



NewsLetter

PPSPERA IS SUPPORTED BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11

March 2014

Editor: Alan Rasmussen

From Your Co-Presidents

Hard to believe it is almost Spring! Where does the time go? The PPSPERA winter general membership meeting was held at the Westside Community Center on Thursday, February 13, 2014. The program for the day was presented by Paul Gesterling and Shea Smith from the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum. It provided a great opportunity to learn about an historic resource right here in Colorado Springs. Paul and Shea started the program by presenting information about the history of the Pioneer's Museum. In the past few years, the museum has been making a concerted effort to move from simply housing artifacts to engaging the community in the history and culture of our area. The museum has over 75,000 artifacts, 76 outdoor sculptures and 21 exhibit galleries and spaces. One of the most recent exhibits reflects the Waldo Canyon Fire and the Black Forest Fire and their impacts on the community. All in all it was a most interesting and informative program!

Scholarship information has been distributed to area school districts. Applications are due March 31, 2014. Scholarship recipients will be invited to attend the general membership meeting in May.

The annual pre-retirement meeting will be held at the Tesla Center on Thursday, April 3, 2014 from 4:00-6:00 pm. There will be interesting and informative presentations and information available. Look for further information elsewhere in this newsletter. Please share this information with any PERA family, friends or colleagues who may be considering retirement in the next few years.

Our **final general membership meeting** of the year is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on **Thursday, May 8, 2014** at the Westside Community Center. The May meeting is our traditional time to meet and recognize our Scholarship recipients, announce the PPSPERA Community and Distinguished Service Awards, and install officers for the coming year. Installation of

Officers will include the Co-Presidents, President-Elect, and Treasurer.

Save the Date! The **PPSPERA August Picnic** is scheduled for **Thursday, August 21, 2014** at the Westside Community Center. We hope to see you there with a friend who is new to our group! We are working hard to expand PPSPERA participation to PERA retirees in all fields. The picnic is a great way to be introduced to PPSPERA and our members, as well as to find out what we are all about.

Lastly, as always, PERA is a topic of interest to the Colorado legislature and at the state level. In the initial ruling on the Memorial Hospital/PERA case, the judge ruled in PERA's favor, but that decision may be subject to appeal. As for the Legislature, to keep abreast of what is going on at the Capitol, be sure to sign up at the www.securepera.com web site to receive all of the latest information about legislative issues that affect PERA.

We hope to see you at our spring activities,

LuAnn Long and Gerry Olvey

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SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, May 8, 2014 – 9:30 a.m.

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

**Westside Community Center
1628 West Bijou Street
Colorado Springs, CO**

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Two PERA Bills Submitted So Far . . . and Defeated in Committee

As of this writing, two PERA bills have been submitted to the 2014 Legislature. Senate Bill 68, sponsored by Sen. Kent Lambert (R-Colo. Spgs.), would have increased the minimum age for full retirement benefits from 58 to 65 for school division retirees. In a bipartisan 4 – 1 vote, the Senate Affairs Committee defeated that bill, with Senator Bernie Herpin (R – Colo. Spgs.) joining three Democratic Senators in votes of opposition. Many emails were directed to Senator Herpin, who also commented that a personal conversation with a PERA retiree improved his awareness of PERA issues and impacted his vote. PERA members and beneficiaries are encouraged to send a note of appreciation to Sen. Herpin for his decision to oppose that bill.

That bill was a good example of the need to continually interact with legislators, especially those who, like Senator Herpin, are new to the legislature and may not be aware of PERA facts, figures, and pension issues.

House Bill 1201 sponsored by Rep. Kevin Priola (R – Henderson), which would have changed the calculation of Highest Average Salary (HAS) from a three year to a five year average for those hired in 2015 and later (Judicial Division excepted) was also killed in committee in late February.

Both of these bills would reduce PERA benefits and so reduce the plan's liabilities. And both would have done so without impacting current members and beneficiaries. However, both produce a financial benefit only when new hires retire, approximately thirty years from now. PERA would not reap any dollar benefit until around the year 2045. More importantly, though, both issues were addressed in 2010, within the varied and large benefit reductions made in bipartisan Senate Bill 1.

