



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXIII-I

January & February 2023

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.



The REOKC wishes all Kern County retirees a very Happy 2023 New Year, and hope you enjoyed your holiday festivities. We start off this year with some new members on our Board of Directors and hopefully will continue to find some new and exciting ideas for our monthly luncheon meetings. Joining us this year as new Board members are Sharon Langham, Ed Ochoa, and Jeanne Berkshire as the past president. With ideas from our members and the Board we expect to bring more interesting and helpful information to the REOKC group.

I would like to thank the current Board members for their willingness to serve for the last few years, since we have not been able to hold elections. I assure you that we (your Board of Directors) will continue to bring you information of interest for retirees which hopefully will help enhance our lives. We are open to areas of interest you might have for our Board to investigate. This is your organization, and we are here to serve you and your interest.

A very important item has been brought to my attention in the last few days. North Carolina had a power outage in December (the 2nd to 8th) affecting 5 or 6 towns (the southern portion of the county). Why I bring this up is to remind us that it could happen anywhere, even here at home. This suggests that being prepared for changes in our normal life activities is important, even very im-

portant to us (retirees), since our lifestyle seems to change as we get older. The interesting part is that it happened around 7 or 8 at night and the whole southern portion of the county went dark. Now dark doesn't seem so bad until we realize they had NO power at all. Nothing worked because there was NO power. Some had generators to help them and maybe a neighbor or two, but the towns all lost everything. It was Dark. No traffic lights, stores closed, no gas pumps etc.... It was estimated that approximately 40,000 people were left without power. Temperature was down in the high 20s. NO heat, flashlights and batteries would only last so long, no water, no flushing toilets, if they had a gas heater, they had no fan to blow out the heat, no power to their internet.

It was reported that someone had shot out some transformers with a high-power rifle and the power stations couldn't carry the load and all went down. That affected the whole southern portion of the County. Now this went on for three days (Sat – Mon) before a few areas were able to get some power back, and it was six days before most finally had their power restored.

I share this to stress, are we ready to weather this type of disaster? Lives were lost because people were not ready. Whether it is 103 degrees outside or 30 degrees, will we be ready to help ourselves and our neighbors during this type of disaster? We need to look again at what we need and how we can survive such a problem. Just a note: As of this writing, they still don't know if this was an attack on their County or something more to come. Be smart and consider what you would do. Be safe.

Special: Inside, don't forget to read the article on "REOKC Membership" on page 6 by our Treasurer, Mary Lou Bennett, this information will be of great value to you regarding your pension benefits from KCERA.

Have a Wonderful 2023! Stay Safe, Be Happy. Hope to see you at our next General Luncheon Meeting, every second Tuesday of the month, doors open at 10:45a.m., lunch starts around 11:30a.m.



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 had a Merry Christmas and will enjoy a Happy New Year. The KCERA Board (Board) has completed a busy 2022. This TREND publication is being sent to all KCERA retirees and beneficiaries throughout the world. The following information is a brief recap of Board action and staff efforts during 2022, as follows:

April - a 2.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) was included in your monthly retirement payment. According to Segal Consulting (KCERA Actuary) the COLA is based upon a comparison with the annual average CPI (Consumer Price Index) for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim Area.

May - the Board approved the 2022-23 Budget. The \$8.6 million budget provides services for more than 20,000 members and over \$5.4 billion in assets. The largest budget category of staffing is 71% percent of the total proposed budget. Staffing requires \$6.1 million that is \$936,089 more than last year’s approved budget of \$5.2 million. The increase is primarily the salary and benefits needed for a staff of 41 employees from the 39 of last year.

September - by law the (Supplement Retiree Benefit Reserve) SRBR was established solely for the benefit of KCERA’s members (both active and retired) and their beneficiaries to be paid only upon retirement of the member. After an extensive evaluation and deliberation, the KCERA Finance Committee unanimously approved and recommended a proposed SRBR restructuring for Board approval. At the September Board meeting, the Board approved the restructured SRBR Policy. SRBR benefit distributions are intended to assist retirees in offsetting escalating health care and other costs of living. The Board has truly acted as a fiduciary in the reengineering of SRBR. An explanation of the Board approved restructured SRBR benefit program is provided in the September TREND article by Dominic Brown, KCERA CEO. More information will be on the www.kcera.org website or can be obtained by contacting KCERA Administration.

December - the Board approved the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report that presented the financial position

of the Kern County Employees' Retirement Association as of June 30, 2022. The respective changes in financial position were in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Board elections for Primary Retirement Trustee and Alternate Retirement Trustee resulted in myself and Robb Seibly being elected for another three-year term beginning in 2023. Robb and I will continue to perform our fiduciary duties professionally and ethically for KCERA members.

During the November Board meeting, the Verus (KCERA investment consultant) presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending September 30, 2022 as follows:

Total Assets at market value -	\$4,899,555,765
1 Year -	8.0%
3 Years -	5.6%
5 Years -	5.1%
10 Years -	6.3%

As of June 30, 2021, the actuarial assumption rate was stated at 7.25% (expected long-term investment return) and as of June 30, 2022 the current funding ratio of 69.2% (% 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 next virtual Retirement Board Meeting on February 8, 2023.

“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.”

- Confucius

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

~ He who keeps his mind on his work goes ahead; he who keeps work on his mind goes crazy.

~ Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.

~ Don’t worry what you could do if you lived your life over; get busy with what’s left.

~ When arguing with a fool, be sure he’s not doing the same thing.

