

Retirement News Update

Give Us Your Feedback

COA ERS is committed to providing our members excellent customer service. There are currently three new ways for you to tell us how we are doing. A *Customer Service Feedback Card* is available when you visit the Retirement Office. *New Retiree Comments* are given to members for completion at the time of their retirement. In addition, members can provide their feedback on our website at www.coaers.org by completing the online survey. We welcome your honest feedback on areas where we excel and areas that might need to be improved. Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this information to COA ERS' Executive Director.



Please join us

*2006 COA ERS
Annual Members' Meeting:*

*Wednesday, October 18, 2006
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM*

at

*The Retirement Office
418 E. Highland Mall Blvd.
Austin, Texas*



COA ERS Board Member Appointed to TEXPERS Board

Eyna Canales-Zarate, a Trustee of the COA ERS Board since 1998, has been elected to the Texas Association of Public Employee Retirement Systems (TEXPERS) Board of Directors.

Congratulations Ms. Canales-Zarate!

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Annual Report Available

The *2005 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)* provides in-depth information about the financial, investment, and actuarial aspects of the COA ERS retirement plan. To obtain a copy of the report, you are welcome to attend the Annual Members' Meeting on October 18. You may also request a copy by contacting the Retirement Office by phone at (512) 458-2551, by email at info@coaers.org, or by downloading a copy from our website at www.coaers.org.

Active Member News & Notes

Members Called to Active Military Duty

As members of the Reserve Forces and the National Guard may be called to active duty, COA ERS offers the following reminder about how military leave relates to retirement benefits.

According to the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Military Relief Act, any person who leaves employment for active duty in the uniformed services shall be treated as being on military leave of absence during that period of service. The COA ERS member may use any amount or combination of annual, paid, or compensatory leave. If the employee is on paid leave during the absence, both the employee and employer contributions will be made by the City of Austin based on a 40-hour work week.

If the COA ERS member is on leave without pay, he/she may continue to make ongoing contributions to COA ERS by sending in personal payment for the amount of his/her regular COA ERS contribution. These ongoing contributions will also be paid by the City of Austin. This arrangement **MUST** be made in advance by contacting the Retirement Office at 458-2551.

Alternatively, members who are on military leave without pay may also establish creditable service for the leave of absence by making a Creditable Service Purchase if they return to City of Austin employment within 90 days of discharge. This purchase cost must also be paid by the City of Austin. This Creditable Service Purchase must occur within 5 years after return to City of Austin employment.

Please note that this information is available in the *Member Handbook* which has been distributed to each employee. This handbook is also available online at www.coaers.org and at the Retirement Office.

Borrowing From Your Retirement Funds

Federal law does not allow Members to withdraw portions of contributions or to receive loans from their retirement funds. Members may not transfer or assign any of their deposits or retirement benefits to anyone except pursuant to an authorized tax levy, child support obligation, or Qualified Domestic Relations Order entered by a proper court of record.

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.



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.

Refund Processing

Are you leaving your employment with the City? Do you have less than five years of service? If so, don't forget to contact COA ERS about your retirement contributions. Go to www.coaers.org or come to the COA ERS Office to get a "Designation of Retirement Deposits" form. This form includes the required IRS Distribution Tax Notice which you should read and understand before making a decision on your retirement plan benefits. Read the form and instructions carefully before you decide whether you want to refund your contributions or roll them over into another qualified plan. Please notice that the form needs to be notarized, which is a service we provide free of charge at COA ERS. The processing of your refund can take up to 60 days from your last day of employment. It is your responsibility to ensure that your employment status has been terminated from the City's payroll system and that you have received your final pay check. Note: If you have more than five years of service, please contact COA ERS before making any decisions about your retirement contributions.

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*:

Andrea Anderson

Date of Death 07/18/2006

Police Department

Lydia Gonzales Cunningham

Date of Death 07/21/2006

Financial Services

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

Retired Member News & Notes

Retired Member Place 11 Election

COA ERS will be conducting its Retired Member Place 11 election in November of 2006. This place is currently held by Janet Bartles. The term of Place 11 will be from January 2007 through December 31, 2010. Every retiree receiving an annuity check from COA ERS is strongly encouraged to vote in this election.

Ballots will be mailed to retirees in mid-October and will be due in the Retirement Office no later than November 29, 2006 by close of business. Only retirees from the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System are eligible to vote in this election.

