



T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXVI-II

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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.

I ran across an article the other day that would be of special interest to many of us. It deals with the DMV testing process for older individuals.

Thanks to Chuck Brown, Director, Retired Employees of San Diego, we have some information that could be important to many of our members. He shared that the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has made some changes that drivers that are 70 years-old and older, in California, whose licenses expire soon will no longer be required to take a written knowledge test. The testing requirement was a department policy, not a law.

The DMV, after reviewing procedures, is working on improving service and decreasing the amount of time spent waiting on the renewal process at DMV offices. Those renewing their license who are 70 years-old and older require an office visit for a vision exam and an updated photo. Some time ago notices for older customers with licenses that were close to expire indicated a knowledge test was required, but now that requirement is waived during the in-office visit.

Customers with poor driving records who have points on their record will be eligible for the eLearning course. Drivers whose records meet any of the following conditions are still required to take the knowledge test:

- Two or more accidents during the two years immediately preceding the expiration of the license.
- Three or more accidents during the three years immediately preceding the expiration of the license.
- A DUI suspension during the two years immediately preceding the expiration date of the license.
- A violation point-count greater than one within the two years immediately preceding the expiration date of the license.

Choosing the online option for testing significantly reduces the amount of time customers need to spend in an office. This improves DMV customer service by reducing office congestion and waiting times. As part of its customer-focused digital transformation, the DMV is processing the following transactions through online, kiosk, phone, mail or business partner only:

- Simple vehicle registration renewals that are not past the due date nor require an address change.
- Driver's license renewals that do not require an in person visit.
- Requests for copies of vehicle registration records which show a vehicle's ownership history.
- Requests for copies of driver's license records which show a driver's history.
- Replacing a lost or stolen driver's license card.

Hope this information will be helpful for you. A call to your local DMV office should be able to answer any other questions you might have.

Please note on Page 2 of this issue, there is a new name connected to Pacific Group Agencies. Last year PGA became a part of AMBA (Association Member Benefits Advisors) with the intention of improving and adding benefits for REOKC members.

We are here for you. We are the eyes and ears for our retirees. Please help others to find their way to us.

Affiliate:

 PACIFIC GROUP AGENCIES



Think You Missed Your Chance? Think Again!

As you are probably aware, members used to be limited to enrolling in dental and vision benefits in the Fall during open enrollment. **We are now excited to announce that Dental and Vision benefits are available for enrollment year-round!** While plans still have a one-year commitment, you have the flexibility to begin mid-year as needed. We are thrilled to be able to make this meaningful improvement. Questions about eligibility? Reach out to our office for more information!

Did open enrollment pass you by in the hustle and bustle of the holidays? Do you no longer have your 2026 Benefits Guide? Wondering how to add plans throughout the year? Our website – www.pgagencies.com/REOKC has copies of the annual benefits guide, helpful links, and online enrollment information. ***Be sure to check regularly as we prepare to roll out exciting new benefit options and discount plans for members.***

Our team is available year-round to assist you by phone or email. You can connect with us during our regular office hours, **Monday–Friday, 7:00 AM–4:00 PM.**

Phone: 800-511-9065

Email: REOKC@pgagencies.com

Website: www.pgagencies.com/REOKC

CHUCKLES

~ I just read a book about marriage that says treat your wife like you treated her on your first date. So tonight after dinner I'm dropping her off at her parent's house.

~ Being a little older, I am very fortunate to have someone call and check on me every day. He is from India and is very concerned about my car warranty.

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.

NEW BENEFIT FOR REOKC MEMBERS!

Congratulations! As a valued **REOKC member**, you now have access to **myAMBAdiscounts**, your new savings portal packed with thousands of discounts on dining, shopping, travel, and entertainment—locally and worldwide.

This benefit is **free with your REOKC membership** and available anytime, anywhere—on your computer or smartphone.

How to Get Started (Step-by-Step)

1. Go to www.myAMBAdiscounts.com
2. Click **Register / Activate**
3. Enter the activation code: **AMBASAVERS**
4. Create your account and start browsing discounts
5. (Optional) Download the **Passport App** on your smartphone for savings on the go

Once logged in, you can search by location, category, or favorite brands—and start saving immediately!

