

Retirement News Update

Meet Your COA ERS Staff

COA ERS strives for excellent customer service, and we would like to introduce a few of the people who work hard for you, our members, every day.



Bobbie Simpson, Office Coordinator, has been with the Retirement Office since June of 2007. Whether you call or come to visit our office, chances are you will be greeted by Bobbie. Her caring and personable attitude will make your visit pleasant and memorable.



Babette "Babs" Ruiz joined COA ERS in October of 2007. Babs is the Executive Assistant for the COA ERS Director. If you have any questions concerning the schedule of Board meetings or other Board related matters, Babs will promptly and efficiently respond to your needs.



Rosaree Koepsel was hired as the Administrative Supervisor in January of this year. Rosaree supervises the operational support of the Retirement Office and manages the System's technology needs. In her short period of time at COA ERS, Rosaree has been involved in continuous internal process improvements to better meet the needs of our members.

We are very excited to have such a talented staff and hope that if you are in the neighborhood that you will stop by to meet our newest staff members.

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Board Elects 2008 Chair and Vice Chair

The Board elected Mark Monteith as the Board Chairperson and Elizabeth S. Gonzales as the Board Vice Chairperson at the January 22, 2008 Board Meeting.

**Congratulations
Mr. Monteith and Ms. Gonzales!**

COA ERS Beneficiary Designation Form

Have you completed a COA ERS Beneficiary Designation Form naming the person(s) you want to receive payment of your retirement death benefits? Members are encouraged to keep these forms up to date since benefits will be paid as designated on the most recent valid form on file. If you do not have a valid form on file, benefits will be paid to your spouse if you are married, or to your estate if you are not married. You should consult with qualified professionals regarding tax, estate planning, and legal issues related to your retirement benefits.

We will be mailing forms in the upcoming months to all active and terminated members with funds on deposit in COA ERS. Forms can also be downloaded from our website, www.coaers.org. If you are married and wish to name someone other than your current spouse as primary beneficiary for any portion of the death benefits, your current spouse must also sign this form. Note that your signature, and, if married, your spouse's signature, must be notarized; COA ERS provides free notary services to our Members for COA ERS business.

Feel free to call the Retirement Office if you have questions about completing the COA ERS Beneficiary Designation Form. Completing and returning this form is an important step to ensure that your death benefits are paid in accordance to your wishes.

COA ERS Receives Prestigious GFOA Award for 9th Consecutive Year!

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, 2006. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government entity 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 ninth consecutive year that COA ERS has received this prestigious award.

Active Member News & Notes

Question: What is the Proportionate Service Program?

Answer: In 1991 the Texas Legislature established a Proportionate Retirement Program for the benefit of members of participating public retirement systems. The current proportionate systems are: ERS of Texas; Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS); Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS); Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS); The El Paso City Employees' Pension Fund; El Paso Firemen and Policemen's Pension Fund; and Judicial Retirement System of Texas I & II. Participating systems recognize service from other participating systems.

Service in another proportionate system may benefit your retirement eligibility date and affect any Service Purchase you make at COA ERS. If you have service credit in more than one participating retirement system, you may be eligible to retire in another system based on the combined service of two or more systems in order to satisfy the length of service requirements used to determine eligibility for service retirement. Members must qualify for retirement eligibility independently in each system. Retirement benefits will be paid separately from each system and will be determined based on the actual amount of Creditable Service earned in and the benefit structure of each plan.

Proportionate participation is based on funded service. If you have refunded/forfeited your service and wish to re-establish that service in one or more of these systems, you must contact that particular system in which you previously had membership in order to determine eligibility requirements to re-establish your service credit and/or membership. Members should determine their proportionate retirement benefits before refunding/withdrawing member deposits in any of these systems.

A limited proportionate service arrangement has also been established for those individuals who have membership in COA ERS and a retirement system within the Travis County Healthcare District organization. This arrangement is similar to the general proportionate program *except* that it applies only between these two retirement systems. Participation in the Healthcare District retirement system can be used to establish retirement eligibility with COA ERS, but not with any other system in the general proportionate program.

