

**PPSPERA August Membership Picnic
Thursday, August 8, 2013
Westside Community Center
11:00 am.**

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Olvey, LuAnn Long, Meredith Jobe, Alan Rasmussen, Joyce Schmaltz, John Kerr, Karen Hart, Terri Stevens, Roger Louden, Naomi Lehmkuhl, Bud Lehmkuhl, Barbara Watt, Charlotte Brummer, Elaine Naleski, Peggy Gardner, Judy McCormick.

There were 45 people attending the picnic.

Welcome:

Co-presidents, Gerry Olvey and LuAnn Long welcomed everyone to our new location. Gerry introduced the board members and their positions.

The guests for the day were introduced.

Greg Smith-PERA Executive Director
Carole Wright –Chair of PERA Board of Trustees
Dave Rich-PILLAR Executive Director
Sandy Patton-CSPERA President-unable to attend
Keilee Hardy-Kaiser Enrollment Specialist
Shauna Broadus-Kaiser Permanente
Wayne Hutchinson- D-11 Foundation
Jake Henderson-AMBA

Wayne Bricker/ Bill Brandenburg Scholarship Winner:

LuAnn introduced Brittney McClain of Fountain/Fort Carson High School as our 2013scholarship winner. Brittney told us a bit about herself and her plans to attend CSU Pueblo this fall to pursue elementary education. She Introduced her grandparents, Bill and Connie Stauffer. Later in the meeting Charlotte Brummer presented her with her \$1500 scholarship check.

PILLAR Partnership and Peach Fundraiser:

Dave Rich reminded us that PPSPERA members have a partnership with PILLAR and can become members at half-price or \$30. He also reported on PILLARS annual fundraiser, selling Palisade peaches. This year due to a very limited crop in Colorado, the peaches will be coming from Utah. They may be ordered by September 10th, pre-paid and may be picked up September 14th. The new PILLAR catalog will be in the mail soon.

Lunch break was taken at 11:45am.

D-11 Foundation:

Wayne Hutchison a member of the D-11 Foundation Board spoke of the upcoming golf tournament at Kissing Camels Golf Club. It will be held September

9th and is a fundraiser for the foundation. Fees for educators have been reduced this year to \$300 for a foursome. The Foundation returned \$20,000 to D-11 classrooms last year. Visit the website.

Alan Rasmussen, Southern Division Director of CSPERA reported on the extent of his division and that he has been able to meet with several of the locals. Membership dues for CSPERA are \$24/year. Alan is also editor of the local newsletter and noted that it has gone electronic.

Kaiser Permanente:

Kaiser underwrote the rent for today's meeting and has sponsored other meetings in the past. Shauna and Keilee were introduced and spoke briefly of the Medicare 5-Star Advantage Plan for 2013.

AMBA:

Jake Henderson and Brian Morgan represent AMBA, the supplemental benefits program for CSPERA. They are a full service benefit management firm that works only with educators on a national basis. Their goal is to grow membership. They have a website or may be accessed through cspera.org/benefits.

Carole Wright, PERA Board of Trustees Chair, thanked Kaiser and AMBA for offering a wide variety of services. Carole spoke briefly of the history of PERA and emphasized that we earned our position. We need to sell ourselves as community members and not be intimidated because we are PERA members. Carole then introduced Greg Smith, PERA Executive Director.

Greg Smith began by giving a bit of his background. He is a fourth generation resident of Colorado and is a trained litigator. His job is taking the money coming in to PERA, investing it and running a benefit's operation. He is proud of the investment history of PERA, \$43 billion. PERA is the 21st largest pension plan in the United States. It has buying power like few others. There is strength in the number of people belonging: 500,000. 70% of the people in the state don't know what PERA is. It's our job to give them the accurate story. People care about the economic impact on the state and on them. The word needs to get out that PERA is the best investment ever made in the state. Critics are looking for anything to be critical of. PERA member benefits consist of employee savings, benefits from employer, and investments. The audit report from the legislature was absolutely clean. The returns from 2012 investments earned 12.9%. This is the story that needs to be told. Greg also spoke of pending litigation. The law suit addressing the change in the COLA is now to be reviewed by the state Supreme Court. It will probably take 1 year to 1 ½ years for an answer. The lawsuit brought by State Treasurer Walker Stapleton was turned down by the trial court. The judge upheld the decision of the trial court.

There is a strategic plan for communication; an outreach program. A better relationship with employers needs to be established. The business community needs information, such as \$300 million is distributed every month in the state from PERA benefits. All members need to be prepared to talk about ColoradoPERA. It needs to be said: "I contributed 8% of every check I ever got. I don't have the social security safety net." The public needs to be able to put a face on ColoradoPERA.

There will be a ballot initiative to increase Colorado state taxes to help with education. Be prepared with your answer that no money from this initiative will be going to PERA. Read what the law says.

Greg encouraged each of us to get involved with the Ambassador Program. Information and training come directly from COPERA. There are presently 200 ambassadors and he anticipates there will be 1000.

Greg opened the floor for questions. A person asked for an update on the Memorial Hospital problem with PERA employees. Greg stated it was a high stakes issue and that COPERA could not compromise. A question about the status of the Health Care Plan was asked. The Plan will have the same providers next year and it is being carefully monitored.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

**Gerry urged top hat donations for the scholarships.
Thanks for donations to Westside Cares.**

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AT WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER AT 9:30 AM.

**November 7, 2013
February 13, 2014
May 8, 2014**

**Respectfully submitted;
Joyce Schmaltz, Secretary**