A Few Tips:

- Check back often—new discounts are added regularly.
- Look for limited-time offers with deeper savings.
- Use the mobile app when you're out and about for instant deals near you.

This new benefit is another way REOKC continues to strengthen the value of membership and support our retirees. Enjoy the savings—and thank you for being part of REOKC!

Any questions or problems, contact Passport at 800.410.4211 or support@passportunlimited.com.



LEVAN INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR ALL SPRING CLASSES!

www.levaninstitute.org

At the Levan Institute for Lifelong Learning we celebrate Healthy Aging with over 40 unique classes focused on the interests of those 55+. Join us to learn, explore, make new friends, and have some fun! Check out the website or call us:

www.levaninstitute.org (661) 395-4431

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**

ASSESSOR: Robin J. Hall

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECO: Cara R. Beattie;
Donnie C. Coleman, Sr; Bobbie C. Martin

BENEFICIARY: Barbara Christensen-Meins;
Paula K. McKenzie; Karen Richardson;
Dallas J. Shearer

CHILD SUPPORT: Dulce M. Cahue-Aguilar;
Pamela Deacon; Lucila C. Martinez

COUNTY COUNSEL: Sara Allbee

DEPT OF AG & MEASMNT ST: Denise E. Eyraud;
Christian E. Hedlund

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Kevin P. Cook

ENVIRON HEALTH SERVICES: Turonda Crumpler

FARM & HOME ADV.: Ricardo C. Ramirez

FIRE: Deborah Rae Duncan; Elvia Hoffman;
Elbert J. Ringer

GARAGE: Carlos H. Recinos

HUMAN SERVICES: Stephen F. Atkinson;
Roger F. Greaves; Kathryn A. Lindsey; Delfino Neira;
Trina Y. Phillips; Brenna M. Viskovic

K.C. HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: Lori D. Finstad;
Kathy P. Fussell

PLANNING & COMMUN. DEVL.: Janice Mayes

PROBATION: Jacob Q. Olivarez; Lilia Sanchez

PUBLIC HEALTH: Angelica Castrejon

PUBLIC WORKS: Angela D. Williams

ROADS: Timothy J. McCay

S.J. VALLEY AIR POLLUT. CONT.: Jason Heerling

SHERIFF: James Anton; Daniel R. Bowman;
Julie Degraffenreid; Craig C. Fraley;
Christopher J. Martin; Mark J. Riehle

SUPERIOR COURT: Joann Bergholdt;
Tamarah L. Pickens

***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

**Last Minute Princess Cruise Line
12 Night Cruise tour**

“Off the Beaten Path” Tour LA5
May 23 to June 4, 2026

7 Night cruise Vancouver to Anchorage (Whittier)
Kenai 2 nights, Denali 2 nights & Fairbanks 1 night
Balcony Cabin \$3909.00 per person including
Princess Plus package & Insurance
Airfare additional

**Celebrity Cruise Line Vietnam &
Thailand Cruise 12 nights**

Jan. 26 to Feb. 7, 2027 Celebrity Solstice
Hong Kong China, Hanoi, Hue/DaNang, Ho Chi
Minh, Bangkok, Ko Samui, Singapore
Balcony Cabin \$2858.00 per person.
Airfare, insurance, pre paid gratuities and drink
package additional

**Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
7 Night Mexican Riviera Cruise**

July 17 - 24, 2026 Navigator of the Seas
Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan & Puerto Vallarta
Balcony Cabin \$2043.24 per person
Insurance, Prepaid gratuities and drink package
Additional

I also book airfare, hotels and Car Rentals.

All rates are based on availability and can sell out.

**Julie Salazar-Garcia
(661) 324-6910 cruiseport@sbcglobal.net
The Cruise Port, 1800 Oak St., Suite D
Bakersfield, CA 93301**

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 ***

Mary Lou Bennett 661-871-5270

mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net

- **Sunshine (Cards of Expression)**
Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222
- **Scholarship Program**
Nancy Warnick 661-205-6333

KCERA Board Retiree Member

- Jeff Frapwell –
jrf7500@gmail.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

By Nancy Warnick

Do you have a grandchild, great niece or nephew who is a high school senior? Well, now is the time to prompt them to submit their application for a \$2000 REOKC scholarship which is on our website reokc.org. We know \$2000 won't pay for four years of college, but it may give your student a little boost this fall as they start their college journey by helping with books or possibly a new computer. You don't have to be local, your students don't have to be local, and the institution they want to attend next year doesn't need to be local either. You just need to be a dues paying member of REOKC.

