

NewsLetter

PPSPERA IS SUPPORTED BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11

VOLUME IV, No. 3

March, 2012

Editor: Alan Rasmussen

From Your Co-Presidents

We missed those of you who had planned to attend our winter general membership meeting on February 3 to hear Carole Wright, Chair of the PERA Board of Trustees, speak. Due to the snow and blizzard warnings in our area we made the decision to cancel the meeting that morning. Although we realize the weather varied from place to place, it was important to us to keep everyone safe. The winter meeting will not be rescheduled and because we canceled on February 3, there will be no refunds for those who had registered to attend. We hope to have much better weather for our spring general membership meeting in May.

As you may have seen in the newspapers and online and heard on TV, it has been a busy year in the Colorado legislature for PERA-related issues. Now is the time to stay informed and be ready to express your views to your legislators.

A website that we have found to be informative, in addition to the PERA and CSPERA websites, is SecurePera (www.securepera.org) which is sponsored by the Colorado Coalition for Retirement Security. You can access the website to sign up for electronic updates and the latest information. Read about specific bills that affect our PERA benefits in the legislative update in this newsletter.

It is important to not only be aware of the bills that have been introduced and defeated and the bills that are still active, but to also understand the long-term implications to PERA.

As Karen Hart and Nancy Haley, co-chairs of the PPSPERA Membership Committee, continue to refine and edit our database of current paid members, it is clear that we need to increase our membership in order to provide the services and support the activities at the same level as in past years. Due to concerns about the long-term outlook for the budget, the Board of Directors has decided to make several adjustments for 2012. There will be one scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 awarded in May to a high school senior in our area. This scholarship recipient will have the opportunity to apply to renew the scholarship for a second year for \$500. The two recipients of our 2011 scholarships will also have the opportunity to renew their scholarships, for \$500 each, for the coming school year. PPSPERA will sponsor only one young woman for the 2012 Colorado Columbine Girls State program in June. The Crystal Apple program will not be supported

this year. Please be sure that your dues are paid and current and continue to encourage your friends and former colleagues to join our group!

Another change that the Board has approved, that will greatly decrease our mailing and printing costs, is to provide this newsletter in an electronic format, starting with the summer, 2012 newsletter. You will receive the newsletter online unless you opt for a paper copy to be mailed to you. Therefore, please be sure that we have your current email address. You will be able to provide your current email to us or to opt for the paper copy on the form provided in this newsletter. We have discussed this issue with you over the previous year and are excited that we will join other organizations and non-profits in our community in providing information to members via the Internet.

Our spring general membership meeting is Tuesday, May 8 at 9:30 AM at Valley Hi Golf Club. At the May meeting we will meet our 2012 scholarship recipient and present our community and volunteer service awards for 2012. Read the scholarship article in this newsletter and encourage a high school senior that you may know to apply for the scholarship. You will also find an article in this newsletter that explains how you can nominate a person or organization for the community and volunteer service awards. We encourage you to submit nominations to the Board. PPSPERA officers will also be installed at this meeting. Register today for the May 8 meeting!

PPSPERA is pleased to be hosting the Colorado School and Public Employees Retirement Association (CSPERA) Board of Directors Meeting and General Membership Meeting on May 16 and May 17 at the Embassy Suites in Colorado Springs! This is a great opportunity for our members to attend a CSPERA event close to home and learn more about our state organization. Registration materials for the CSPERA meetings are included in this newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you at the May 8 PPSPERA meeting and also the CSPERA meetings on May 16-17!

Meredith Jobe and Sandy Patton

.....
: SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST PICNIC! :
: Tuesday, August 7, 2012 :
: Bear Creek Park, Pavilion #1 :
: 11:00 AM :
:.....

Volunteer News

Your Volunteer Hours Are Needed. Albert Schweitzer said, "The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Volunteering is a way of life for many of our members. It is good to let others know how those of us in retirement years are spending our lives in meaningful service.

Will you take a few minutes to record the hours you have served the past year? Send your name and # of hours volunteered to:

Marjorie Swearingen
1615 Querida Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
or email teacupmejs@aol.com.

From May 2010 to Dec. 2011 our local PPSPERA members reported a total of 6,974 service hours. The three top volunteers were Bud Lemekuhl, Sandy Patton and Marje Swearingen who each volunteered over 1500 hours. Congratulations and thanks to each person who turned in hours of volunteer service.

Scholarship Committee Report

Invitations for the \$1500 2012 PPSPERA Scholarship Award were sent February 21, 2012 to all El Paso and Teller county high schools. The applications are due back by March 31, 2012. The scholarship will honor both Wayne Bricker and Bill Brandenburg.

Two second year applications will be sent out to last year's recipient, Bethany Wallace and Christine Anderson.

