

Retirement News Update



City of Austin Employees' Retirement System

1st Quarter 2006 Volume 4 Issue 1

A Quarterly Newsletter for Members of the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System

Meet Your Member Services Specialists

When you approach retirement, you will no doubt be in contact with a COA ERS Member Services Specialist. They are experts in providing retirement information to our Members. Among their varied duties, they counsel Members, prepare estimates for retirement, calculate service purchases, conduct pre-retirement seminars and New Employee Orientation sessions, and conduct departmental presentations upon request. They are a vital link between COA ERS and our Members and are an important part of the COA ERS team.



Johne Behner has been with COA ERS for six years.



Teresa Cantu has been with COA ERS for two years.



Laura Fugate has been with COA ERS for four years.

Board of Trustees Certify Election Results

The Nominating and Election Committee met on January 3, 2006 to tabulate the ballots for the 2005 Active-Contributory Member Place 8 and Place 9 election. Anthony B. Ross, Sr. is the winner for Place 8 with a total of 578 votes. Eyna Canales-Zarate is the winner for Place 9 with a total of 555 votes. Francine Gertz received a total of 417 votes. Mike Pope received a total of 230 votes. Terry Davis received a total of 38 votes. Six write-in candidates were received with two of these candidates receiving two votes each for a total of eight votes. Twelve percent (12.28%) of those ballots mailed (935/7,608) responded.

The Board of Trustees certified these results during their January 24, 2006 Board meeting.

The Nominating and Election Committee is commended for their dedication to this important process.

**Congratulations Mr. Ross and
Mrs. Canales-Zarate !**

COA ERS Receives Prestigious GFOA Award

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System (COA ERS) for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements. A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. This is the seventh consecutive year that COA ERS has achieved this prestigious award.

COA ERS Board Member Reappointed by Board

On January 24, 2006 Reagan David was reappointed by the COA ERS Board of Trustees to serve in Place 5 on the COA ERS Board of Trustees. His new term runs through December 2009.

Congratulations Mr. David!

COA ERS Board Member Reappointed by City Council

On January 12, 2006 Ed Golden was reappointed by the Austin City Council to serve on the Board of Trustees for the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System in Place 4. His new term runs through December 2009.

Congratulations Mr. Golden!

Board Elects 2006 Chair and Vice Chair

The Board elected Reagan David as the Board Chairperson and Mark Monteith as the Board Vice Chairperson at the January 24, 2006 Board Meeting.

**Congratulations
Mr. David and Mr. Monteith!**

Active Members' News & Notes

Know Your Benefits: What Are My Options At Retirement?

All retirement options are designed to be actuarially equivalent to other options. The total amount of money you and/or your designated survivor beneficiary receives depends on the option you choose and how long you and/or your beneficiary live. You can choose from the following payment options when you retire:

Life Annuity Only: Monthly payments to you for your lifetime. Payments stop when you die.

Joint and Survivor Options: Monthly payments to you for your lifetime. When you die, payments will continue to be made to the person you designate as your surviving beneficiary for as long as that person lives. You can designate anyone you choose as your surviving beneficiary. However, if you are married, your spouse must consent if you designate someone other than your spouse as surviving beneficiary. There are a variety of joint and survivor options available. If your surviving beneficiary dies before you do, and you have chosen Joint and Survivor Options I,

II, or III, your monthly benefit "pops up" to the basic life annuity amount.

Fifteen Year Certain and Life: Monthly payments to you for your lifetime. Payments stop when you die. However, if you die within 15 years of retirement, your designated beneficiary or your estate will receive the remaining monthly benefits until a total of 15 years (180 months) of payments have been made.

Actuarial Equivalent Option: Lump sum and/or monthly payments structured by you and approved by the System's actuary to be actuarially equivalent to the Life Annuity Only option. All option selections are subject to approval by the COA ERS Board of Trustees. Board Policy has established limitations on what will be allowed under the Equivalent Benefit Plan Option.

For further information about your retirement benefits, please see the COA ERS Member Handbook or call the Retirement Office at 458-2551.

Retirement Annuity and Creditable Service Calculations on the Web

Please visit our website at www.coaers.org to calculate the amount of your retirement annuity or Creditable Service purchase. Note: These calculations are provided as **estimates only**. Final calculations will be provided by the COA ERS staff. Please contact the Retirement Office at 458-2551 for additional information.



