



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXI - II

March & April 2021

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.

Hope you had a great Presidents' Day!

After considering all the things I could write about for March and April, I seemed to focus on what is affecting all of us the most. We look back to the first part of last year and see how the COVID-19 took over our comfort zone and turned it into chaos. In reading up on the COVID issues I came across some very interesting information. With approval from Stan Coombs, President of the Board of the Retired Employees of San Diego County, I would like to share with all of you some very pertinent information. Information that might help us see where we are going with this COVID virus. Stan writes in part:

{ So much is happening so fast within the pandemic that the final draft submitted is invariably out of date before it reaches our members.

That said, last month we noted U.S. COVID-19 cases had risen to almost 15 million, and ended by wondering whether there would be enough funding to vaccinate the population. U.S. COVID-19 deaths, by the way, totaled about 274,000. On the "upside," we were enchanted by news of a very promising vaccine suddenly announced by Pfizer/BioNTech, and the possibility of a second developed by the separate biofirm, Moderna.

What's happened since?

The coronavirus rages on. The national case count has increased to over 23 million in just four weeks and U.S. COVID deaths are almost 400,000. Dr. Fauci observed increased holiday travel and social gatherings, and said

the worst is yet to come.

On the other hand, both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Fourteen million doses have gone to state and local health agencies in rough proportion to their populations, and about 10 million initial vaccinations have been reported. Doses are being held in reserve for secondary injections needed after three weeks.

But that's a very slow start, only 47% of the 20 million inoculations promised by the end of 2020 by the chief operating officer of the federal Operation Warp Speed vaccine initiative, expected to be followed by shipments that would vaccinate another 30 million in January and 50 million in February, based on a priority system (see below). Vaccines were expected to be available to the general public during April or May 2021. Those goals will be difficult to achieve now.

Will there eventually be enough doses available? AXIOS net new service says yes, if you live in the U.S., Europe or another wealthy country. The World Health Organization wants a just distribution of vaccines worldwide, on the premise that no one is safe unless everyone is safe. They want at least 20% of the population in virtually every country to have access to a vaccine by the end of 2021.

So where do older Americans fit into all this? Since distribution and inoculations are state and local operations, not coordinated by the federal government, the answer varies depending on location. But state scheduling often follows U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines and CDC guidelines recognize that COVID-19 mortality risk increases with age, older adults are at greatest risk. They also recognize the importance of protecting our frontline health and emergency workers.

California says it plans to have sufficient doses to vaccinate most Californians in all 58 counties by summer 2021, depending on vaccine production. Retirees living in other states should connect with their state or local COVID information centers.

The California website at COVID19.CA.GOV also says vaccines should now be available within the State for 1a priority healthcare workers (persons at risk of direct exposure to SARS-COV-2 through their work in any role in any health care or long-term care setting) and to residents of long-term care facilities. Next would come 1b

(President's Message continued on Page 3)



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).

If you have any questions whatsoever on your 1099R or monthly pension advice, please call KCERA administration for assistance. You are also reminded to read any KCERA communications for information that may benefit you.

Good news!! A COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) beginning April first will be seen in your pension payment at the end of April. As presented by 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-Long Beach-Anaheim Area (with 1982-84 as the base period) in each of the past two years. Our COLA is limited to a maximum of 2.0% pursuant to Section 31870 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). Your COLA may be affected by fluctuations of the CPI over the years and dependent upon when you retired. According to current law, the resulting percentage change of 1.62% should be rounded to .5%, but not exceed the 2.0% maximum pursuant to the nearest one-half percent, which is 1.5%, but shall not exceed the 2.0% maximum pursuant to Section 31870. 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. This year the following COLA will be applied to retirees and beneficiaries as follows:

Retirement Date	COLA
On or before on April 1, 2020	2.5%
April 2, 2020 to April 1, 2021	1.5%

For a more complete explanation, please refer to the KCERA February 10, 2021 Agenda Item 14 on the KCERA website at www.kcera.org. As always,

direct all question concerning the COLA to KCERA Administration.

The January and February KCERA Board meetings approved the consent agendas (routine and noncontroversial items) received and filed the following agenda items: 1st Quarter 2021 Investment Landscape Report presented by Verus (KCERA Investment Consultant); 4th Quarter Investment Performance Report for the period ending December 31, 2021 presented by Verus; 4th Quarter 2021 Portfolio Review presented by Albourne America (Hedge Fund Consultant); and other investment and administrative matters. Staff and committee reports were also heard.

