



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXIV-I

January & February 2024

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.

To all our Kern County Retirees, the REOKC Board wishes you a very Happy New Year for 2024! We hope you are doing well, staying healthy and finding ways to be happy and involved. We have attempted to setup exciting lunch meetings that will be informative and interesting for all attendees for this new year. Our end of year luncheon, in December 2023, was a great success with 232 members and guests attending; we had our 2024 Board of Directors installed with Dick Taylor the installing officer and we brought in the Christmas season with the Bakersfield College Chamber Singers.

This is the time for all REOKC members in Bakersfield and nearby areas to make notes on their calendars for the 2nd Tuesday of each month to join us for lunch at Hodel's starting in January. Doors open at 10:45 a.m. with lunch being served around 11:30. Come and get together with old friends and/or make new ones. We all have a great time and the food is outstanding. You will find all the information in this issue of the TREND newsletter.

Be sure to take time to look over this newsletter. In it you will find information covering what your

Board is doing to serve Kern County retirees; deceased members who have made their final journey in this life; new members who have chosen to join us; useful contacts that will be very helpful throughout your retirement. We hope you will enjoy the information herein and are able to use some of it (Travel Tips, Scholarship Program, Upcoming Programs, and Luncheon Information) and if not yet a member, decide to join the Retired Employees of Kern County (REOKC) for only \$2 a month.

I mentioned earlier that the 2024 Board of Directors has been installed. The Officers and Directors are listed here for your information:

Robb Seibly—President
Barbara Goodlow—1st Vice President
Sharon Langham—2nd Vice President
Cynthia Alipio—Secretary
Mary Lou Bennett—Treasurer
Phil Franey—Director
Edward Ochoa—Director
Brenda Preston—Director
Tony Rizos—Director
Nancy Warnick—Director
Jeanne Berkshire—Past President

We are here for you. We are the eyes and ears for all Kern County retirees. Please help other retirees to find their way to us. The form on Page 4 can be used to become a member of REOKC. Together we can help each other. Have a Great Day! Stay Safe! Be Happy! Hope to see you at our next monthly Luncheon/Meeting.



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**



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 2023. 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 2023, 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. During this time the Board Meetings were opened to the public. The public still continues to have the option of listening to audio or access live audio and video of Board meetings in progress.

May - the Board approved the 2023-24 Budget. The \$8.8 million budget provides services for more than 23,000 members and over \$5.6 billion in assets. The largest budget category of staffing is 78% percent of the total proposed budget. Staffing requires \$6.9 million that is \$736,045 more than last year’s approved budget of \$8.6 million. The increase is primarily the salary and benefits needed for a staff of 40 employees from the 41 of last year.

In July - retired members and beneficiaries received the Board approved restructured SRBR benefit distributions 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 at www.kcera.org or 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. Some Actuarial Study and Investment Performance information is shown in this article. As always, more detailed information is shown at the KCERA website concerning Board agendas.

Last year, 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, respectively. Robb and I will continue to perform our fiduciary duties professionally and ethically for KCERA members. Robb is able to serve on committees as a voting member and with Board meetings serves in my absence. I will serve as Chair for the 2024 year.

During the December Board meeting, Verus (KCERA investment consultant) presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending September 30, 2023 as follows:

Total Assets at market value - \$4,901,023,930

1 Year - -7.9%

3 Years - 5.6%

5 Years - 5.1%

10 Years - 6.3%

As of June 30, 2023, the actuarial assumption rate was stated at 7.00% (expected long-term investment return) and as of June 30, 2023 the current funding ratio of 68.7% (% 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, 2024.

***“What the new year brings to you will depend
a great deal on what you bring to the
new year.”***

- Vern McLellan

CHUCKLES

~ Sorry that I’m late. I got here as soon as I wanted to!

~ I can’t believe I forgot to go to the gym today. That’s seven years in a row, now.

~ Do you ever get up in the morning, look in mirror and think, “That can’t be accurate!”



