



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXII-VI

November & December 2022

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.

Now that we are entering the end of the year (November & December), it's time to look back and see what we have accomplished. We are building up our General Meeting luncheons, bringing in speakers of value to seniors, enjoying being back with and making new friends, and having some of the best lunches in town. As we reflect, we realize we have lost friends, routines have changed, and things just aren't the same as before (before Covid19).

So now it is time to grow, throw away the fears of yesterday and keep moving forward. Our luncheons have grown each month and are now around 165 strong and maybe by December we will be up to 180 or 190 strong. We want you to enjoy your retirement and mix and mingle with old and new friends. We need each other, "No Man Is An Island," we grow in strength with others we care about and enjoy being with. Unfortunately we have lost some and that seems to bring great sadness, but we must remember what they have given us and what we learned from them.

I will share with you what someone sent me to ease the pain (this was written by Elizabeth Ammons):

"You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you. Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and

live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile, open your heart, Love... and go on".

There are still some of you out there that have not come back, and we are waiting to see you again. We hope you will take this invitation to come back and enjoy yourselves with us once again. As I shared last year in November, "Life may not be the party we would like it to be, but we don't have to take away the happiness others may have found. We all need a friend and the opportunity to help one another. So, let's look to the value of being together and sharing memories".

Remember, these last two months of the year are very special.

November: Daylight Savings Time Ends - 6th, Elections Day - 8th, Veterans Day - 11th, Thanksgiving - 24.

December: Hanukkah - 18th, First Day of Winter - 21, Christmas - 25, New Year's Eve - 31.

Some thoughts: Do you know how weird it is being the same age as old people? I'm still tired from yesterday's tired, today isn't looking so good, and I've already used up tomorrow's tired.

Some more to share: I ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was pizza...OK!?... A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it... Kids today don't know how easy they have it, when I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.

Please remember our Veterans: I have done things that haunt me at night - So you can sleep in peace.

President's Message concluded 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).

I hope everyone will have an enjoyable and safe holiday season with family and friends. I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Now to some very important retirement business.

As mentioned earlier and at the 2021 August KCERA Board (Board) meeting, staff requested that the Board refer to the Finance Committee (Committee) the SRBR (Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve) Policy for revisions including applicable benefits. The SRBR was established pursuant to Article 5.5 of the County Employees’ Retirement Law (CERL) of 1937. By law, SRBR funds are to be used solely for the benefit of KCERA’s members (both active and retired) and their beneficiaries and paid only upon retirement of the member. At the 2022 August Committee Meeting, members unanimously approved and recommended a proposed SRBR benefit restructuring for Board approval. During the 2022 September Board meeting, the Board approved the restructured SRBR Policy. SRBR benefit distributions are intended to assist retirees in offsetting some of their increasing health care and other living expenses. An explanation of the Board approved restructured SRBR benefit program is provided in this edition of the TREND in the article by Dominic Brown, KCERA CEO. More information is available on www.kcera.org website and by contacting KCERA Administration.

The September and October KCERA Board meetings approved the consent agenda items (routine and noncontroversial items); discussion and approval of KCERA’s voting delegation for the State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS) Fall Conference; appoint nominating committee for selection of the 2023 KCERA Board slate for chair and vice-chair; restructured SRBR program and trustee education.

As a brief reminder, please read the insurance and benefit information sent from Kern County Health Benefits and Pacific Group Agencies for other benefits. As with health benefits, please remember to review your tax information this time of year.

Retirement Board election ballots for retiree member positions will be sent soon. I and Robb Seibly will be running for Retiree and Alternate-Retiree, respectively. We will appreciate your vote.

During the August KCERA Board meeting, Verus (KCERA’s Investment Consultant) presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending June 30, 2022, as follows:

Total Assets -	\$5,046,342,206 (Net of Fees)
1 Year -	4.5%
3 Years -	6.8%
5 Years -	6.5%
10 Years -	7.1%

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 and/or participate in the virtual Retirement Board Meeting on November 2, 2022.

“Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing.”

– Abraham Lincoln

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- ~ Solitude is a good place to visit but a poor place to stay.
- ~ There are two things on earth that are universal, hydrogen and stupidity.
- ~ If you can’t apologize, you’d better be good at making new friends.



