneficiaries. I suppose Winston Churchill said it best when he stated, *"The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is."* Your REOKC Board will continue to be vigilant and also seek KCERA Board approval to use available SRBR funds to improve benefits as intended by law, such as increasing the death benefit.

Annually available to immediate family members, your REOKC Board of Directors offers and awards scholarships. This year we offered two \$750 scholarships to high school seniors. Scholarship program information was

sent out to the membership concerning the application filing for immediate family members. All scholarship requirements and timelines are provided on our website (reokc.org) along with the application form. We must all thank Teresa Vasquez and her committee for a job well done.

We are again planning to conduct the REOKC Health and Wellness Fair (Fair) during the day (9:00A-3:00P) of our July 9 BBQ luncheon (free to our members and spouses). The third annual Fair will be a similar format as last year. Steve Pettee of Pacific Group Agencies, Inc. is coordinating an effort to have representatives of various REOKC endorsed benefit providers (dental, pet, travel, legal, etc.) at the Fair. Eric Barthel of HUB International, our healthcare consultant, is coordinating with CVS for a pharmacist to provide advice on members prescribed drugs (bring your medication list and dosage) and Kaiser Permanente staff to provide various health screenings and health information. This also will be the first year that we have Julie Salazar-Garcia of The Cruise Port, our newly partnered travel agent and consultant, who will be available to assess member travel interests. Yes, travel is an important aspect of wellness. I must give special recognition to Jeanne Berkshire and her committee for all of their hard work in preparing for a successful Fair.

As I mentioned in the last TREND, every day our retirees and their families unselfishly volunteer their time and effort for community projects and causes. Many retirees and spouses also have volunteered their time at the information desk in the Kern County Administrative Building lobby on Truxtun Avenue. Since 1992 to this past May, the volunteer program has assisted more than 315,000 visitors for over 25,000 hours of public service. In recognition of this effort, the 21st annual luncheon was hosted by the Board of Supervisors and General Services for our volunteer retirees and spouses. Later that afternoon, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed Volunteer Host and Hostess Day in Kern County. We must also thank Mary Lou Bennett and her volunteers for a job well done.

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 timely notice concerning important retirement matters. You may also access past TREND issues and other important retiree information at reokc.org.

Don't forget our next luncheon will be on July 9 with serving by table number beginning at 11:30 A.M. The general meeting will begin at 12:00 Noon with no agenda, but the health fair will run from 9:00A to 3:00P.

"Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear." - [Mahatma Gandhi](#)

Phil

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 April 2013, 34 volunteers worked 104 hours assisting 1,103 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of May 2013, 31 volunteers worked 93 hours assisting 852 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

Since 1992 our volunteers have worked over 25,450 hours assisting more than 315,400 visitors to the County Administrative Complex at 1115 Truxtun Ave.!

There is always a need for additional volunteers. Please contact **Mary Lou at 871-5270** if interested.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

July 9, 2013:

Luncheon Entertainment—**Tony Rinaldi** will be playing the key board. Tony has played at the Crystal Palace, the Padre Hotel, Dagneys and other venues around Bakersfield.

August 13, 2013:

Bob Laramee, President of Cal State's Sixty Plus Club, will be our speaker.

OXYMORONS:

- old news, even odds, civil war, inside out, half naked,
- open secret, sight unseen, baby grand, final draft,
- loose tights, student teacher, original copy, growing small,
- awful good, voice mail, loyal opposition, dry ice,
- random order, divorce court, criminal justice, plastic silverware



July 9 Health & Wellness Fair 9:00 am—3:00 pm
Norris Road Veterans' Hall
REOKC FREE Luncheon—Tickets required
(For Members and Spouses Only)
Norris Road Veterans' Hall
Lunch served from 11:30 am to 12:00 noon

July 10 KCERA Board Meeting:
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

August 13 REOKC Board Meeting 10:00 am
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

August 13 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon
General Meeting 12:00 noon
Norris Road Veterans' Hall

August 14 KCERA Board Meeting:
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

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!

LUNCHEON MENUS

July 9th, 2013
Hamburgers/Hot Dogs
Chili Beans - Cole Slaw
Fresh Fruit Salad
Peach Cobbler
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



August 13th, 2013
Sirloin Tips—Sinful Potatoes
Green Beans with Bacon
Santa Maria Salad—Macaroni Salad
Rolls—Strawberry Shortcake
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 the KCERA office.