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

- Darrell Berry—Parks & Recreation
- Mina Cooper—Human Services
- Constance Corbell—Human Services
- Joanne Edmondson—Beneficiary
- Robert Edwards—AG & Measmnt. Dept.
- Ruth Elkins—Beneficiary
- Antoine Escobar—Info. Tech. Services
- Richard Jarrett—Transportation Mgmt.
- Catherine Malahowski—Kern Medical Center
- Norma Markey—General Services
- Harley Morrow—Fire
- Margaret Orman—Sheriff
- Delores Poplin—Human Services
- Etta Robin—Substance Abuse Program
- Candace Robinson—Kern Medical Center
- Dianne Smith—General Services
- Karyl Towse—Library

“We never lose the people we love. They live with us in our hearts for the rest of our lives.”

- Author unknown

NOTICE

This issue of the TREND is being sent to all Kern County retirees and beneficiaries. To receive all 6 issues for the year you must be a member of REOKC (see page 4).

RECYCLING GLASSES PROJECT

For many years the members of REOKC have been bringing unwanted glasses, frames, lenses and glass cases to our luncheons. These are then collected and donated to the Lions Club for redistribution. A total of 217 of these items were collected during the luncheons in 2023. Thanks to Peggy Richardson for the work she’s done on this project for several years.

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).

Free Document Shredding
 Scheduled for Friday,
January 26, 2024 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Strata Credit Union
 4180 Coffee Road
 (WinCo Foods Shopping Center)

UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS

- January 9, 2024:** Carla Stanley with the 60+ Club will be our speaker.
- February 13, 2024:** Our speakers will be Otilia and Jose from the Alzheimer’s Adult Day Service of Kern County.

LUNCHEON MENU AT HODEL’S



January

- Sliced Tri-Tip w/ Hunter sauce
- Chicken Breast w/ Artichoke
- Buttered Noodles
- Steamed Vegetables

February

- Chile Verde
- Fried Chicken
- Spanish Rice
- Buttered Corn

- 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)

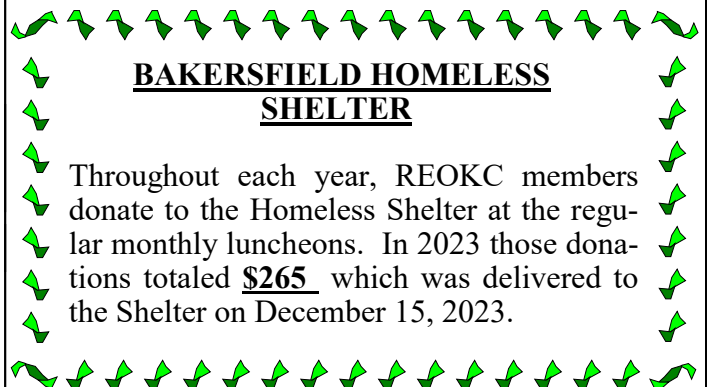
- Check box to stop your deduction for the luncheon.
- Check box to stop your deduction for REOKC membership dues.



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

AUDITOR CONTROLLER: Dan R. Barnett
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECO: Norma Navarro
BENEFICIARY: Tina Harris; Carla Wallach
CHILD SUPPORT: Laurie A. Vargas
KERN MEDICAL CENTER: Corinne Scott
PROBATION: Lisa A. Young
S.J. VALLEY AIR POLL CONT: John Hejde
SHERIFF: Leslie Harbour; Bertina A. Isbell; Tammy Yarbrough
SUPERIOR COURT: Leslie D. Carter

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



BAKERSFIELD HOMELESS SHELTER

Throughout each year, REOKC members donate to the Homeless Shelter at the regular monthly luncheons. In 2023 those donations totaled **\$265** which was delivered to the Shelter on December 15, 2023.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- ~ As scarce as the truth is, the supply has always been in excess of the demand.
- ~ If you want to make sure people believe what you say, whisper it to them.
- ~ Advise is like castor oil– easy to give, but dreadfully uneasy to take.
- ~ Talent is knowing how to do something; judgment is knowing whether to do it.
- ~ To err is human, but to really mess things up you need a computer.