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

- Ruth Boone—Library
- David Brassfield—Fire
- Johnny Brown—Parks & Recreation
- Javier Camargo—Beneficiary
- Gene Carlberg—Public Defender
- Vincent Chapman—Environ Health Services
- William Davis—Sheriff
- Gay Dickerson—Beneficiary
- Gerald Eastman—Human Services
- Kenneth Fowler—Sheriff
- James Hall—Kern Medical Center
- Hal Hannah—Fire
- Carol Johnson—Superior Court
- Gloria Johnston—Probation
- Mary Kofahl—Sheriff
- Eugene Naschke—Human Services
- H George Neville—Beneficiary
- Lawrence Petree—Fire
- Barbara Ross-Smith—Behavioral Health & Reco
- Shirley Rupert—Kern Health Systems
- Shirley Sauer—Assessor
- Wilma Somers—Assessor
- Ronald Spradley—Kern Medical Center
- Nellie Stafford—Kern Medical Center
- Rosena Todahl—Beneficiary
- Melvin Westfall—Construction Services
- Donna Wilson—S.J. Valley APCD
- Linda Wood—Beneficiary

“Anyone who has lost a loved one knows that you don’t recover. Instead, you learn to incorporate their absence and memories into your life and channel your emotional energy toward others, and eventually, your grief will walk beside you instead of consuming you.

~ Rashida Rowe

DO YOU HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

TREND EMAIL LIST CONTINUES TO GROW!

Thanks to all of you who signed up for membership on the TREND Email list. We are now saving over **\$6,000.00 per year!!**

As you can see, we have finally recalculated the savings amount due to our TREND email recipients and we are pleased to announce the amount above! Keep those savings coming folks!!

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).



**NOVEMBER 8, 2022
ELECTION DAY**

REMEMBER TO VOTE!



UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS

- ★ **November 8, 2022:** Andy Barkate will be our speaker on the subject of “The Elderly.”
- ★ **December 13, 2022:** The Bakersfield College Chamber Singers will be our holiday entertainment.

**LUNCHEON MENU
AT HODEL’S**



November
Hand Carved Pork Loin
Deep Pit Turkey
Au Gratin Potatoes
Steamed Vegetables

December
Hand Carved Ham
Fried Chicken
Rice Pilaf
Green Beans

5 Different Salads
3 Different Desserts

Coffee, Tea & Water
will be on each table



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

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECO: Shannon Tolar
BENEFICIARY: Vickie D. Goins
INFO. TECH. SERVICES: Isolde Marroquin
K. C. HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: Daniel Fecke
PROBATION: Mesha Elliott; Elizabeth Garcia-Madden
PUBLIC WORKS: Craig Pope
SUPERIOR COURT: Trudy Rosenbalm

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Cont. from Page 1

I have been away from my family a long time – so that you may live free.

I have done these things because I have sworn an oath – to my country.

And I will live by this oath until the day I die— because I am and always will be a U.S. VETERAN.

Have a Wonderful, Healthy and Safe Thanksgiving and Holiday Season (Christmas and whatever holidays you celebrate). Hope to see you at the Veterans Day Parade on November 11, 2022.



SIGNS OF THE TIME

- ~ SIGN on a Blinds and Curtain truck:
"Blind man driving"
- ~ SIGN in a Podiatrist's office:
"Time wounds all heels"
- ~ SIGN at an Optometrist's office:
"If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place"
- ~ SIGN on a Plumber's truck:
"We repair what your husband fixed"
- ~ SIGN on an Electrician's truck:
"Let us remove your shorts"



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

10 Day Alaska cruise on the Ruby Princess:
July 16—26, 2023. Roundtrip San Francisco
Balcony cabin \$3049 per person based on double
occupancy, including port charges, taxes and travel
insurance, Beverage package, Wi-Fi and Crew
Appreciation for 1st and 2nd person in the cabin.

Itinerary - San Francisco, Sitka, Juneau, Endicott
Arm & Dawes Glacier, Ketchikan & Victoria,
Canada.

7 Night Pacific Coastal cruise on the Solstice,
Celebrity Cruise Line: April 22 - 29, 2023. Round-
trip Los Angeles. Deluxe Oceanview stateroom with
Veranda \$1027 per person based on double occupan-
cy. Including all port charges & taxes . \$120.00 per
cabin in shipboard credit.