Pension 101

COA ERS and the City Deferred Compensation Program (Great-West Retirement Services) have developed a joint presentation "Pension 101: A Primer for City of Austin Civilian Employees". In this seminar you will find out:

- What's the difference between defined benefit and defined contribution retirement plans?
- What are my options when I retire or terminate City employment?
- How, when, and why might I consider transferring funds between COA ERS and Deferred Comp?

If you would like to learn more about the seminar, or find out when seminars are scheduled, please call Great West at (512) 457-9240 or email will.cornforth@gwrs.com.

Creditable Service Purchase and Retirement 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 (512) 458-2551 for additional information.

COA ERS Pre-Retirement Seminars

If you are thinking about retiring from the City of Austin within the next two years, you may want to attend a Pre-retirement Seminar. Representatives from COA ERS, Social Security Benefits, the City of Austin Benefits Department (Retiree Healthcare), and Deferred Compensation present valuable information for planning your retirement. The seminar is generally offered the third Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the Retirement Office, 418 E. Highland Mall Blvd.

If you have any questions concerning the seminar or want to sign up for an upcoming seminar, please call the Retirement Office at (512) 458-2551.

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*:

David Barber

Date of Death 11/18/2007

Austin Water Utility

LaTanya M. Birdow

Date of Death 11/11/2007

Community Care Services

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

Retired Member News & Notes

With Deepest Sympathy

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

Louetta M. Bodenhamer
Date of Death 12/13/2007
Retired From CTM

Sandy Cabin
Date of Death 01/07/2008
Retired From Public Works

Mary A. Cooley
Date of Death 12/06/07
Retired From Library

Thurdore Crumley
Date of Death 12/13/2007
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Theodore Earls
Date of Death 11/05/2007
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Mary Frances Fowler
Date of Death 01/05/2008
Retired From Health & Human Svcs.

Jean M. Hart
Date of Death 11/01/2007
Retired From Small & Minority Business

Kenneth Hogan
Date of Death 11/06/2007
Retired From Police Department

Mary L. Holman
Date of Death 11/22/2007
Retired From Brackenridge

Clifton B. Houston
Date of Death 11/26/2007
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Christakis Ioannou
Date of Death 01/05/2008
Retired From Austin Energy

Mattie Kleiber
Date of Death 12/12/2007
Retired From Financial Svcs. - Payroll

Lovie Lankford
Date of Death 01/04/2008
Retired From Austin Energy

Josephine C. Lopez
Date of Death 01/15/2008
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Pete Mansker
Date of Death 01/22/2008
Retired From Utility Customer Svcs.

Nolan A. Murchison
Date of Death 11/30/2007
Retired From Austin Energy

Mary J. Poehl
Date of Death 11/05/2007
Retired From Brackenridge

Auguster Powell
Date of Death 11/26/2007
Retired From Street & Bridge

Louis Rickes
Date of Death 01/31/2008
Retired From Financial Svcs. - Fleet

Bennie T. Sanders
Date of Death 12/04/2007
Retired From Public Works

Loyd E. Sundberg
Date of Death 12/27/2007
Retired From Austin Water Utility

Ernest S. Watson
Date of Death 01/28/2008
Retired From Health & Human Svcs.

Robert E. Wilder
Date of Death 12/21/2007
Retired From Austin Energy

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

Affidavit Process and Reminders

Affidavits were mailed on March 3, 2008 to all Retirees and Beneficiaries receiving monthly benefit payments from COA ERS. Please return your completed and notarized form by the **April 4, 2008** deadline. Retirees are welcome to bring their forms to the Retirement Office for free affidavit notary services. If you need an accommodation in this process, please contact us for assistance.

If you have assigned a Power of Attorney (POA), please have the original or court certified copies of durable POA orders brought to the Retirement Office for timely processing of your affidavit. A POA is a document that allows you to appoint a person or organization to handle your affairs when you are unavailable or unable to do so. POA orders may be accepted if they comply with the basic statutory requirements set forth in Section 490, Texas Probate Code. POAs must be reviewed by the System's General Counsel and approved by the Executive Director before the designated agent is allowed to do business with COA ERS on your behalf.