When I began serving on the scholarship committee several years ago, REOKC awarded two \$500 scholarships a year. The program has grown substantially since those days. Last year we received over 30 applications and were able to award 14 \$2000 scholarships. In 2025 the REOKC board voted to allow our annual scholarship recipients to be related. When we were only awarding two annual scholarships, it didn't seem fair to award both of them to members of the same family. Now it seems unfair not to allow both twins to be considered for a scholarship.

As the scholarship committee chair, I am your student's advocate. I will assist them in completing their applications so they can be considered by our scholarship committee. It is the committee members who select the recipients. The committee members read all the completed applications (that have identifying information redacted), and they make the determination for the year's awards. (I don't get to vote). I am often asked what the selection criteria is, but it's a multitude of things. As each applicant is unique, so are the perspectives and priorities of our committee members. They take their choices seriously and have lively discussions on each selection.

Your student's first step in the pursuit of an REOKC scholarship is to ensure their application and supporting documents are **mailed** to our PO Box by **April 15**. Online submissions are not accepted. Occasionally REOKC has received glowing letters of recommendation for an outstanding high school senior but no application for that student. With no information about how to contact the student, I can't even let them know REOKC hasn't received their application. The application must contain the name of the qualifying REOKC member the student is related to. Although you may be a county retiree, unless you pay your \$2 monthly dues to REOKC, your high school senior is not eligible to receive one of our scholarships. Also, once a retiree passes away (and has no surviving spouse who is an associate member) they can no longer be considered a qualifying relative.

Along with the application, your student must submit an essay, usually around 500 words, or about a typewritten page. This is how we get to know your student, learning what is important to them, and their goals for the future. The essay should be more than a list of honors. If the student's grades slipped their sophomore year in high school they should explain the reason. The committee members will consider challenges the student has faced when making their determinations.

Another requirement is an official high school transcript of the student's grades from their high school, including their grades for the fall term. It must be submitted by their high school registrar in a sealed envelope. Sometimes high schools are slow in sending these. I will let the applicants know if I haven't received their transcripts. A 2.5 GPA on a 4-point scale is required. Most of our scholarship recipients have at least a 3.5 GPA – but not all of them.

Finally, a successful scholarship application requires three letters of recommendation. These letters can be sent by teachers, employers, or other people the applicant knows who can tell us about their past performance, obstacles overcome, leadership ability and prognosis for future success. I will let the students know if we haven't received all three letters.

I will contact (usually by text) the scholarship applicants during the application process. I will let them know what information we have received and what information we are lacking. I will even let them know when their application is complete. If your student has mailed an application and hasn't heard from me after a week or so, please contact me. Also, if their address or phone number has changed, I need to know. My cell phone number is 661-205-6333.

The scholarship committee meets in May to consider all the completed applications. I make copies of the applications and all supporting documentation and remove any identifying information from them. The committee selects the recipients based on the redacted applications but does not know who they are selecting. Once the determination for the scholarship awards has been made, I will notify all the applicants of the committee's decisions. Only after all the applicants have been notified will I release the names to the REOKC board and membership.

Once our scholarship recipients are selected, REOKC needs documentation that the students are scheduled for a full course load (at least 12 units) for the fall term before their checks can be released. REOKC will host our local scholarship recipients and their families at our August REOKC meeting and give them their checks at the meeting. If the student is not local, we will mail their check.

Best wishes to all our high school seniors! I look forward to reviewing their scholarship applications soon.

NAME WANTED



Scan here to submit
on Instagram



Scan here to submit
Online

**SUBMIT YOUR NAME SUGGESTION AT
A BRANCH, ONLINE, OR ON INSTAGRAM
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Retired Employees of Kern County
P.O. Box 2592
Bakersfield, CA 93303

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Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S

5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026

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)