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**

BENEFICIARY: Fred L. Johnson

HUMAN SERVICES: Lisa A. Milam; Pauline A. Vega

PROBATION: Wendala McCune;
Sharon A. Traffanstedt

SUPERIOR COURT: Laura Sosa

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



REOKC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



**We are now accepting Applications
for the 2023 Scholarship Awards
for Graduating High School Seniors**

Our scholarship program was established over ten years ago and for the last two years has awarded **twelve \$2,000** scholarships annually to graduating high school seniors who were relatives of **REOKC members.**

Scholarship application forms, instructions and relevant information are all available on our website: **www.reokc.org**

Applications must be submitted by **April 15, 2023**



2023 REOKC **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Robb Seibly—President
Barbara Goodlow—1st Vice President
Sharon Langham—2nd Vice President
Ginger Mello—Secretary
Mary Lou Bennett—Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Phil Franey Brenda Preston Tony Rizos
Edward Ochoa Nancy Warnick
Jeanne Berkshire—Past President

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

Princess Cruise Line - Caribbean Princess.
10 Day Canada New England Cruise - **September 29 to October 9, 2023.** Balcony cabin \$3965.00 per person. Includes all port charges, taxes, prepaid gratuities, Wi-Fi and Beverage package and travel insurance and transfers. Additional would be airfare.

Quebec City, Canada, Saguenay, Canada, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Sydney, Halifax, Canada, Bar Harbor, Maine, Boston, MA and New York City.

Celebrity Cruise Line - Celebrity Solstice 12 night Far East - **November 16 - 28, 2023.** Balcony Cabin \$2084.00 per person. Rate includes port charges & taxes. Airfare, transfers and insurance additional.

Hong Kong, China, Hanoi, Vietnam, Hue/Danang (Chan May) Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh (Phu My), Vietnam, Bangkok (Laem Chabang), Thailand, Bangkok (Laem Chabang) Thailand, Ko Samui, Thailand and Singapore.

Princess Cruise Line - Island Princess
15 Day Panama Canal Cruise - **May 11- May 26, 2023.** Balcony Cabin \$3926.00 Per person including port charges, taxes, prepaid gratuities, Wi-Fi and Beverage Package. Additional would be airfare.

Los Angeles, Puerto Vallarta, Huatulco, Mexico, San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua, Puntarenas, Costa Rica, Sur de Amador, Panama, Full transit of the Canal, Cartagena, Columbia and Ft. Lauderdale.

All rates are based on double occupancy.

**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**

IMPORTANCE OF REOKC MEMBERSHIP



by Mary Lou Bennett
REOKC Treasurer
TREND Editor

No matter where you live or when you retired, as a Kern County retiree or beneficiary, which means you receive pension benefits from KCERA, you should be concerned about those benefits being protected, managed and maximized for as long as you live.

Since 1964, the Retired Employees of Kern County (REOKC), a non-profit organization, has worked diligently to protect and improve retirement benefits for all KCERA members and their beneficiaries. The two volunteers in recent years, along with others, who have worked long and hard to achieve these goals are past REOKC presidents Phil Franey and John De Mario.

Members of REOKC along with other organizations have been instrumental in increasing retiree's purchasing power, establishing additional stipends through the SRBR (Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve) program and getting the retiree Death Benefit increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Currently, REOKC membership dues are \$2.00 a month which is deducted by KCERA from monthly pension payments. Granted, \$2 a month doesn't sound like much but multiplied by the number of retirees and beneficiaries in KCERA (of which REOKC has only a little more than half right now) it could really make a difference to our community, Kern County retirees and their families.

What do you get for your \$2 a month? It does mean you will receive six issues on this newsletter each year which keeps REOKC members informed about current important issues on a timely basis.

Some of the benefits your \$2 helps to maintain and provide:

- Consulting services to constantly monitor state and local legislation which could adversely affect Kern County pensions and benefits.

- A scholarship program established over ten years ago and for the last two years has awarded twelve \$2,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who were relatives of REOKC members.
- Supplemental insurance plans offered by Pacific Group Agencies at discounted group rates. Several insurance plans are available, including Vision, Dental, Legal Shield, Pet, Life and others.
- The Finance Committee of REOKC has been established to vet local nonprofit organizations in order to help fund those whose mission is dedicated to senior health care, education, quality of life and other related services.
- A website, reokc.org to provide information about REOKC, to post updated and current information and provide forms and requirements for submitting scholarship applications.
- REOKC also works with the 19 other 1937 Act Counties to help safeguard pensions and health benefits statewide.
- Local members can enjoy getting together with new and long-time fellow workers and friends to take advantage of the discounted luncheon rates at Hodel's Country Dining on the second Tuesday of each month.

As you can see, there are many advantages of being a member of REOKC. To join, just complete the Payroll Deduction Form on page 4 and email it to me at mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net or mail it to the address on the Form. Help REOKC help you by joining the near 5,000 retirees and beneficiaries who are already REOKC members!

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.

2022

January

Calendar grid for January 2022

February

Calendar grid for February 2022

March

Calendar grid for March 2022

April

Calendar grid for April 2022

May

Calendar grid for May 2022

June

Calendar grid for June 2022

July

Calendar grid for July 2022

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Calendar grid for August 2022

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Calendar grid for December 2024

STRATA CREDIT UNION

2023

www.stratacu.org 661.327.9461

Wasco CALIFORNIA COMING 2023

FIRST QUARTER

January 2023 calendar grid

February 2023 calendar grid

March 2023 calendar grid

SECOND QUARTER

April 2023 calendar grid

May 2023 calendar grid

June 2023 calendar grid

THIRD QUARTER

July 2023 calendar grid

August 2023 calendar grid

September 2023 calendar grid

FOURTH QUARTER

October 2023 calendar grid

November 2023 calendar grid

December 2023 calendar grid

County Paydays County Holidays Strata CU Holidays Free Document Shredding

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

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**January & February 2023
Time Dated Material**

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

REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S

5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023

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)