Changing Your Direct Deposit

If you want your annuity check automatically deposited into your checking or savings account, or if you want to change the account into which your payment is deposited, you will need to complete an "Authorization Agreement for Direct Deposit" form. Please note that documentation from your financial institution must be provided showing the name of the institution, the type of account (checking or savings), the routing number, your name, and your account number in order to prove that you are the owner of the account. If your direct deposit will be made to your checking

account, you must provide a voided check from your account. Temporary checks will not be accepted. If your deposit will be made to your savings account, you will need to provide a personalized document from your financial institution. If you have an account that does not provide checks or if you do not yet have a permanent check, a statement of account or a personalized letter signed by a representative of your financial institution will be accepted. Please note that forms received after the 12th of the month may not be effective until the following month's payroll. If you have any questions, please contact the Retirement Office.

Upcoming Retiree Events

* These events are not sponsored by COA ERS

Austin Energy Retirees 4th Annual Get Together

When: Last Friday in September
6:00 P.M. to ???

Where: Manchaca Fire Hall

For More Information Contact
Wallace Gootman @ (512) 352-8865

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COA Water/WasteWater Retirees Monthly Get Together

When: First Thursday of each Month
8:30 a.m.

Where: Waterloo Icehouse Restaurant
8600 Burnet Rd. Austin, TX

For More Information Contact
Gus @ (512) 930-3900

Medicaid Seminar

Most of us are familiar with Social Security Medicare programs which offer health insurance for people who are age 65 or older and people who are disabled. COA ERS is considering hosting a seminar about **Medicaid**, another health insurance program funded by the states and the federal government and managed by the states. Medicaid is the largest source of funding for medical and health-related services for people with limited income. If you would be interested in attending this seminar presented by a representative from the Medicaid Office, please call John Behner, Member Services Specialist, at 512-458-2551 x 103. **If enough retired members are interested, we will schedule this seminar in the fall of 2006.**

With Deepest Sympathy

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

Joe R. Boyer

Date of Death 08/23/2006

Retired from Street & Bridge

Ronald T. Dolan

Date of Death 07/15/2006

Retired from Austin Energy

Benito Hipolito

Date of Death 08/22/2006

Retired from Parks & Recreation

George H. Hoker

Date of Death 07/02/2006

Retired from Public Works Department

Eugene C. Holland

Date of Death 07/18/2006

Retired from Police

Wilma Kloppe

Date of Death 08/05/2006

Retired from Brackenridge

Leonel L. Luna

Date of Death 08/25/2006

Retired from Brackenridge

Gladys Nooner

Date of Death 08/19/2006

Retired from Health Department

Elbert Ira Purser, Jr.

Date of Death 08/12/2006

Retired from Street & Bridge

Manuel V. Romo

Date of Death 07/02/2006

Retired from Parks & Recreation

Leonard Vandermast, Jr.

Date of Death 07/28/2006

Retired from Police

Robert C. White

Date of Death 07/28/2006

Retired from Infrastructure Support Services

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

2006 Retiree Pay Dates

September 29th

October 31st

November 30th

December 29th

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

Upcoming Dates to Remember

October

18th - Annual Members' Meeting
19th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
31st - Retiree Payday

November

16th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
23rd - 24th Retirement Office closed in observance of Thanksgiving
28th - COA ERS Board Meeting
30th - Retiree Payday

December

19th - COA ERS Special Called Board Meeting
21st - Pre-Retirement Seminar
25th - Retirement Office Closed in observance of Christmas
29th - Retiree Payday

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

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.

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.

¿Habla Usted español?

Representantes están disponibles para contestar sus preguntas en español por teléfono o aquí en la oficina de COAERS. Además, contamos con algunas formas en español y podemos dar presentaciones sobre el sistema y la jubilación para los miembros interesados. Favor de hablar al (512) 458-2551 o vea nuestro sitio de Internet: www.coaers.org.

Spanish Translated Forms Available

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.

Website/Newsletter Suggestions?

If you have any suggestions regarding information you would like to see on the COA ERS website or in our newsletter, please email them to jesse.ortega@coaers.org.

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

or

Information regarding your \$1,000 City of Austin Death Benefit.

COA ERS Staff

Executive Director
Stephen C. Edmonds

Operations Manager
Rhonda 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
Jobne Behner
Teresa Cantu
Laura L. Fugate

Member Services Coordinators
Craig Finkelstein
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City of Austin Employees' Retirement System

Retirement News Update is a publication of the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System and is distributed for the information of COA ERS Active, Vested, and Retired Members, and their beneficiaries.