Three applications will be read by committee members Barbara Watt, Bud Lehmkul, Jane Johnson and Charlotte Brummer and the winner will be notified by April 19, 2012. The recipient and his/her parents will be invited to attend the PPSPERA meeting on Tuesday, May 8 so that he or she can be acknowledged for high school achievement and to receive the award. It is the PPSPERA Board's sincere hope that we can generate more donations this year so two awards may be given annually.

Community and Volunteer Service awards

The PPSPERA Board of Directors presents awards annually to citizens or organizations that have done remarkable things for children, education or Public Service in our community. The Community and Volunteer Service Awards are presented at the May Meeting

Any member of the PPSPERA may submit nominations for persons or organizations worthy of recognition for their service. Nominations will be accepted until March 31, 2012. Winners will be selected by the Board of Directors.

Please note the following criteria for nominations and selection process.

- Awardees must be a resident of Colorado.
- They must have made significant contribution to the field of education, children, youth or Public Service.
- Teams of people will be considered as one unit.
- Nominators should submit a letter of nomination that must include a biographical sketch and any other documentation, which defines the achievements of the nominee(s).
- The Awardees will be notified in April of their selection and invited to be our guests at the May meeting. For this Awards program to continue successfully, YOUR input is vital! Please give careful consideration to those YOU could nominate.

Submit your nomination packet to:

Marjorie Swearingen
1615 Querida Dr.
Colorado Springs CO 80909 719-597-2196
teacupmejs@aol.com

Help PPSPERA increase our membership...get your friends and colleagues to join or renew their memberships. Membership forms will be available at the May meeting or from the Membership Committee at any time.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: PPSPERA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Effective Summer 2012 PPSPERA will be sent electronically to as many members as possible in order to ensure quicker delivery at a lower cost. If we do not have a current email address for you, please send a signed email to membership@ppspera.org.

OR

If you do not have email access and would like to continue to receive a paper copy, please complete this form and send it to: PPSPERA, P.O. Box 7969, Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7969 by June 1, 2012.

_____ I do not have email access and would like to continue to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PERA - How Can I Be a Good Citizen Lobbyist?

On Thursday, March 1, 2012, the House Finance Committee heard two bills – HB 1150 and HB 1142. The outcome was not entirely in our favor, but our voices were heard and both bills were amended. The amendments dealt with some of the issues your emails raised. HB 1150 would change an employee's highest average salary calculation from 3 years to 7 and was amended to affect only non-vested employees. HB 1142 would allow all employees to choose a defined contribution plan instead of a defined benefit plan and was amended to only include non-vested employees. Both bills were passed out of committee. More than a hundred of you showed up and, as you just read, we did make a difference.

Are we fast becoming Citizen Lobbyists? The answer is definitely yes! As we all know, numbers do count as we have been heard recently in the committee hearings on the current bills before the committees. And, as we are finding out, when it comes to House Bills to be considered, it takes all of our voices to let our legislatures know that we are out there and are actively involved in our legislative process!

Lobbying starts before the legislative session by getting to know your legislators on a personal basis. We need to go to Town Hall meetings that our legislators sponsor and volunteer to make phone calls for our legislator. We need to get involved by delivering flyers and helping with mailings. And, have you ever considered contributing money towards their election?

Lobbyists become familiar with all the bills that have been introduced and take a position on those bills that are of interest to us. We must follow the bill through the legislative process and work with our sponsor to change the bill by an amendment, if it is needed. We must learn to work with other legislators on the various committees to agree with the bill that has been proposed.

Our additional responsibilities may include meeting with other lobbyists, seek help from other lobbyists to pass our bill or defeat our bill, give reports to interested parties regarding the bill's progress as well as other bills of interest, meet with people in the Governor's Office to

enlist their help and learn their position, and go to committee meetings and legislative hearings and floor voting.

Lobbying for a particular bill guidelines consist of the following recommendations:

- Make written information personal rather than using form letters
- Stay positive rather than to threaten a legislator that you will not vote for them
- Become knowledgeable concerning the bill you are lobbying for or against
- Know how and when to lobby on a particular bill
- Make sure the legislator knows you are in his/her district
- Be specific and stay positive at all costs - do not cry "wolf"

Many of you have e-mailed or called the legislators on the recent bills in committee. Keep up the good work! Our voices are being heard!

Thinking about Retiring??? We can help!! Mark your calendars!!

What: Pikes Peak School Public Employees Association
Pre-retirement Seminar

When: April 12, 4-6 p.m.

Where: CSSD 11 Tesla Educational Opportunity Center,
2560 International Cir.

