

NewsLetter

PPSPERA IS SUPPORTED BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11

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From Your Co-Presidents

Can you believe it is already summer? What happened to spring? It seems we went directly from winter into hot weather. Now it is time to begin thinking about the AUGUST PICNIC. Meredith Williams from PERA will once again join us to share the latest from PERA. All the picnic details are included in this newsletter. There will also be a reminder flyer closer to the date. However, mark your calendars now for **AUGUST 3 at 11:00 am at Bear Creek Park Pavilion**. Check the flyer for what you need to bring. We will provide paper products and drinks. See you there.



You may have noticed that this column is coming from your co-presidents! Yes, this year the position of president will be shared. Meredith Jobe and Sandy Patton will work

together to lead PPSPERA into the best year yet.

The legislature has been out of session for several weeks now. Through the consolidated efforts of Friends of PERA, the Coalition for a Secure PERA, Colorado School and Public Employees Association, and the efforts of many of you, we were able to defeat all but one of the bills that were designed to destroy or weaken PERA benefits to all of us. The one bill passed does not impact the School Division. Most importantly, the structural changes that were enacted with Senate Bill 1 in 2010 were maintained. Thank you each of you who contacted legislators in support of PERA benefits.

Walker Stapleton, the State Treasurer, continues his attack on PERA. He maintains on his website that the state treasurer "must provide leadership while serving on PERA's board as a voice for the taxpayers." In our opinion Mr. Stapleton provides no leadership while actively supporting fellow politicians who are working to force/convert all public employee Defined Benefit plans into Defined Contribution plans. Stapleton maintains that the assumed PERA 8% return on investments over 30 years is unachievable despite PERA's exceeding this estimated return for the past 25 years. He ignores PERA's 2009 return of 17%. The 2010 return is still at the auditors

but promises to be another double-digit return. Facts do not seem to be important to Mr. Stapleton.

The May awards meeting was wonderful. In case you were not able to attend you can read about our scholarship recipients and service award winners in two separate articles in this newsletter.

The Board has approved community service projects tied to each of the general membership meetings. We will be collecting non-perishable food items at the August 3 picnic to be donated to the food pantry at the Westside Community Center. Please bring at least one item to the picnic and look for more projects and details this fall.

Have you accessed our website www.ppspera.org, enjoyed all the newsletters this year and noticed that we have increased our scholarship award amounts? These increased services all cost money. Therefore, the board has approved a small dues increase. Get more information in this newsletter.

As you can see we have an exciting and busy year coming up. Mark all the meetings on your calendar and sign up early. We are anxious to work with each of you this year. See you at the picnic!

Meredith Jobe and Sandy Patton

Old and New

With the fiscal New Year upon us it's time to wish good luck and thank you to the 2010 - 11 board members that have chosen new paths. It is with great appreciation that all of our board members work tirelessly to promote PPSPERA. Thank you to each and every one of you for a job well done. Greg and Shirley Swinney have spent many years on the Board and are now off to a winter home in Arizona to spend six months per year. Deb Key, Past President, Jan Tyler, Legislative Rep and Dave DiCocco, Pre-retirement have also stepped down from their positions. Judy McCormick is transitioning from the Social duties she has held for many years to Member Emeritus.

And also a huge welcome to our new board members for 2011 - 12. Brenda LeBrasse will assist with Legislative issues; Nancy Haley, Karen Hart and Dennis Shultz have taken over the Membership responsibilities; Elaine Neleski will cover Pre-retirement and Terri Stevens will be the representative for Programs. Good luck to all of our outgoing and new board members.

19th Annual Senior Resource Council/AARP Boomer and Beyond Senior Expo

Colorado School and Public Employees Retirement Association (CSPERA) and Pikes Peak School and Public



Employees Retirement Association (PPSPERA) joined AARP and the Senior Resource Council as participants at the 19th Annual Boomer and Beyond Senior Expo on Saturday, June 4, 2011

at the World Arena in Colorado Springs. Kathy Zinter, John Dale, Sandy Patton, Alan Rasmussen, and Lisa Sarter talked to hundreds of attendees about the benefits of CSPERA and PPSPERA membership.