Annual Member Statements

Annual Member Statements were mailed January 20, 2006 to all Active and Terminated Members with funds still on deposit with COA ERS. These statements reflect your 2005 contributions to COA ERS, any Creditable Service purchases (buybacks) made during 2005 and interest posted for 2005. This statement also provides you with your Retirement Start Date. This date corresponds to the date you began making contributions to COA ERS. This statement is for information purposes only and to help Members confirm their retirement records. Actual service credit and account balances are determined by the rules and regulations of COA ERS. Service credit may be reduced by any periods during which no contributions were made, or increased by purchases of service credit or by any probation period service credit that may be provided by COA ERS. If you feel that any information on the statement is incomplete or in error, please submit your concerns in writing to the Retirement Office.

With Deepest Sympathy

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of those Members of COA ERS who were Active City of Austin employees who have passed away*:

Isaac T. Perez
Date of Death 12/13/2005
Austin Energy

* Please note, this list only includes those deaths of which COA ERS has been notified.

COA Employee Addresses

All correspondence from the COA ERS to an Active COA ERS Member (Annual Member Statements, Election Ballots, Creditable Service Calculations, Retirement Calculations, etc.) are sent to the Member's address of record. These records are updated based on the address on file with the City of Austin Payroll Department. All Active Members must change their address with the Payroll Department.

Retirement Strategies Presentations

*Presented by the City of Austin
Employees' Retirement System*

Find Out:

When can I retire?

How can I purchase service credit?
How much Permissive Time can I buy?



What is "proportionate retirement"?

Do I qualify for the DROP?

Our informal question and answer sessions will help you plan for retirement.

To request a presentation for your department, please call the Retirement Office at 458-2551.

Retired Members' News & Notes

With Deepest Sympathy

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of those Retirees of COA ERS who have passed away*:

Joe Arbuckle
Date of Death 12/19/2005
Retired From Public Works

Namon Brown
Date of Death 1/9/06
Retired From Austin Water Utility

James W. Clark
Date of Death 12/11/2005
Retired From General Services

Ronald Coddington
Date of Death 1/14/2006
Retired From Austin Energy

Lewis Fowler
Date of Death 1/28/2006
Retired From Public Works

Ricky Jenkins
Date of Death 12/20/2005
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Rufus E. Johnson
Date of Death 12/31/2005
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Carroll R. Love
Date of Death 12/30/2005
Retired From Parks & Recreation

Marie McGowan
Date of Death 1/24/2006
Retired From Library

Walter Monroe, Jr.
Date of Death 1/22/2006
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Lloyd T. Navarro
Date of Death 1/18/2006
Retired From Finance Department

Betty Overman
Date of Death 12/10/2005
Retired From Purchasing FSA

Rodolfo Rodriguez
Date of Death 12/8/2005
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Albert J. Shelton
Date of Death 12/23/2005
Retired From Auditorium / Public Events

Virgil Silagi
Date of Death 1/12/2006
Retired From Public Works

Charles Synagogue
Date of Death 1/20/2006
Retired From Brackenridge Hospital

Katie McClain
Date of Death 12/14/2005
Retired From Brackenridge Hospital

* Please note, this list only includes those deaths of which COA ERS has been notified.

2006 Retiree Pay Dates

February 28th
March 31st
April 28th
May 31st
June 30th
July 31st
August 31st
September 29th
October 31st
November 30th
December 29th

Monthly annuity payments are made on the **last business day** of each month.

Monthly Deposit Statements Have Been Discontinued

Effective February 2006, COA ERS discontinued providing monthly deposit statements to Retirees and Annuitants. Statements were sent to all Retirees and Annuitants in January 2006 and will continue on an annual basis. Additional statements will be sent to individual Retirees and Annuitants any time a change is made to the individual's benefit or withholdings as well as a change of address, name or direct deposit information. This change is being implemented as a cost-saving measure and is similar to the procedures of many other retirement systems and Social Security. As always, you can call your bank to verify that deposits have been made. Pay dates are posted in quarterly newsletters as well as on the COA ERS website.

2006 Affidavits - Check your Mailbox

Once each year, affidavits are mailed to all Retirees, Beneficiaries, and other Annuitants receiving annuity payments. By signing and completing the affidavit, Annuitants confirm that they are alive and that they are eligible to continue receiving their monthly annuity. The affidavit process is used by retirement systems to prevent fraudulent payments to people who are not eligible to receive an annuity. Board Policy requires that affidavits be notarized.