During the KCERA February meeting, the Verus presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending December 31, 2021 as follows:

Total Assets - \$4,871,169,479
 1 Year - 11.5%
 3 Years - 7.2%
 5 Years - 8.5%
 10 Years - 7.3%

As of June 30, 2020, the actuarial assumption rate was stated at 7.25% (expected long-term investment return) and current funding ratio of 64.4% (% 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 hear virtual Retirement Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month.

*There are two ways to be fooled.
 One is to believe what isn't true;
 the other is to refuse to believe what is true.*
 - Soren Kierkegaard

GOOD ADVICE?

- ~ The most valuable inheritance you can leave your children is not a lot of money, but rather the example you set in life.
- ~ You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself.
- ~ Experience isn’t what happens to you. It’s what you do with what happens to you.

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).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (concluded from Page 1)

frontline essential workers (first responders, teachers, public transit, grocery store staff) and people 75 years and older, starting in late winter 2021. Priority 1c seniors 65 to 74 years and 55 to 64 years would follow.

The California website also advises healthcare workers to contact their employers to arrange vaccinations that CVS and Walgreen pharmacies will administer to staff and residents living in long-term care facilities, and that frontline essential workers and those 75 years and older contact their health providers to determine whether they're enrolled to administer the vaccine.

Oh yes...what about that federal assistance we were concerned about, to help financially hard-pressed states and local health agencies distribute and vaccinate 331,000,000 Americans? In late December, Congress passed and the President signed a \$900 billion fiscal stimulus bill, reported to include an extension to the end of 2021 for states and local governments to spend the \$340 billion provided them in the March 2020 CARES Act; \$20 billion for purchase of vaccines; \$9 billion for vaccine distribution; and, \$22 billion for testing and tracking.

If California's plans are similar to most other states, and implementations are successful, elderly Americans will find the vaccines available now. }

(Many thanks to Stan Coombs for his research and contribution that enabled this article.)

We hope to start our luncheons up again mid-year, depending on health and safety risks. Have a safe and happy March and April.



March 14, 2021 Daylight Saving Time Ends
(set clocks ahead one hour)

March 17, 2021 St. Patrick's Day

March 20, 2021 Spring Begins

March 26, 2021 Strata Shredding Day
Riverlakes Branch 2 - 4 p.m.
(unless cancelled by rain)

April 4, 2021 Easter Sunday

April 15, 2021 Income Tax Day

May 28, 2021 Strata Shredding Day
Riverlakes Branch 2 - 4 p.m.
(unless cancelled by rain)



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 2020 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.



"WELCOME!" **NEW MEMBERS OF THE** **RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF** **KERN COUNTY**

ANIMAL SERVICES: Cynthia L. Dahlgren
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: Nadine C. Harris
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECO.: Nathaniel Blakey; Dianna C. Hart; Helen G. Speer
BENEFICIARY: Carolyn Balch; Madeline Horttor; Mirta Martinez; Jill Mushaney; Melba Nerida; Donna M. Petersen; Mary Russell
CHILD SUPPORT: Myra G. McArthur
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES: Pamela Wilkins
DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Lisa S. Green
EMPLOYERS' TRG. RESOURCE: Michaela Munoz
ENVIRON HEALTH SERVICES: David Wasserman
FIRE: Robert L. Hurst; Deborah Johnson; Richard Lujan; Daniel Reed
GENERAL SERVICES: Robert Mojica
HUMAN SERVICES: Lisa M. Carter; Rosita Curioso; Julie D. Goesling; Debra Greenwood; Virginia Haley; Paula L. Joseph; Kevin T. Liles; Donna Montes; Delores Soto; Valerie Tayco; Donna L. Villa
INFO. TECH. SERVICES: John F. Devlin; Manuel Terrazas
KCERA: Janice Jackson
K.C. HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: Michael Friesen; Josephine Melroy-Sparks; Annie L. Smith
K.C. WATER AGENCY: Sandra Minner
KERN MEDICAL CENTER: Yvonne Chambers; Elaine Covert; Maria E. Flores; Renate Morledge
PARKS & RECREATION: John Parsons
PLANNING & COMM. DEVL.: Scott Denney; George G. Gonzales
PROBATION: Ellis Carter III; John W. Smoot; Steven G. Webdell
PUBLIC DEFENDER: Barbara Coston
PUBLIC HEALTH: Denise L. Smith
PUBLIC TRANSIT ENT FUND: Brenda J. Alexander
PUBLIC WORKS: Ricky Bradley; Steven McGarry
S. J. VALLEY APCD: Lakhmir Grewal; Suzanne Tange
SHERIFF: Danielle Davenport; Irma Davis; William Tyson Davis, Jr.; Robert B. Hatch; Jana R. Jacquez; Anthony McCuan; Vetrice Mitchell; Layne Skeels; Staci Stearns-Mead; Carol Wright-Patterson

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

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

Covid-19 has turned the Travel Industry upside down. We have just received news that Canadian Minister of Transport announced that international cruise lines will be prohibited from visiting Canadian ports until 2022. What does this mean? The Alaska & Canada/New England season has been put on hold for now. The Cruise lines are inquiring about departures from US ports. They are trying very hard to get the Alaska & Canada/New England Season for 2021 to move forward. When I get more information I will keep you updated.