More than 80 exhibitors provided information on health, education, fitness, finance, and senior living to the several thousand seniors attending this year's Expo. It was free and open to the public with a non-perishable food donation. The food drive benefited AARP's Drive to End Hunger. In conjunction with this cause, AARP sponsored the display of Jeff Gordon's racecar #24 for the event!

This was the first time CSPERA and PPSPERA have participated in the Expo. It proved to be a very beneficial



activity that introduced both organizations to many potential members. Also it was lots of fun!



Historic Buena Vista School Centennial – Save the Date

The Centennial Celebration for the Historic Buena Vista Elementary School will be held on Saturday, October 1, 2011. The school was closed to students a few years ago but is now the site of The Westside Community Center which offers free and low cost services to preschoolers, teens, adults and seniors throughout the Westside and greater Colorado Springs. Former students, staff and community members who have memories, photos, memorabilia and a fondness for a fun time are invited to the celebration. Call the Center at 385-7920 x100 for more information.

PPSPERA DUES INCREASE

After several years of maintaining the cost of dues, the Board of Directors approved a dues increase at the June 6 Board meeting. Effective September 1, 2011, the PPSPERA dues will be \$7.50 per year.

The Board's decision was based on several factors. As the cost of many things has increased over the past few years, printing and mailing costs for our newsletters continue to increase. In the past, District 11 has been able to help with these expenses but in the future PPSPERA may incur all of the printing and mailing expenses. The Board feels that the newsletters are an important tool in communicating with the PPSPERA members. In addition, PPSPERA is actively developing a website to enable us to share information and communicate with a growing number of our members who rely on electronic communications. The website will be an efficient way to share up-to-date information with members and the public and our electronic communications will eventually allow us to send our newsletters electronically as well. In recent years we have increased the amount of the Wayne Bricker and Bill Brandenburg scholarships to high school seniors to \$1500 each and have initiated a plan so that scholarship recipients have the opportunity to renew the scholarships for a second year for \$500 each.

Faced with a deficit budget, the Board feels that this modest dues increase, which makes our yearly dues comparable to the dues of other local school and public employees retirement organizations in Colorado, will enable us to serve our membership effectively and to continue to support our scholarship and community goals.

Please note: New or renewed memberships that are paid by August 31, 2011 are at the current \$5.00 rate. Please refer to the Membership Form in this newsletter to join PPSPERA or renew your membership now.

2011 PPSPERA Scholarship Recipients

Seventeen high school seniors from nine high schools in El Paso and Teller Counties applied for the two 2011 scholarships. The amount of each scholarship was \$1500 and the scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to apply to renew the scholarships for a second year of study for \$500 each. Those of you who attended the May general membership meeting have already seen the 2011 winners introduced.

The PPSPERA scholarship honoring Wayne Bricker was presented to Bethany Wallace ranked number one in her class at Lewis Palmer High School. Bethany plans to attend Colorado State University in Fort Collins where she will pursue studies in Math Education and Business toward working in the public service field.

Christine Anderson, also ranked as the number one in her class at Lewis Palmer High School, received PPSPERA's scholarship honoring Bill Brandenburg. Christine will be attending Washington College in Maryland this fall to pursue a degree in Secondary Math Education. The women are not only co-valedictorians but best friends as well.

Abel Martinez and Katharine Lundquist, last year's winners, were given a second year award of \$500.

Thank you to the PPSPERA members who generously support our scholarships at meetings and when paying dues.



Community Service Awards

If service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy on earth, the recipients of the 2011 Distinguished and Community service awards, have surely paid theirs forward for a lifetime. We were pleased and proud to pay tribute to three wonderful people.

The winner of the Distinguished Service Award is Marcella Ruch. Her career began in 1958 as a Kindergarten and first grade teacher and continued in School District 11, Cherry Creek Schools, Simla and El Paso Community College as a teacher, adult educator and principal. She retired to find a new career on the mission field. Following a mission trip to Russia, she became acutely aware of the medical needs in our own community and founded Mission Medical Clinic, a free medical clinic for persons without health insurance and low income. She's also a co-founder of a free pharmacy called TLC Pharmacy. Marcella started the Free Surgery Project which provides necessary surgery to the needy of our community. Currently she is now off to fulfill another dream working to start a health care program for the women of Liberia.