Affidavits were mailed February 27, 2006 and are due no later than April 3, 2006. Retirees may stop by the Retirement Office for free affidavit notary services. Annuities may be suspended if affidavits are not returned by that date. Please help protect our Retirement System by completing your affidavit promptly each year. Thank you in advance for making this a successful process.



Types of COA ERS Retiree Beneficiaries

If you wish to change your designated beneficiary for your **\$10,000 COA ERS death benefit**, you will need to complete a new COA ERS Beneficiary Designation form. Please remember that the COA ERS Beneficiary Designation form must be notarized, and if you are currently married, your spouse must also sign the COA ERS Beneficiary Designation form.

If you wish to change your **\$1,000 City of Austin death benefit**, you will need to complete the City of Austin's Beneficiary Designation form.

The COA ERS Beneficiary Designation form can be mailed to you for completion, downloaded from our website at www.coaers.org, or you can stop by the Retirement Office to complete a new one. This is a simple step you can take to ensure your death benefits are paid in accordance with your wishes.

Please note: **A Member cannot change the survivor beneficiary selected at time of retirement.** If you selected a retirement benefit option providing for an ongoing annuity at the time of your death, only the survivor beneficiary named at retirement will receive survivor benefits. Even if a Retiree and the beneficiary are no longer married, the survivor beneficiary cannot be changed. The survivor beneficiary you selected at the time of your retirement will be stated on the Affidavit form mailed annually to all Retirees and Annuitants receiving annuity payments from COA ERS.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

March

- * 16th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
- * 28th - COA ERS Board Meeting
- * 31st - Retiree Pay Day

April

- * 20th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
- * 25th - COA ERS Board Meeting
- * 28th - Retiree Pay Day

May

- * 18th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
- * No Scheduled COA ERS Board Meeting
- * 29th - Retirement Office closed in observance of Memorial Day
- * 31st - Retiree Pay Day

Please Note: Retiree annuity payments will be made the **last business day** of each month.

IRS Form 1099-R Tax Forms

IRS Form 1099-R's were sent to all Members, Beneficiaries, and other Annuitants who received a payment from COA ERS during 2005. These forms were sent to the individual's address of record. If you have questions about your IRS Form 1099-R, please call the Retirement Office at 458-2551.

Free Notary Services Available

The Retirement Office offers free notary services to our Members for COA ERS business only. System notaries will not notarize non-COA ERS documents.

COA ERS Board of Trustees

Reagan David, Board Chair
Mark Monteith, Board Vice Chair
Janet Bartles, Trustee
Francis E. Benoit, Trustee
Leslie Browder, Trustee
Eyna Canales-Zarate, Trustee
Betty Dunkerley, Trustee
Ed Golden, Trustee
Elizabeth S. Gonzales, Trustee
Cathy Rodgers, Trustee
Anthony B. Ross, Sr., Trustee

Please keep your address up to date!!

ACTIVE MEMBERS - Please contact City of Austin Payroll Dept. at 974-3001 to change your address.

RETIRED & VESTED MEMBERS - Please submit a change of address in writing to the Retirement Office. Forms are available at www.coaers.org or by calling 458-2551.

For your security, we will only mail financial information to the address that we have on record.

Need to Discuss Your Retirement Benefits?

COA ERS Member Services Specialists are available to answer your questions by phone, email, or in person Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. If you would like to speak with a Specialist in person, please call our office at 458-2551 to make an appointment. This will ensure you have adequate time to discuss any questions you may have regarding your retirement benefits. Our staff will continue to serve walk-in Members as scheduling allows.

RETIREES:

Contact the City of Austin Benefits Office at (512) 974-3284 for...

- ✓ All Information related to your medical and/or dental benefits:
 - Change of Address
 - Claims
 - Premiums
- ✓ Information regarding your \$1,000 City of Austin Death Benefit.



COA ERS Staff

Executive Director
Stephen C. Edmonds

Operations Manager
Rbonda Helm

Finance Manager
Donna Boykin

Administrative Supervisor
Jesse Ortega

Finance

Financial Analyst
Bertie Corsentino

Accounting Technician
Korrie Hoskins

Management Services

Executive Assistant
Rosaree Koepsel

Member Services

Member Services Specialists
Johnie Behner
Teresa Cantu
Laura L. Fugate

Member Services Coordinators
Craig Finkelstein
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