



NewsLetter

PPSPERA IS SUPPORTED BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11

January, 2014

Editor: Alan Rasmussen

From the Co-Presidents

Happy New Year!! We hope this New Year finds you happy, healthy and keeping warm!! It is hard to believe it is actually January 2014 and Christmas 2013 has come and gone. As we start the New Year, let's recap the end of 2013 for PPSPERA.

In November, we had a general membership meeting that was held at the Westside Community Center. The program for the day featured Lynea Hansen, from the Colorado Coalition for Retirement Security (CCRS). CCRS, also called Secure PERA, was founded in 2006 to work with PERA and the State Legislature. The coalition has 8 member organizations as follows:

- AFSCME Colorado (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees)
- American Federation of Teachers Colorado
- Association of Colorado State Patrol Professionals
- Colorado Association of School Executives
- Colorado Education Association
- CSPERA – Colorado School and Public Employees Retirement Association
- Colorado WINS (Workers for Innovative and New Solutions)
- Friends of PERA

As you can see, our parent organization, CSPERA, is a member of the coalition. Lynea Hansen runs the Secure PERA website and works very hard to keep PERA strong. She also makes it very easy for all of us as PERA retirees to keep abreast of issues and news regarding PERA, as well as what is happening in the legislature regarding PERA. If you have not signed up to be on the Secure PERA email list, we want to encourage you to do that. It is an easy, handy way to keep yourself in the know about PERA issues. You can sign up at <http://www.securepera.org>

As we look forward, there are a couple of general membership meeting dates to put on your calendars. The meetings are scheduled for February 13, 2014 and May 8, 2014. Both of those meetings will start at 9:30 am, and will be held at the Westside Community Center located at 1628 West Bijou Street in Colorado Springs. There is ample parking and the facility is easily

accessible. Please plan to join us and bring a friend!

Happy 2014!

Gerry Olvey and LuAnn Long

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2013 -14 Meeting Calendar

General Membership Meetings: 9:30-11:30 at the Westside Community Center

February 13, 2014
May 8, 2014

Board Meetings: 9:00-11:00 at The Egg and I at Academy/Galley

January 16, 2014
March 20, 2014
April 17, 2014
June 19, 2014

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, February 13, 2014 – 9:30 a.m.

PPSPERA WINTER Membership Meeting
and
Breakfast/Brunch - \$12.00 Cost

Westside Community Center
1628 West Bijou Street
Colorado Springs, CO

Community and Distinguished Service Awards

At the General Membership Meeting held in May, the Pikes Peak School and Public Employees Retirement Association (PPSPERA) recognizes two organizations or individuals who have made significant contributions in the field of education and/or public service in Colorado.

Recipients of these prestigious awards may be an individual or an organization. All PPSPERA members are encouraged to nominate their special individual or organization. Nominations must be submitted by the first week of March each year and sent to Roger Loudon, 14065 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. The nomination form contains guidelines for either an individual or an organization.

Our two 2013 award winners, the Westside Community Center and Happy Cats Haven, are good examples of worthy recipients of our Community and Distinguished Service awards.

Several other stipulations not included on the nomination form are the following:

- Awardees must be residents of the state of Colorado.
- They must have made significant contribution to the field of education 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 are 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.

You are strongly encouraged to nominate worthy individuals or organizations who contribute so much to our community and the lives of others.

Roger W. Loudon



The Danger of Mandatory Social Security

Keep Informed, and Comment to Your Congresspersons

Our legislative articles usually deal with the Colorado legislature. This article, however, will describe a PERA-related item of federal legislation that has appeared, re-appeared, and will likely be brought up again in Washington.

The item is Mandatory Social Security for all workers, which, if passed, would require Social Security participation for those public employees who currently have only their state's retirement plan, such as PERA employees in Colorado.

In Colorado, PERA was started in 1931, before Social Security existed. When Social Security began, Colorado's public employees declined to join. That has proven to be a good decision, because as both plans have evolved, PERA has come to be a far superior plan in both success of funding and level of benefit. That development is partly because both employers and employees contribute significantly more to PERA than the contributions required by Social Security, and partly because PERA investments have done well.

What would happen if Congress passed Mandatory Social Security? No one can say with certainty how that would play out, but it's unlikely that Colorado employers would continue to pay the current PERA contribution PLUS the 6.2% required by Social Security. Similarly, would PERA employees accept paying PERA's current 8% PLUS the federal 6.2%? If federal participation became mandated, it's likely that PERA contributions would be adjusted downward, with a necessary adjustment in the PERA benefit.

Given the secure and reliable history of PERA's benefit level and professional fund management, we believe PERA's active members and retirees would be better served to continue with PERA as the exclusive pension provider. Many highly qualified job applicants seek Colorado public service careers, and subsequently serve the public very well with their top talents, because of the PERA affiliation.

Why might this be a dangerous issue in Washington? Currently only fourteen states are like Colorado, with public employees NOT in the Social Security system. For thirty-six states, Mandatory Social Security adds income to the federal system (from those other fourteen states) without costing THEIR state any new expense at all. The added dollars wouldn't create a huge infusion of dollars to Social Security, but they WOULD add income, a perennial goal of those looking to shore up the federal Social Security plan.

