



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXVII-V

September & October 2017

www.reokc.org

John De Mario, President

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



President's Message

JOHN DE MARIO

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.

On Wednesday, August 16, 2017, the KCERA Finance Committee held a meeting to recommend to the Board of Retirement a new "SRBR Policy" and to discuss a "SRBR Benefit Improvement Study". The "SRBR Policy", which was the first item on the agenda, was recommended as written. You can see that policy by going to www.kcera.org and clicking on the agenda items for Wednesday, August 16, 2017.

The second item on the agenda, "SRBR Benefit Improvement Study", was a study of the availability of funds to increase the SRBR allocation. The study covered two basic improvements for KCERA members. The first benefit discussed was an additional benefit titled SRBR 4. This benefit would be either a \$15 or \$20 payment (the amount to be decided at a later date) based on your employment start date. The SRBR 4 benefit also would be paid only to members that make less than either \$75,000 or \$100,000 total retirement yearly (the exact cap amount to be determined at a later date also).

Also discussed was a modification to the existing SRBR 3. This benefit would be limited to members with a total yearly retirement of less than \$75,000 or \$100,000. By adding the cap to SRBR 3, the benefit could be raised to either 83% or 85% purchasing power for members eligible for SRBR 3 payments. A cap would also be added to the SRBR 3 cash payment; the amount of which would be no more than 2.5% cash increase in any one year.

There was a lengthy discussion on both of the items

in agenda number 2. REOKC expressed its thoughts as to both the projected new SRBR 4 and the modification of SRBR 3. The projected SRBR 4 payments of \$15 or \$20, we believe, could be increased to \$25 if the cap were to be set at \$87,500. On the modifications to SRBR 3, the purchasing power could be raised to 85% by also using the same \$87,500 cap. Both of these changes would be consistent with the policy of providing the largest benefit increases to members who have the greatest need. There are also other items to be considered, such as: how and at what level the cap should be incremented yearly; should there be yearly limits on the total payment under SRBR 3; when would any changes to the SRBR become effective.

From the list above, you can see why the Finance Committee referred the items back to KCERA staff to work with REOKC and the actuary to answer questions on how changes in SRBR will affect KCERA members.

It is very important that the members of REOKC understand this is a benefit that has been earned by the members and needs to be allocated to the members. In order to influence the Board of Retirement we must show a unified front. There were approximately 16 members of REOKC at this Finance Committee meeting and that is a very poor showing. If this is the extent of the concerns about the SRBR allocation, then we deserve what we get and we cannot complain about the amount or the conditions placed on SRBR eligibility that is approved by the Board of Retirement. The next meeting on this subject will be in front of the full Board of Retirement where a decision will be made on whether to grant or not grant additional benefits. The REOKC membership needs to attend! I know that this is a difficult time and it is an early morning start, but without your support behind your negotiators and your officers who are trying to get these benefits for you, their requests will have very little influence on the Board of Retirement. REOKC needs to have at least 100 or more people to show that there is support for REOKC positions and that we will not be dismissed as if we mean nothing. You will be informed when the Board of Retirement will act on the SRBR allocations. All retirees and beneficiaries need to attend; I would very much like to see the boardroom filled to overflow which has never happened before.

(President's Message continued on Page 4)



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).

Gloria Dominguez, KCERA Executive Director, will be retiring this October. She has been directing KCERA operations and providing leadership in the administration of Board policies for four years. She previously served as KCERA Assistant Executive Director from 2011 to 2013. Before joining KCERA, she was the Director of Budget and Finance for Kern County. We thank Gloria for her many years of service to KCERA and wish her an enjoyable retirement. With the acceptance of Gloria’s retirement announcement, the Board of Retirement appointed Dominic Brown, KCERA Assistant Executive Director, as acting Executive Director. Before joining KCERA in 2016, he spent eight years as a division chief in the office of the Kern County Auditor-Controller. Earlier in his career, he was an assistant controller at Lennar Homes. He also worked at Daniel Phillips Vaughan & Bock CPAs and Brown Armstrong CPAs. He previously served a term on the KCERA Board, including one year as Chairman. We expect his experience and management skills will provide the necessary leadership for KCERA administration. In another change of KCERA staff, Chief Investment Officer Peter Tirp has resigned his position with KCERA. He worked with Verus (KCERA Investment Consultant) in administrating the investment program while providing daily oversight of the investment program and monthly reporting to the KCERA Board. We thank Pete for his service and wish him a successful future in his professional endeavors.