When I have clients traveling to different states or countries I check to see what their requirements are to enter. For example: Hawaii will allow visitors, but you must obtain a negative Covid-19 test within 72 hours of travel with an approved testing site. Many Caribbean destinations are requiring this too. There is a government mandate that a negative Covid-19 test must be obtained when returning to the USA from any country outside of the USA. Most hotels are offering free testing - if not, I will let you know where to obtain your test. This is a very fluid situation that changes, at times weekly and sometimes daily.

Each cruise line, airline and tour company have different policies for cancellations. Please make sure you understand what your options are before you book.

Passport offices are now open and will accept renewals by mail or appointments for your passports. The office is still overwhelmed from being closed for months. The processing time is now between 6 to 8 weeks and www.travel.state.gov is the website for more information.

I work Monday through Friday 8:30AM to 12:30PM with afternoons and Saturday by Appointment. If you have any questions or need help with passports or any other travel questions please let me know and we can meet or talk on the phone. Stay safe and healthy!

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 –
franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—Robb Seibly -
seiblyrl@gmail.com

Kern County District Attorney's Office

- **Elder Abuse: 661 868-2400**

Kern County Aging & Adult Services

- **661 868-1000**

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

Karyn Bostick—Human Services
 Donna Butler—Health Department
 Sandra Chavaria—Kern Medical Center
 Shirney Colwell—Sheriff
 Leona Compton—Beneficiary
 Monica Dulan—Human Services
 Dannie Garner—Sheriff
 Lori Girard—Kern Medical Center
 Dolores Gonzales—Human Services
 Anne-Marie Gordon—Public Health
 Cheryl Hunter—Human Services
 Donna Iannotti—Aging & Adult Services
 Kim Johnston—Health Department
 Jerry Keene—Parks & Recreation
 Thomas Kenngott—Fire
 Howard Kent—Fire
 Otto Kooren—Behavioral Health & Reco.
 Ola Langley—Human Services
 Virginia Lennemann—Probation
 Paul Leonard—Roads
 Gaye McGhee—Court Support
 Alma McNinch—Kern Medical Center
 Annice Meyer—Treasurer-Tax Collector
 Barbara Monroe—Beneficiary
 Joven Nazareno—S.J. Valley APCD
 Madelyn Nickerson—County Counsel
 William O’Rullian—Environ Health Services
 Doris Ortiz—Health Department
 Perry Patterson—District Attorney
 Floyd Petty—Beneficiary
 Sue Poh—Kern Health Systems
 Caesar Quicho—Kern Medical Center
 Vernon Reichard—Environ Health Services
 Adeline Sanchez—Recorder
 Donald Shinn—West Side Mosquito
 Robert Small—Beneficiary
 Verda Swaim—Beneficiary
 Jeffrey Tripp—Info. Tech. Services
 Cathryn Williams—Assessor
 Clarence Williams—Roads
 Gary Yaeck—Fire

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

REOKC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**We are now accepting
Applications for the
2021 Scholarship Awards
For Graduating
High School Seniors!**



Last year, **Seven \$2,000** scholarships were awarded to relatives of **REOKC members**.

Applicants must be graduating seniors in 2021 and must be relatives of REOKC members to apply.

Scholarship application forms, instructions and relevant information are all available on our web-site:

www.reokc.org



Applications and required documents must be submitted no later than **April 15, 2021**

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- ~ Time may be a great healer, but it’s a lousy beautician.
- ~ The smallest good deed is greater than the greatest good intention.
- ~ The person who laughs, lasts.

Reminder: The surviving spouse of a retired Kern County Employee is eligible for REOKC membership. Just complete the Payroll Deduction Form on Page 4 and mail to:

REOKC, PO Box 2592, Bakersfield, CA 93303

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



BRIGHTER DAYS ARE ON THE WAY AND WE CAN HELP.

Our financial relief products can offer the help you need – right when you need it most.

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**

**March & April 2021
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 2020 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!