



# T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXIV-II

**March & April 2024**

[www.reokc.org](http://www.reokc.org)

Robert Seibly, President

M. L. Bennett, Editor ([mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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.*

**G**reetings to all our wonderful "REOKC" members, and their family and friends, who get to read this newsletter. I hope you are doing well and involved in things that bring you happiness. Knowing that we are all getting older and maybe we can't do all the things we used to do, but at least we can do some things that bring fun and excitement and joy into our lives, and it seems that family and friends are our saving grace.

**L**et's look at what is coming up and to get involved in. Our lunch meetings have been a big success, and we are having 200+ members attending. Just last month we had 222 people at our Luncheon (and the food was great). So, let's look at March and April for things to do that will keep us busy and involved.

**March:** 12th - REOKC Monthly Luncheon Meeting; 10th - Daylight Saving Time Begins, set clocks ahead one hour; 17th - St. Patrick's Day, wearing of the green!

**March continued:** 20th - First Day of Spring; 24th - Palm Sunday; 29th - Good Friday; 31st Easter Sunday.

**April:** 1st - April Fools' Day; 9th - REOKC Monthly Luncheon Meeting; 15th - Income Tax Day; 22nd - Earth Day/Passover Begins at Sunset; 24th - Administrative Professionals Day; 30th - Passover (last Day).

With the things on the calendar above and adding our to-do-items, we all have on our own calendar, we could make this be a busy two months. So, enjoy yourself, stay safe, stay active, make a new friend, touch a life, and see you at our March and April REOKC Luncheons.

As I have said before, and now say again, too often we underestimate the power of:

A touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear,

An honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring,

All of which have the power to turn a life around.

**Hope to see you at our next REOKC luncheon.**

(Luncheon doors open at 10:45a.m., luncheon/meeting starts about 11:30 a.m. Come early to get a good table and be with new and old friends, the food is great and the socializing is wonderful.)

**Happy  
Easter!**





## 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).*

Good news!! A Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) as of April 1, 2024 will be seen on your retirement check at the end of April. According to Segal Consulting 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). Due to fluctuations of CPI over the years and depending upon when you retired, your COLA may be affected. 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. Although this year the following **COLA rate of 2.5%** will be applied to all retirees and beneficiaries for those in retirement prior to April 1, 2024. As always, direct all questions concerning COLA to KCERA Administration.

During the February KCERA Meeting the Board approved consent agenda items (routine and noncontroversial items); heard and approved presentations: Annual Private Market Review (Cambridge Associates);

Private Market Funds Recommendations (Cambridge Associates); Hedge Fund Recommendations (Elliott Associates). The Board also heard various staff administrative reports.

During the February 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](http://www.kcera.org). All members are encouraged to hear and/or participate in the next virtual Retirement Board Meeting on March 13, 2024.

*“You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.”*  
- Abraham Lincoln

### CHUCKLES

~ Untold wealth: that which does not appear on the income tax return.

~ If you’re looking for ways to prevent electrical shock around the home, just open your electric bill slowly.

~ If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it—unless of course....you’re a politician.



## 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:** Bonnie Billings;  
James R Leon; Flornesto Lopez

**BENEFICIARY:** Audrey Brownfield; Luke Curtis;  
Preston George Sr.; Diwana Hinds; Joan Holton;  
June E Martinez; Debbie D. Thomas

**CA CHILDRENS SERVICES:** Catherine Horton

**CHILD SUPPORT:** Diana Ulloa

**CODE COMPLIANCE CE:** Beth Husted

**COUNTY COUNSEL:** Kelley Scott

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Gregory Bianchi

**EMPLOYERS' TRG. RESOURCE:** Alan D. Hall

**ENG. & GROUNDWATER:** Robert Dill;  
Douglas Tisinger

**ENVIRON HEALTH SERVICES:** Mart Brownfield;  
Florence Chmiel

**FIRE:** Tim Lillard; Anthony R. Romero; Jay B. Ryan

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Debra Bulseco; Ava Chambers;  
Virginia Hackman; Donna Joy Hegelein; Ana Murguia;  
Tammy Slankard; Ana Tapia; Cecelia Vigil