During the August Financial Committee Meeting, Segal Consulting (KCERA Actuary) presented the proposed Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Policy with the recommendation of approval to the Board of Retirement. Under the provisions of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL), any excess earnings (earnings in excess of the Retirement Fund’s actuarial assumption rate) that are realized by the primary pension fund for a county are controlled 100% by the Board of Retirement. In 1984, however, the Kern County Board of Retirement and Board of Supervisors adopted the alternative financial provisions of Article 5.5 of the CERL. The result was to put in place a statutory Supplemental Retirement Benefit Reserve (SRBR) formula. The statutory SRBR formula prescribes the authority of the Retirement

Board over distribution of excess earnings, by mandating that any excess earnings be equally divided, with 50% of the total to the County to fund the County’s retirement liability and the other 50% to the SRBR to fund current and future retiree loss of purchasing power due to the burdens created by annual inflation. The proposed Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Policy was approved by the Finance Committee with the recommendation of approval to the Board of Retirement.

During the August Financial Committee Meeting, Segal Consulting also presented the proposed Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Benefit Improvement. The committee explored various program enhancements for distribution of available unallocated SRBR funds to members. After discussion, the matter was referred to staff, REOKC representatives, and Segal Consultants to prepare a revised proposal of benefit enhancements to be submitted to the full Board of Retirement for discussion and action - hopefully implementation. Member attendance and support is important for the KCERA Board meeting with the planned presentation and action for the enhancement of your SRBR benefits. You may confirm that the agenda item will be on the October 11, 2017 KCERA Board agenda - posted (www.kcera.org) late the Friday before the Wednesday Meeting. By tapping the agenda item, you will be able to read supporting documentation.

The July and August KCERA Board meetings approved the consent agenda items (routine and noncontroversial items); heard presentations and approved Segal Consulting Tri-Annual Experience Study recommending the economic and demographic assumptions for the next three-year period 2017-2020 and decreasing the current 7.5% assumption rate to **7.25% assumption rate** over the next three-year period (to become effective in Fiscal Year 2018/19); heard presentation on 2nd Quarter Investment Performance Review for the period ending June 30, 2017 by Verus; and heard presentation by Alborne America LLC with hiring TPG Sixth Street Partner.

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, 2017 as follows:

- Total Assets - \$3,938,876,183 (Net of Fees)
- 1 Year – 11.8%
- 3 Years – 4.4%
- 5 Years – 7.7%
- 10 Years – 3.7%

More detailed information and reporting 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.

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 June 2017,
31 volunteers worked 93 hours assisting 448 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

Statistics for the month of July 2017
are not available.

Since 1992 our volunteers have worked over 30,100 hours assisting more than 362,000 visitors to the County Administrative Center 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

Thursday, October 19, 2017: Huell Houser Exhibit - at Chapman University \$75.00 8:00AM to 6:00 PM

September 19, 2017 & October 17, 2017:

Chukchansi Casino Bus 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. \$15.00
Includes roundtrip bus & \$10.00 cash & \$5.00 food voucher (Full bus - No stops!)

Panama Canal Cruise - 2018 Now on sale!

Alaska Cruises - 2018 Now on sale!

Call **Julie** at **The Cruise Port**, (661) 324-6910 with any questions or to make reservations for your travel plans.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 12 REOKC Board Meeting 9:30 am
Westchester Bowl, 1819 30th St. Bakersfield

September 12 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon
General Meeting 12:00 noon
Elk's Building, 1616 30th Street, Bakersfield

September 20 KCERA Board Meeting:
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

October 10 REOKC Board Meeting 9:30 am
Westchester Bowl, 1819 30th St. Bakersfield

October 10 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon
General Meeting 12:00 noon
Elk's Building, 1616 30th Street, Bakersfield

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

UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS

September 12, 2017:

Healing Arts by Dignity Health—presented by Emily Hernandez

October 10 2017:

Overview of the 2017 Open Enrollment process by Mary Aaron of Blue Cross and Martin Reynosa from Aging and Adult Services will also be a speaker

LUNCHEON MENUS

Sept. 12, 2017

Beef Lasagna - Green Salad
Mixed Vegetables - Rolls
Strawberry Shortcake
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



Oct. 10, 2017

Individual Pot Roast
Sinful Potatoes
Corn - Garden Salad
Rolls - Peach Cobbler
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

ASSESSOR: Jerel E. Hansen

CA CHILDREN'S SERVICES: Mari Rub-Ferrell

K.C. WATER AGENCY: David C. Davis

KERN MEDICAL: Wynona Mayo

PARKS & RECREATION: Patrick L. Denney

SHERIFF: Barbara Eckert; Abraham C. Ramirez

YOUR REOKC BOARD NEEDS HELP!

While some current members of the Board have agreed to serve again next year, some have served on the Board for years and new members with new ideas are needed!

Treasurer - the current Treasurer has been in the position for 12 years and has everything very well organized. If you have an accounting background and are interested, please contact us. The current Treasurer will be available to train and assist you.