- 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, Inc. 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: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Detach form and send to:

KCERA / 11125 River Run Blvd. / Bakersfield / 93311

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: Kenneth Reyes

AGRICULTURAL & MEASURE: Louis Cervantes

AIR POLLUTION CONT. DIST.: David Jones

AIRPORTS—ENT. FUND: Jack Gotcher

ASSESSOR: Marjorie Bierman; James Thompson

BUILDING INSPECTION: Steven Adams; Rory Regan

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES: Catherine Garcia;
Mary Johnson

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Victoria Schallock

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES: Fred Rolin

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Janette Ort;

Nicholas Palmisano; Joel Pichardo; Susana Ruiz

EMPLOYERS TRG. RESOURCE: Gloria Aleman;
Benigno Martinez

ENGINEERING & SURVEY: Richard Lloyd

FIRE: Christopher Angello; Kevin Harper;

Anthony Martinez; Randall McCarver; Thomas Patlan;
Larry Shearer

HEALTH DEPT.: Luis Torres

HUMAN SERVICES: Margarita Adame; Sara Diaz;
Jaime Nunnenkamp; Brian Ohotto; Diana Towery;
Constance Valdez; Maria Velez

INFO. TECH. SERVICES: Sharon Schooley

KERN MEDICAL CENTER: Julia Adams; Florence
Alacar; Kenneth Fleming; Debra Gonzales; Calyn
Mc Grath; Lynn Nagatani; Trinidad Noriega;
Sandra Rebeske; Yolanda Terrazas

KERN MOSQUITO & VECTOR: Linda Sanderson

KERN WATER AGENCY: Phillip Holderness

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: Celeste Clancy;
Kenneth Collins; Jana Swearingin

PERSONNEL: Joyce Anderson

PROBATION: Pamela Arango; Guadalupe Perez

RISK MANAGEMENT: Cynthia Street

ROADS: Larry Benson; Timothy Douhan;
Rene Marroquin

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UAP: Daniel Barber;
Lance Ericksen

SHERIFF: Utah Allen; Scott Burnett; Marcia Dickey;
Roxan Joyner; Rhonda Porter; Richard Wood

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROG.: Sharon Way

SUPERIOR COURT: Juan Cobian; Ruth Deabenderfer;
Minnal Hummel

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



SKULLDUGGERY FROM THE PAST

By WALTER E. STEWART

Old-time Bakersfield residents remember the Beale Memorial Clock Tower that majestically stood in the center of the intersection at Chester Avenue and 17th Street. Truxtun Beale constructed the clock tower in 1904 for a memorial to his mother. The clock tower was severely damaged in the 1952 earthquake resultant in it being razed that same year. I photographed the clock tower in November, 1950. I added two additional clock towers to the photo; one at 18th Street, and another at 19th Street. The old saying, "Photographs don't lie," is not true when I'm whimsically having fun.



Nothing would be accomplished, at this juncture, by disclosing the identity of the deceased woman who borrowed a matted 8" x 10" print of my photograph. She, who was a well-known and respected pillar of the community, stated she wanted to show it to a friend. I was honored by her request. She returned my photo and I thought nothing more about it. I didn't know her intention was to plagiarize my photo until, by a quirk of chance, I happened to see a framed copy hanging in the office of a now deceased Kern County Department head who didn't know

the photo was purloined. I was incensed by her betrayal when I learned she took credit for my photograph. Larceny can be forgiven, but her deceitful act cannot be erased and will forever sully my remembrance of her.

REOKC'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

REOKC is happy to announce that we are hosting our Third Annual Health and Wellness Fair on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 from 9:00 to 3:00 PM at Veteran's Hall on Norris Road. There is no charge for this event and all retirees (and spouses) are welcome, regardless if they purchase their retiree health insurance from the County.

The theme of this year's event is "Prescription Drug Round Up". Please either bring all the prescription drugs you take (as well as over-the counter drugs, vitamins and herbal remedies) and you can meet with a Registered Pharmacist to make sure the drugs you're taking aren't going to result in dangerous interactions. If you don't want to bring your bottles of prescriptions, please bring a list of the drugs you're taking, including the dosage and frequency.

Our health benefit consultants, Eric Barthel and Sharon Catania from Sidles Duncan & Associates, are working with Kaiser Permanente, Liberty Dental, Pacific Group Agencies, Liberty Mutual, VSP and other vendors to provide information, tools and services that will help you manage your health more effectively and have a positive impact on your health

Just like last year's Health and Wellness Fair, REOKC is providing a way for members to obtain information from local, credible sources of healthcare information and to continue building on our culture of good health and wellness.

Lastly, a raffle for door prizes will be held at the end of the health fair. You have to attend to participate in the raffle, but do not have to be present at the time of the drawing. We had some pretty good prizes last year, so don't miss out on your opportunity to participate in this year's raffle.

We look forward to seeing you at our Third Annual Health and Wellness Fair!

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- Growing old is no more than a habit which a busy
- person has no time to form.
- Hardening of the heart ages people more quickly
- than hardening of the arteries.
- The most valuable inheritance you can leave your
- children is not a lot of money, but rather the example
- you set in life.