Itinerary - Los Angeles, California, Catalina Island,
California, Monterey, California, San Francisco,
California Overnight in San Francisco, California &
Ensenada, Mexico.

Globus Trip Enchanting Canyon Lands
May 21 - 31, 2023 11 Day tour Las Vegas roundtrip.
Rate \$4129.00 per person based on double occupan-
cy, including all hotel stays, Breakfast every morn-
ing & 5 dinners. Airfare and insurance additional.
LAS VEGAS, GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, LAKE
POWELL, MONUMENT VALLEY NAVAJO TRIBAL PARK,
MOAB, EXCURSION TO ARCHES NATIONAL PARK,
BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK, ZION NATIONAL
PARK.

If you have any Future Travel/cruise credit, check with
the airline, tour or cruise company as they may have been
extended.

All rates are based on availability and can expire at
any time.

**Julie Salazar-Garcia (661) 324-6910
cruiseport@sbcglobal.net**

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**

IMPORTANT KCERA UPDATE



By
Dominic Brown
KCERA CEO

SRBR Restructure – What You Need to Know

Introduction

On September 14, 2022 the KCERA Board of Retirement unanimously voted to restructure the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Program. This change came after more than a year and a half of working meetings with the Finance Committee and the Board to improve the mix of benefits to reflect the following objectives:

- Allocate additional funds by increasing benefits
- Increase predictability of future assets and liabilities
- Exercise duty of loyalty to all KCERA members
- Simplify the benefit structure
- Do no harm to any members already receiving benefits

Background

The funding for the SRBR Program is unpredictable. New money only enters the SRBR fund when KCERA's investment return exceeds the assumed rate of return (currently 7.25%) over a 5-year rolling average. The last time new principal entered the SRBR fund was approximately 14 years ago.

Before the recent revisions, the SRBR Policy required the Board consider new benefits whenever the funded ratio exceeded 120% two years in a row, and required the Board consider eliminating benefits when the funded ratio fell below 120% for two consecutive years. This ongoing need to re-evaluate benefits, along with the wide range of benefit options available to the Board, regularly resulted in prolonged and burdensome approval processes.

Resolution

With the help of KCERA's actuaries, KCERA Staff proposed a new benefit structure to address the past problems and allocate funds to all members, including current and future retirees. KCERA Trustees considered a range of new benefit options, but ultimately favored a single benefit based on years of service ("Years of Service Benefit").

KCERA Staff and Trustees focused on developing a benefit structure that would maintain SRBR benefits for any member who was already receiving them while creating a more predictable and sustainable structure for the future. To do so, KCERA Staff worked with its actuaries to devise a process in which all members will have their SRBR benefit calculated, on a one-time basis, under the new "Years of Service" benefit (\$1.80 per year of service) and the old SRBR 1-4 structure. Members will then receive whichever benefit calculation yields a higher result. That will be the member's starting SRBR benefit under the Restructured SRBR (also referred to as the "floor" benefit).

One of the best aspects of this Restructured SRBR is that eligible members will receive a 2.5% COLA on their SRBR benefit every year, so long as the SRBR remains adequately funded.

Under the Restructured SRBR, KCERA's Board will consider benefit changes when the SRBR funding is above 115% funded or below 95% funded for two consecutive years. If the funded ratio begins to creep up above 115%, the KCERA Board can increase benefits or change the eligibility date to include more members. If the funded ratio drops below 95%, the Board can simply suspend or reduce the annual 2.5% SRBR COLA to bring the funded status within range.

Conclusion

We believe this is a significant improvement to the SRBR Program because it creates a durable structure that will be functional for generations in the future.

The change in benefit structure is effective July 1, 2022, but it will take time for staff to fully implement the change. For eligible retirees whose "floor" benefit is greater under the Years of Service calculation, Staff is currently targeting January 2023 for the first new payments, and February for any retroactive payments. The first 2.5% COLA will be applied July 1, 2023 for all eligible recipients.

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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YOU AND
YOURS
HAPPY
HOLIDAYS
AND A
HAPPY,
HEALTHY
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YEAR!**

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November & December 2022
Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S

5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022

LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022

LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)

Members without payroll luncheon deductions will pay at the door each month.

**REOKC members and their spouses \$7.00 each
Guests \$10.00**

Doors will be open at 10:45 a.m. Lunches served at 11:30 a.m.

(Payments requiring no change will be greatly appreciated)