**K.C. HOSPITAL AUTHORITY:** Janet Bellows;  
Ricardo Esteban; Patricia Gaeta; Ruby Segobia;  
Antoinette C. Smith

**KERN MEDICAL CENTER:** Jack E. Arnold;  
Jeana G. Gimena; Jayshri Patel; Valentino Rea

**OVERHEAD BUSINESS PT CLK:** Michael Thompson

**PROBATION:** Denis Amble

**PUBLIC DEFENDER:** Glen F. Pitts

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Ronald Christian; Robert Dear

**SHERIFF:** Daniel Andre; Enrique L. Bravo;

Sandra Forst; Gregory D. Morgan; John Puga Jr.;  
Orlanda Ramos; Linda Reitz

**SUPERIOR COURT:** Cheryl A. Watson

**VETERAN SERVICE:** Bernabe Delacruz

***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**

**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](mailto: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**



By Jeremy Rowell  
KCERA Communications Manager

**Board of Retirement Change:** 2024 brings a few changes to the KCERA Board of Retirement. KCERA thanked Tyley Whitezell for his dedicated leadership as KCERA's Board of Retirement Chair in 2023. We also welcomed Phil Franey as the 2024 Board of Retirement Chair and David Couch as the Vice-Chair. KCERA's Board of Retirement has one vacancy, the General Elected 3<sup>rd</sup> member seat. We are currently in the election process and hope to have the seat filled soon.

**Cost-of-Living Adjustment:** This year's 2.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) will be effective April 1, 2024. The Board approved the COLA for Retirees and Beneficiaries at its meeting on February 14, 2024.

- **Retirees:** You can expect to see it reflected in your April 2024 benefit payment. The KCERA Board of Retirement approved the COLA for Retirees and Beneficiaries at its Board meeting on February 14, 2024.

You can find more COLA information on our website at [kcera.org](http://kcera.org)

**Update your Beneficiaries:** The new year is a great time to review your beneficiary designation! Confirming that you have a complete and accurate beneficiary designation form on file with KCERA is essential. That includes your beneficiary's current contact information. You should also update your beneficiary designation whenever there are changes in your family status due to the following:

- Birth
- Death
- Marriage
- Domestic partnership registration
- Divorce

You can check your beneficiary information at any time by logging in to your KCERA Portal Account, clicking Personal Information, and opening the Beneficiaries tab. Should you have any questions regarding your designation or Portal registration, please do not hesitate to contact the KCERA office.

**KCERA Photo Contest:** We received over one hundred and fifty photo entries from our members! From Lake Isabella sunsets to Probation Officers playing catch with kids, there was no shortage of outstanding entries. Please go to our website, [kcera.org](http://kcera.org), and enjoy the fantastic Kern County photography.

**Be On Guard Against Scammers:** Scams against older adults are steadily increasing. Individuals aged 60 and older are increasingly targeted because scammers see them as less tech-savvy and more financially stable. You may receive a letter, phone call, email, or text message from people you don't know who claim to be someone they're not to scam you out of your money. Here's some information and tips to help you avoid being vulnerable to scammers.

- Beware of phishing scams (emails, internet links, and phone calls) trying to trick you into revealing personal information.
- Before responding to a questionable retirement email, please give us a call.
- Don't rely on your phone's Caller ID. Businesses can be spoofed. Generally, no government agency or reputable company will call you unexpectedly and request your personal information or request fees for services in the form of wire transfers or gift cards.

If you ever have any questions regarding your retirement, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are here for you.

[www.kcera.org](http://www.kcera.org)  
[memberservices@kcera.org](mailto:memberservices@kcera.org)  
661-381-7700

**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.

# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Certificate

**4.75% APY Fixed Rate**

**13-Month Certificate  
Available until 4/15/24**



**STRATA**

CREDIT UNION

661.327.9461  
WWW.STRATACU.ORG

CELEBRATING



EST. 1949

\*APY = Annual Percentage Yield. Rates are effective for special certificates opened between 02/01/2024 through 04/15/2024. Minimum balance to open certificate is \$1,000.00. Rate is fixed for stated term and penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. Federally insured by NCUA. StrataCU roll-over certificates and IRA certificates are not eligible for special certificate promotion.

**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 2024  
Time Dated Material**

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

**REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S**

**5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024**

**LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 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)**