HEALTHY NOTES

DIABETES

By Audrey Cochran, APRN, BC, CCCN

Would you be more motivated to not eat desert if you knew being overweight can cause not only heart problems, but diabetes which can cause Alzheimer's (by some authors called type 3 diabetes)? That's the only cause of death among the top 10 that cannot be prevented, cured, or even slowed. For every one of the 5.4 million people who have it, there are about 3 unpaid caregivers, and when they get worn out and develop health problems within an average of 3 years, because of the stress and strain, the Alzheimer's victim ends up in a nursing home, paid for by the family or the government.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has made this situation worse. It approved High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS), a cheap sugar substitute developed to help farmers fatten their cows faster (time is money) then it was adopted by food manufacturers because it's cheaper than price subsidized sugar. The FDA says it has never approved HFCS-90 because it says it "does not have adequate information to assess the safety of...the final product." But the Corn Refiners' Association, a lobbying group that represents the companies that manufacture this supposedly banned ingredient, recently admitted it has been in use "with FDA knowledge for decades." In blatant violation of government regulations, one manufacturer, Archer Daniels Midland, even markets a non-FDA approved food product, Cornsweet 90 on its corporate website. Defend your health by reading labels carefully. You'll find HFCS in "diet" sodas, most fruit juices, fresh or frozen, and even in deli potato salad.

What can you do if you have already slipped into diabetes? Low blood levels of magnesium are common among type 2 diabetic patients. One big meta-analysis of nine good-quality studies found patients who got a dose of 360 mg. of magnesium a day for 1-4 months had a significantly lower fasting glucose levels, HDL (good) cholesterol rose 0.1 mmol/L, but there were no changes in total or LDL cholesterol or triglycerides, and there was no significant change in either HbA1C or blood pressure. The amount needed varies by age and gender. Usually men over 31 need 420 mg. and women over 31 need 320 mg. Vanadium acts like insulin by increasing glucose uptake by cells, and it also reduces insulin resistance. The best sources are grains, mushrooms, wine, beer, dill weed, parsley, black pepper and shellfish. Chromium is an essential mineral for metabolizing blood sugar and fats, and is found in wine, beer, coffee, tea, brown sugar, molasses and brewers' yeast. It is known that severe chromium deficiency can cause reversible insulin resistance and diabetes. The effects of chromium supplementation in diabe-

tics show mixed results, and should not be used by people with liver or kidney diseases. Those with psychiatric disorders should avoid supplementing with chromium since it has an unpredictable effect on neurotransmitter levels – the site of action by many antipsychotic drugs.

One expert noted that preliminary evidence suggests the effects of some dietary supplements on HbA1C in diabetics lower it comparably to or even better than the anti-diabetes drugs currently available.



**WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER
OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:**

- Leora Adams—Emergency Medical Services
- Polly Bace—Human Services
- Evelyn Bertolet—Kern Medical Center
- David Conley—Fire
- James R. Cox—Sheriff
- Meallean Creswell—General Services
- Velma Daugherty—Kern Medical Center
- Mildred Gibson—Human Services
- Minnie Green—General Services
- Karen Houle—Superior Court
- Marolyn Johnson—Human Services
- Mildred Munding—Sheriff
- Muriel Parker—Library
- James Pryor—Kern Medical Center
- Salvador Salazar—Assessor
- Helen S. Saldana—Kern Medical Center
- Joanne Simon—Superior Court
- Oliver Starkey—Probation
- Frances L. Stowers—Airports - Enterprise Fund
- Elaine Tanner—Library
- Charlotte Torrey—Probation
- Charles Townsend—Human Services
- Sue Vandernoer—Kern Medical Center



The surviving spouse of a regular member is eligible for REOKC membership; just complete the Payroll Deduction Form on Page 4 and mail it to KCERA, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield, CA 93311.

NOTICE: The information presented in the TREND is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by REOKC, the Editor, or the writers for inaccuracies in the articles published. Opinions of the writers are not necessarily the opinions of the REOKC Board. REOKC does not sell or disclose information about our members to third parties.

24/7 Member Service



You call. We answer. It's that easy.

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Federal Credit Union

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

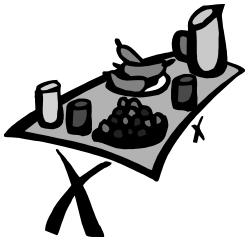
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July & August 2013
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Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

FREE July Luncheon Reservation—Members & Spouses Only (TICKETS REQUIRED)

July 9th, 2013—Lunch served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Veterans' Hall, 400 Norris Road



If you wish to attend, please complete this reservation form to request your tickets and send it with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801** before July 3, 2013.

(Reservations **not** necessary for payroll deduction members.)

Member's name _____ Spouse _____

Member's Phone # _____ Total tickets _____ (This is not a valid ticket)

August Luncheon Reservation

August 13th, 2013 -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 (08/07/13). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 835-0294 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 \$ _____