The annuity option you selected at the time of retirement will be listed on your affidavit. If you selected an option that provides for an ongoing annuity to your Survivor Beneficiary at the time of your death, the name of the Survivor Beneficiary selected at the time of your retirement will be printed on your affidavit. Please note that a Retiree cannot change a Survivor Beneficiary after retirement. Even if the Retiree and the Beneficiary are no longer married, the Survivor Beneficiary cannot be changed.

If your Survivor Beneficiary has passed away and the death has been reported to COA ERS, the date of death will be listed on your affidavit. If your Survivor Beneficiary is deceased and no date of death is listed, please mark on the affidavit that the Survivor Beneficiary is deceased and the date of the death. If your Survivor Beneficiary's death was after **October 1, 1999**, you have the right to have your monthly annuity increased to the Member Only Life Annuity amount. In order to "pop-up" your monthly annuity, you will need to provide a certified death certificate. It is the responsibility of the Retiree to notify the Retirement Office of the death. This benefit will become effective the month after receipt of your Survivor Beneficiary's death certificate and is not retroactive to the Survivor Beneficiary's date of death. The "pop-up" benefit applies to Retirees who selected any Survivor option other than a Joint and Last Survivor option.

Thank you for helping us protect our Retirement System by completing your affidavit promptly. Feel free to call the Retirement Office if you have any questions.

Retired Member Place 10 Board Member Election

We are preparing for our Retired Member Place 10 election to be held in November of 2008. This place is currently held by Ronnie Wilson, who was elected to fill the unexpired term of Francis Benoit through December 31, 2008. The term of Place 10 will be from January 2009 through December 31, 2012. More information will be available on our website and at the Retirement Office in upcoming months for those wishing to run for the election.

The Retirement Office is searching for volunteers to serve on the Nominating and Election Committee to oversee this upcoming election, including the development of the election ballot and determining the results. This Committee is made up of retired City employees currently receiving retirement annuity payments from COA ERS.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to participate in the Committee, please contact Rosaree Koepsel, Administrative Supervisor, at (512) 458-2551 ext. 109 or at rosaree.koepsel@coaers.org.

Upcoming Events

April

4th - COA ERS Annuitant Affidavits Due
17th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
30th - Retiree Pay Day

May

15th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
26th - Retirement Office closed in observance of Memorial Day
27th - COA ERS Board Meeting
30th - Retiree Pay Day

June

19th - Pre-Retirement Seminar
24th - COA ERS Board Meeting
30th - Retiree Pay Day

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 (512) 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

Mark Monteith,
Board Chair

Elizabeth S. Gonzales,
Board Vice Chair

Janet Bartles

Leslie Browder

Eyna Canales-Zarate

Reagan David

Betty Dunkerley,
Mayor ProTem

Francine Gertz

Ed Golden

Anthony B. Ross, Sr.

Ronnie Wilson

Please keep your address up to date!!

ACTIVE MEMBERS - Please contact City of Austin Payroll Dept. at (512) 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 (512) 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

Website 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 rosaree.koepsel@coaers.org for consideration.

RETIREES:

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

All information related to your medical, dental, and/or vision benefits:

*Change of Address
Claims
Premiums*

or

Information regarding your City of Austin Death Benefit.

COA ERS Staff

Executive Director
Stephen C. Edmonds

Operations Manager
Rhonda Helm

Finance Manager
Donna Boykin

Administrative Supervisor
Rosaree Koepsel

Finance

Financial Analyst
Bertie Corsentino

Accounting Technician
Korrie Hoskins

Management Services

Executive Assistant
Babette Ruiz

Member Services

Member Services Specialists
*John Behner
Teresa Cantu
Laura L. Fugate*

Member Services Coordinators
*Lori Bateman
Craig Finkelstein*

Operations

IT Coordinator
Melissa Adams

Office Coordinator
Bobbie Simpson

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

City of Austin Employees' Retirement System

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