If PERA was still in a 2008-type critical financial moment, then perhaps at least discussion of the two bills might be warranted, in spite of their far-off date of impact. However, the benefit-reducing and income-increasing reforms of 2010 are working as planned, and further austerity changes are not needed at this time. Those 2010 reforms calculated full funding within 30-35 years as long as the fund investment return averages 8% annually. Since that legislation, the fund return has been well over 11%. And the 2013 investment return, while not yet officially calculated, is

projected to be over 12%.

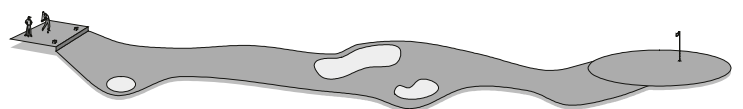
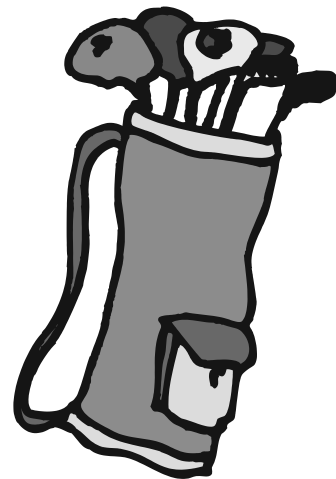
No one can foresee future financial developments, but, currently, PERA bills that reduce benefits are a cure for which there is no illness. Senate Bill 1 set a planned course for PERA's financial health, and so far that plan is being fulfilled even ahead of schedule. That bipartisan legislation should be allowed to work, unmodified, until events give evidence that it is not on a successful course.



www.SecurePERA.org Offers Easy Path to Legislators

Are you willing to participate in the democratic process by messaging legislators with your perspective on PERA issues?

The Colorado Coalition for Retirement Security (of which your state CSPERA organization is a member) makes such comments easy. Go to www.SecurePERA.org and register with the Coalition. There is no cost, no dues. You will simply give your email address, which will not be "sold" or transferred. That registration will cause you to receive email legislative alerts from the Coalition lobbyist, Lynea Hansen. Also, when a PERA bill heads to Committee, you will receive an email with a "suggested message to legislators" about the bill, and a one-click email connection to ALL the appropriate legislators.



2014 SCHOLARSHIPS

PPSPERA has established scholarships honoring distinguished local educators Wayne Bricker and Bill Brandenburg. The purpose of these scholarships is to assist students who aspire to enter the education or public service professions. Two \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded each April to graduating local seniors. Winners will have an opportunity to apply for second-year scholarships of \$500 each.

Scholarship information, requirements and application forms are sent in mid-February to high school principals and counselors in El Paso and Teller County. This information is also available at our website, PPSPERA.org. Applications must be received by March 31. Winners will be notified by April 15. Winners and their parents will be invited to attend the May 8 PPSPERA Membership Meeting, where the scholarships will be awarded.

Please encourage any worthy students you know to apply for one of these scholarships. And please remember to make a generous donation to the scholarship fund as often as you can.

PPSPERA Calendar

Pre-Retirement Meeting

April 3, 2014

4 – 6 PM

Tesla

General Membership Meeting

May 8, 2014

9:30 AM

Westside Community Center

PPSPERA Picnic

August 21, 2014

Thinking about Retiring???

We can help!!

Mark your calendars!!

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

When: April 3, 2014 4-6 p.m.

Where: CSSD 11 Tesla Educational Opportunity Center
2560 International Circle 80910

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, transitioning from work to retirement
- SecurePERA- what it is and why it is important
- Financial planning issues to consider
- Health insurance coverage, Medicare, and other related issues
- Small group sessions for school district, utilities, and city employees
- Answers from the experts on your specific questions or concerns

We hope to see you there. If you need additional information, please email Terry Alley at terry.alley@ymail.com.



Pikes Peak School & Public Employees Retirement Association

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