Pikes Peak Hospice and Palliative Care offer specialized bereavement care and support to family members for 13 months following the death of their loved one. The winners of the Community Service Award was given to Deb Kinnan and Susan Boyle who recognized that children grieve in ways that differ from adults and made sure that quality service is provided for these children.



Deb and Susan lead and provide trained counselors and volunteers who serve as facilitators on a 1:1 basis. The Children's Grief Counseling Program is provided at no cost to children whose parent, sibling, or grandparent has died in the care of PPHPC.

Marcella, Deb and Susan, we tip our hats to you with deep gratitude for the difference your dedicated service has made for children and adults, in not only our community, but the world over. We honor you; we salute you and we thank you for caring enough to give your very best.

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS ON THE LEGISLATURE AND THE MEDIA – (Both statewide and nationally)

Here in Colorado we have been fortunate that PERA supported and the State Legislature passed SB 1 in 2010. That bill put PERA in a better financial position, spreading the structural changes among all PERA participants. HB 1248, which would have changed the composition of the PERA Board of Trustees was laid over, essentially killing the bill. It would certainly behoove us to thank our representatives who opposed that bill, as I do believe we will see it again next year.

It is also on our shoulders to let PERA critics know the true facts of matters being addressed. Readers of the newspapers around the state are getting some misinformation through op-ed pieces and guest columnists. If you are unsure of any information, you can go to the PERA website www.copera.org for accuracy.

Nationally, Congress is expected to raise the debt limit, BUT there are various proposals floating around with implications for Social Security and Medicare. You may want to contact your Congressional representatives to ask for their support in preserving Social Security and Medicare. I think we all know that some adjustments must be made, but we certainly don't want to lose the privileges we have been counting on. CSPERA has put out a more detailed memo in this regard to its members.

Several organizations will be attempting to respond to the misinformation regarding public pensions and taxpayer dollars by meeting with major clubs across the State such as Kiwanis, Lions, etc. This effort is being led by the Colorado Coalition for Retirement Security.

www.securepera.org

PPSPERA MEETING CALENDAR

2011

June 6 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Peak Grill
August 3 at 11 am	General Membership Picnic	Bear Creek Park Pavilion 1
September 15 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Peak Grill
October 12	State Legislative Workshop	Denver Embassy Suites
October 13	CSPERA Board Meeting at APS Center	Denver
October 27 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Pikes Peak Grill
November 1 at 9:30 am	General Membership Brunch & Program	Valley Hi Golf Course

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January 26 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Peak Grill
February 7 at 9:30 am	General Membership Brunch & Program	Valley Hi Golf Course
April 6 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Peak Grill
April 11 at 6:15 pm	Pre-Retirement Seminar	Tesla
May 8 at 9:30 am	General Membership Brunch & Program	Valley Hi Golf Course
May 16 & 17	CSPERA Board Meeting	Colorado Springs Hotel TBD
May 17 & 18	CSPERA Annual Conference	Colorado Springs Hotel TBD

IT'S AUGUST!! PICNIC TIME!

You are invited to the Pikes Peak School & Public Employees Retirement Association Annual August Potluck Picnic

New Retirees are our Special Guests

Bring a fellow Retiree who has not attended in the past

EACH ONE REACH ONE

In our efforts to be more community service-oriented please bring non-perishable food items to be donated to a food bank

When: Wednesday, August 3, 2011
Where: Bear Creek Park, Pavilion A
What: Pot Luck Picnic (See below for what to bring)
Program: Come hear the latest PERA Update on Fiscal and Political Issues
Bring: P - Z Main Dish, A - G Dessert, H - O Salads
Time: 11:00 Networking - 11:30 Eating with Program to Follow

No Need to Register – Just Come
Set-ups and Drinks Provided
Dress is Comfortable & Casual
SEE YOU THERE