First Vice President - This position establishes the monthly programs by presenting relevant topics to the Board and scheduling presenters from the community.

Second Vice President - This position coordinates each month's lunch menu with our catering provider, determining the monthly menus and notifying the newsletter editor for timely publication.

Your REOKC Board has the best interests of Kern County retirees in every action taken. If interested in serving or if you have any questions, please send us an email to Contactus@reokc.org. Thanks!

President's Message - concluded from page 1

Quick change of direction, the August meeting was well attended, and the guest speaker, Gloria Dominguez, gave an update on the KCERA finances and what was occurring at their office. Gloria also announced that she was retiring after many years with the County and KCERA. We wish Gloria well in her future endeavors and hopefully will welcome her as a new member of REOKC.

Our next luncheon will be on September 12th with serving by table rows beginning at 11:30 A.M. The general meeting starts at 12:00 Noon. Hope to see you there!

John De Mario

HISTORY



BAD GRAMMAR

By WALTER E. STEWART

This is an elaboration on my writing in the January-February 2016 TREND that briefly touched on bad grammar and unnecessary jargon. I started teaching high school in Stockton, California in 1951. Once a teacher, always a teacher.

People express single entities when referring to plural factors. To say *the fence is five foot high* is incorrect. The fence is five feet high. Most people say *city limits* when referring to a single city or town. Bakersfield, like all cities and towns, has one city limit.

Frankly and *you guys* are filler words that have no purpose.

Between me and you is incorrect; should be between you and me.

When people use the trite expressions *let me be honest* and *let me say*, they are soliciting attention before they say what they are about to say. When people say *let me be honest*, do they assume people will think they are dishonest?

To say *I enjoyed myself* is bad grammar. You enjoyed the park, book or whatever, but not yourself.

People are void of cognizance when they repeat the metaphor, *if you will*. When I hear *if you will* I laughingly ask myself, what if I won't?

When people talk about time they say *at this point in time*. The word *point* used in this context is superfluous. At this time is correct. The expression *ah* used before a person says anything is also superfluous.

People misuse the words *basically* and *you guys* over and over as filler words. They have nothing to do with anything when they are taken out of context.

This writing covers just a few hackneyed idioms.

After writing this unsolicited and obnoxious diatribe, I think I'll go eat a worm.

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 661-204-4386

• Sunshine (Cards of Expression)

Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222

KCERA Board Retiree Member

- Phil Franey –
franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—John Mattly
jmattly@bak.rr.com

Kern County District Attorney's Office

- Elder Abuse: 661 868-2400

2017 REOKC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

REOKC is once again proud to announce the winners of the two \$1,000 scholarship awards for this year:



One of the recipients is Bryce Faulk, seen here with his mother, Laura Faulk and his grandmother, Sandra James who is a member of REOKC. Bryce, a student at Bakersfield High School, was very active in his school and class government. In addition to his many scholastic obligations,

Bryce also did some tutoring, worked with local charities and on community projects. Bryce plans to attend San Diego State University, majoring in Electrical Engineering.



Taylor Lawson is also a recipient this year. She's pictured here between her mother, Michelle Lawson and her uncle, Michael Douglas, an REOKC member. Taylor worked while attending Frontier High School and was very active in school projects and community

service. She plans to attend Northern Arizona University, majoring in Kinesiology and Sports Therapy.

Congratulations to both Bryce and Taylor on their achievements so far and best wishes for succeeding in all their future endeavors!



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

Harvey Bondurant—Info. Tech. System
Annie Denison—Assessor
Christine T. Denison—Mental Health
Dorothy M. Garee—Child Support
Walter L. Garratt—Building Inspection
Charles Goodison—General Services
Franklin M. Graham—K.C. Water Agency
Beverly Hagan—Fire
Shula Hodson—Human Services
Billie Linnebach—Human Services
Patricia Linnell—Parks & Recreation
Mary Madsen—Employers' Training Resource
Johanna M. Meyer—Probation
Delma Morden—Sheriff
Rita D. Pizana—Human Services
Norma Purdie—Dept. Unknown
Dan Quiroz—Mental Health
Cathrine Sappenfield—Kern Health Services
Arline Steinert—Garage
Gene D. Tassej—Sheriff

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

Author unknown

GENTLE THOUGHTS

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble.

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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**Sept. & Oct. 2017
Time Dated Material**

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

September Luncheon Reservation

September 12, 2017—11:30 to noon, **Elk's Building, 1616 30th Street, Bakersfield.**

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 (09/06/17). 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 \$ _____

October Luncheon Reservation

October 10, 2017—11:30 to noon, **Elk's Building, 1616 30th Street, Bakersfield.** 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 (10/04/17). 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 \$ _____