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 - Crown Princess
Alaska Roundtrip San Francisco
July 20 -31, 2024**

Balcony Cabin \$3281.00 per person based on double occupancy. Rate includes the Princess Plus package & vacation protection. Rates are based on availability and can change at any time.

San Francisco, Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Tracy Arm Fjord (Scenic Cruising) & Victoria, Canada

**Princess Cruise Line - Enchanted Princess
Canada/New England Roundtrip New York
September 28 to October 5, 2024**

Balcony cabin \$1897.00 per person based on double occupancy. Rate includes the Princess Plus package & Vacation Protection. Rates are based on availability and can change at any time.

New York City (Manhattan or Brooklyn), New York - Newport, Rhode Island - Boston, Massachusetts - Bar Harbor, Maine - Saint John (for the Bay of Fundy), Canada - Portland, Maine

**Globus Escorted Bus Trip
11 Days Rome to Rome
September 11 - 21, 2024**

\$3949.00 Per person based on double occupancy plus airfare & travel insurance. Single rate is \$4569.00 plus airfare and travel insurance.

ROME, ITALY - ORVIETO - MONTECATINI
EXCURSION TO FLORENCE - PISA - VENICE ISLAND
ASSISI - POMPEII - NAPLES - SORRENTO - ROME

**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**

REOKC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



In 2012 REOKC's Board of Directors established a scholarship program for our members' relatives who are in their senior year of high school.

For the first 4 years (2012 through 2015), REOKC awarded two scholarships of \$750.00 each. From 2016 through 2018 the scholarship amount was increased to \$1,000 and two were awarded each year. In 2019 and in 2020 REOKC awarded six and seven \$1,000 scholarships respectively.

In 2021 the Board voted to increase the scholarship amount to \$2,000 and awarded twelve in both 2021 and 2022. In 2023, after careful review of all applications, the Board decided to award thirteen scholarships of \$2,000 each.

From 2012 to 2023 your REOKC Board has awarded 64 scholarships to REOKC members' relatives for a total of \$106,000.

This program is just one of the benefits of being a member of REOKC. Applicants are not required to live in Kern County or California. So, if you are not yet a member, take time to complete the form on page 4 and mail it to us.

Detailed scholarship application information/forms are available on our website: www.reokc.org. Forms must be completed, printed, signed and mailed no later than April 15th each year.

REOKC membership applications are also available on our website along with useful information and important contact numbers. Membership dues are only \$2.00 a month which is automatically deducted from retirees' and beneficiaries' retirement pay.

Also, as a member, you will receive all six issues of REOKC's newsletter, the TREND, each year by mail or email. Its purpose is to keep retirees updated on issues involving their retirement benefits as well as current events.

Membership in REOKC is one of the greatest bargains Kern County retirees and beneficiaries can have! Benefits like the scholarship program can only happen with a robust number of members.

REOKC SECRETARY HONORED



After 23 years, serving as Secretary, Ginger Mello is leaving the position to enjoy a little more leisure time. In appreciation of the service she has rendered over the years, Ginger was awarded a plaque at the December luncheon last year by President Robb Seibly. Thanks again, Ginger, for the many years of service to REOKC and its members!

REOKC NUMBERS

1. Number of REOKC members as of November 30, 2023: **4,910**
2. Number of members taking advantage of the discounted rates for Supplemental Insurances from Pacific Group Agencies (PGA) as of January 1, 2024: **2,107**
3. Number of policies issued per plan:
Vision—**1,515**
HMO Dental—**560**
PPO Dental—**830**
Personal Accident & Secure Travel—**257**
Legal Shield—**199**
ID Theft Shield—**155**
4. Other Insurances available: Pet, Life, Hearing

Anyone interested in learning more about any of the Insurance plans can contact Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.:

Telephone (800) 511-9065
REOKC@pgagencies.com

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.

2023

January

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● County Paydays
 ■ County Holidays
 ■ Strata CU Holidays
 ● Free Document Shredding

*Strata Credit Union Branches will be closed at 3pm

2025

January

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

**PRSRT-STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BAKERSFIELD, CA
PERMIT NO. 349**

**January & February 2024
Time Dated Material**

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

REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S

5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2024

LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024

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)