We are bringing together the experts to share the information you need if you are planning to retire in the next few years. The seminar will provide presentations on:

- PERA retirement process
- Financial planning issues to consider
- Health insurance coverage, Medicare, and other related issues
- Answers from the experts on your specific questions or concerns

We hope to see you there. If you need additional information, please email Lu Ann Long at lu55long@gmail.com.

PPSPERA Calendar

April 6 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Peak Grill
April 12; 4-6 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 & Annual Conference	Colorado Springs



PPSPERA is going ELECTRONIC!
Newsletters and flyers will be sent electronically
starting this summer.....
more timely updates and postage and mailing
savings.
See information inside on how to make sure that we
have your current email address now!

**CSPERA MAY MEETINGS IN COLORADO
SPRINGS**

**May 16 – Board of Directors Meeting and
Sandy Patton’s installation as CSPERA
President**

**May 17 – General Membership Meeting
Join us at The Embassy Suites for one or both
days!**

PPSPERA Spring Membership Meeting and Brunch

Valley Hi Golf Club
610 South Chelton Road,
Colorado Springs, CO

Breakfast/Brunch Buffet - \$15 Cost
Tuesday, May 8, 2012
9:30 a.m.

**** Announcement of 2012 Scholarship Recipient**
**** Announcement of 2012 Community Service Award**
Recipients
**** Installation of Officers**

**** Community Service Project: Food/Nonperishable donations**
(toiletries, soap, deodorant, razors, shaving cream, toilet paper, dental care, etc.)
are requested and will be given to the Ecumenical Social Ministries

Reservations due April 30, 2012

Please complete and mail this portion with your check made payable to PPSPER to:
Terri Stevens, 6926 Oak Valley Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919.

Please make _____ reservation for the PPSPERA Brunch, May 8, 2012.

Donation to Scholarship Fund \$ _____
Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Name _____
Phone _____

Due to a required reservation number we will not be able to give refunds for no shows.

Mail Your Reservation Today

CSPERA ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Embassy Suites Hotel

7290 Commerce Center Dr.

Colorado Springs, CO 80919-2629

AGENDA

(Subject to change)

- 8:30 a.m. Coffee and Conversation**
- 9:00 a.m. Call to order**
Welcome— Roger Fulks, CSPERA President
Recognition of Sponsors
- 9:15 a.m. Giving Back—Cathy Lasnik, AARP**
- 10:00 a.m. Break**
- 10:15 a.m. Carol Hedges, Colorado Center on Law and Policy**
- 11:00 a.m. Entertainment**
- 11:30 p.m. Susan Lowry, AMBA**
- 11:45 p.m. LUNCH/Door Prizes**
- 12:30 p.m. Joe Garcia, Lt. Governor - (Has been invited)**
- 1:15 p.m. Questions for Lt. Governor**
- 1:30 p.m. Grandparent Essay Contest Winners Awards Presentation – John Dale, Contest Chairman**
- 2:15 p.m. Meredith Williams, PERA Executive Director - (Has been invited)**
- 3:00 p.m. Closing remarks/Door Prizes**
- 3:15 p.m. Adjournment**



REGISTRATION

CSPERA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 16, 2012

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL COLORADO SPRINGS, 7290 COMMERCE CENTER DRIVE, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80919

Name _____

Lunch will be served.

Registration for non-board members - \$18.00

DEADLINE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING REGISTRATION IS MAY 7, 2012

If you need overnight accommodations, please call the Embassy Suites Hotel at 719.599.9100. Guest rooms have been reserved at the rate of \$109 (Double Suite or King Suite) - this rate will be available all week. (There a few handicapped rooms available on a first come first served basis.)

Deadline for room reservation is April 14, 2012



BIRNADINE MACK FOUNDATION BREAKFAST

May 17, 2012

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL COLORADO SPRINGS, 7290 COMMERCE CENTER DRIVE, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80919

Name : _____

Registration (for all attendees) - \$10.00

DEADLINE FOR FOUNDATION BREAKFAST REGISTRATION IS MAY 7, 2012

If you need overnight stay, please call the Embassy Suites Hotel at 719.599.9100. Guest rooms have been reserved at the rate of \$109 (Double Suite or King Suite) - this rate will be available all week. (There a few handicapped rooms available on a first come first served basis.)

Deadline for room reservation is April 14, 2012



CSPERA ANNUAL MEETING

May 17, 2012

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL COLORADO SPRINGS, 7290 COMMERCE CENTER DRIVE, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80919

Name: _____

Registration Fee (for all attendees—lunch included) - \$20.00

DEADLINE FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION IS MAY 7, 2012

If you need overnight stay, please call the Embassy Suites Hotel at 719.599.9100. Guest rooms have been reserved at the rate of \$109 (Double Suite or King Suite) - this rate will be available all week. (There a few handicapped rooms available on a first come first served basis.)

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