And Social Security, unlike PERA, faces a not-too-distant funding problem. The trust funds that support Social Security are projected to become insufficient to pay

full benefits in 2033. At that point, Social Security would only collect enough to pay about 75% of normal benefits.

So, a majority of states would find Mandatory Social Security a tempting law, and we rely on our federal legislators to join with those of similar non-Social Security states to discourage that which would harm the very well-functioning Colorado plan.

How can you help? Keep informed about the issue by your membership in your local unit and your state CSPERA. Watch the www.cspera.org and www.securepera.org and www.friendsofpera.com web sites. It's important to provide your email contact to CSPERA for timely updates as events happen (email info is kept confidential). Message your federal Representatives and Senators with your opposition to Mandatory Social Security (contact information below). In election years, ask candidates their position on this issue. The Colorado congressional delegation faces a difficult job on this issue, but PERA retirees and active members should press them to learn about and to work on the matter.

Senator Michael Bennet, 458 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510

1-202-224-5852 Email via www.bennet.senate.gov

Senator Mark Udall, Hart Office Building, SH-730, Washington, D.C. 20510

1-202-224-5941 Email via www.markudall.senate.gov

Representative Doug Lamborn, 2402 Rayburn House office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

1-202-225-4422 Email via www.lamborn.house.gov

Thank you Tom Tonoli, CSPERA President-elect, for this article which he wrote for the Ft. Collins Chapter.

CSPERA REPORT: A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Sandy Patton, President

Developing and implementing a strategic plan was a major goal of my presidency. Input for this process started at the October, 2012 Board of Directors Meeting. Most Board Members felt CSPERA communicated well and in a timely manner with those members with email but needed to improve communication to those members without email. Many felt we needed to actively seek to expand our membership base beyond educators. Another need identified was increasing support for local units and encouraging local participation at the state level. Lastly, many thought we should expand the use of technology and enter the world of social media.

The Executive Committee worked hard and long all day on January 15, 2013 with the very able assistance

of Margaret Deiotte, a professional facilitator. As a result of all the hard work we defined ourselves as an organization, worked on a new vision statement and developed four action goals for the next three years. This was presented to the Board at the May meeting.

Four goals were developed with action steps and timelines determined. The goals are:

Goal #1: Electronic Communication: CSPERA will utilize multiple paths for internal and external communication;

Goal #2: Branding: CSPERA will engage a marketing/communications firm to develop a CSPERA brand that is recognized by the legislature and throughout the state;

Goal #3: Political Scene: a) Deliver honest and accurate data to combat misinformation.; and

Goal #4: Organizational Structure: Ensure the executive board, the full board and the organization as a whole are structured to conduct CSPERA efficiently and effectively.

Implementation is under way on Goals 1 and 2. Our Facebook page is coming soon. We will add other social media to facilitate member communication. As you see above Goal 2 states that CSPERA will engage a marketing/communications firm to help develop a CSPERA brand that is recognized by the legislature and throughout the state. Saltzman Communications was selected to help us with this work. They have extensive experience in school, non-profit and public sector communications. The first challenge is collecting data from which we can develop effective messaging and marketing materials.

Therefore, we will send out an **electronic survey to a large sampling of members** in the coming weeks. We are doing this to find out more about your impressions of our efforts and directions under way to protect your PERA annuity. **Please take the time to help us.** The survey will take about 15 to 20 minutes. Your feedback is the critical foundation for our future communications and marketing plans. **THANK You** in advance for helping us.





Pikes Peak School & Public Employees Retirement Association

P.O. Box 7969

Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7969

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Pictured is a huge check with an equally huge amount made out to the State of Colorado for \$1,567,534.14. This rather substantial sum of money represents the monetary value of CSPERA volunteer hours statewide. Those hours total 70,801 which appears on the memo line of the check. Presenting the check to State Representative Su Ryden of Aurora are Richard Garner, CSPERA Volunteer Chair and Barb Zahn, CSPERA Co-legislative Chair. PPSPERA volunteer hours comprise almost 10% of the total state volunteer hours. The 9.8% translates into \$153,961.59. This breaks down to roughly \$22.14 per hour for every volunteer hour you have served. From January 2013 through September 2013, PPSPERA members have served 6954 volunteer hours, and these are the ones that have been reported to me. Probably many more volunteer hours go unreported.

Thank you, PPSPERA members for your service to our community. The Pikes Peak area is better because of you. Your continued dedication to those organizations and groups is much appreciated and they are a little better off because of you.

Roger W. Louden

Community Service Chairman





PIKES PEAK SCHOOL AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

2014 Community and Distinguished Service Awards

PPSPERA annually awards up to two Community and Distinguished Service Awards to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the fields of education and/or public service in Colorado.

Complete the following information and attach one page that includes specific examples of supporting documentation for each person/organization nominated.

Name of individual or organization nominated: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

If the nominee is an organization, name of organization's contact person: _____

Contact person's position: _____ Phone: _____

PPSPERA member submitting the nomination: _____

PPSPERA member's phone: _____ Email: _____

Documentation should include but is not be limited to:

(For an individual)

How does this person support education and/or public service in the community?

What makes this person stand out?

What is the impact of this individual in the community?

(For an organization)

What is the purpose and/or function of the organization?

How does this organization support education and/or public service?

Who is the target group of the organization?

How many community members are impacted by this organization?

Send completed nominations to Roger Loudon, 14065 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, 80921 by March 1, 2014.