



Crossroads

A publication of the Louisiana School Employees' Retirement System Vol.17 No.2 FALL 2004

2004 Legislative Session Results In

The 2004 Legislative Session resulted with LSERS being under more legislative oversight. Act 207 was filed to improve the standards under which the boards of trustees of the various public retirement systems conduct their business. Trustees are now required to receive more educational training prior to being allowed to vote or receive per diem for attendance at board meetings. Education is required in the fields of investments, actuarial science, fiduciary duty, ethics, and other legal issues affecting the systems.

Act 275 and Act 802 were designed to provide the legislature a closer view of

the budgets of the public retirement systems. LSERS must now present its budget to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget for review and approval in October of each year.

House Bill No. 1215 was designed to prevent any suspect dealings involving the trustees or staffs of the public retirement systems. Those seeking contracts or other business relationships with public retirement systems must report expenditures on board members or retirement system staff to the board of ethics, or face penalties for failure to make such reports.

COLAs Affected

Act 588 restructures the amortization of the unfunded accrued liability for LSERS, LASERS, and TRSL. This change causes the gains and losses in the earnings on the investments to be amortized over a thirty-year period as opposed to the fifteen-year period that they had been amortized over in the past. This restructuring will affect the ability of LSERS to meet its target ratio. This ratio is the comparison between the funded level of the system and the remaining time prior to the date for the required full funding of the system. This directly affects the system's ability to grant COLAs. Therefore, it could be several years before a COLA could again be granted.

Securities Litigation Proving Positive

LSERS, since becoming involved in its securities litigation program to recover for wrongdoings committed by corporations against their stockholders, has been very successful. Prior to our active involvement, LSERS was receiving far too few settlement checks

from the fraud cases that were taking place against corporations committing corporate fraud and mismanagement.

Active tracking of cases and actual involvement in litigation has greatly increased the size of the recoveries received. For calendar year 2003 we recovered \$279,347.97, while for the first 8 months of 2004 we have received \$335,246.53. These recoveries add to the overall assets of the fund and are in addition to the other regular earnings of LSERS' investments.

LSERS Staff Says Farewell to Colleagues

LSERS staff says good-bye to several people we hold in high esteem. Our longtime retirement analyst, Chuck Clough, passed away in May. He worked for LSERS for seven years and is missed, greatly, by all who knew him.

(continued on page 2)

Retiree

Re-employment Fails

The Board of Trustees proposed a law for the re-employment of retirees in this past legislative session. Rep. Pete Schneider, Chairman of the House Retirement Committee, filed this proposed law as HB 977. Considering the fiscal problems facing the state during this legislative session, HB 977 was never given a hearing in committee. Thus we must wait two years before we may attempt this legislation again.

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Retirement Seminars for 2004 - 2005

We have planned Retirement Planning Seminars at various locations throughout the state for the Fall of 2004. These seminars will provide active members and retirees with important information you need to know about your retirement benefits. Whether you are just starting out, close to retirement, or retired, you need to know about the benefits your retirement system provides.

There will also be a Social Security representative available at the seminars. If you or your spouse has paid Social Security you need to know what benefits you will be eligible for from Social Security.

Below is a list of the dates and locations of the seminars. If you wish to attend one of the seminars, you must contact Ms. Galloway by telephone at 1-800-256-3718 or 225-925-7492, or by e-mail at ggalloway@lsers.state.la.us. Please

include the following: your name, Social Security number, the date and location of the seminar you wish to attend, and your telephone number.

Wednesday, September 22 - Acadia Parish School Board, 157 Cherokee Drive, Crowley, 5:30 PM.

Thursday, September 23 - Calcasieu Parish School Board, 1732 Kirkman St., Lake Charles, 5:00 PM.

Saturday, September 25 - Natchitoches Parish School Board, 310 Royal Street, Natchitoches, 9:00 AM.

Thursday, October 28 - St. Landry Parish School Board, 1013 East Creswell Lane, Opelousas, 5:00 PM.

Monday, November 8 - St. Bernard Parish School Board, #2 Mustang Drive, Arabi 10:30 AM.

Thursday, November 11 - Iberville Parish School Board, 58060 Plaquemine Street, Plaquemine, 3:00 PM.

Monday, November 22 - Caddo Parish School Board, South Wood High School, 9000 Walker Road, Shreveport, 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM.

Tuesday, January 11 - Bossier City School Board, Airline High School Library, 2801 Airline Drive, Bossier City, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM. ~

Employer Reference Manual Training to be Held

We will be holding training sessions for the employer agencies on the newly released LSERS Reference Manual for Employer Agencies on October 11 from 1:00 - 4:00 and on October 14 from 9:00 - 12:00. Both sessions will be held at the LSERS main building board room. Employer agency staff who work with the LSERS members should contact this office to register for either of these training sessions. Contact Ms. Galloway by e-mail at ggalloway@lsers.state.la.us or by telephone at 1-800-256-3718 or 225-925-7492 to register. ~

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LSERS' Farewell

LSERS's legal counsel, Randy Roche, is retiring at the end of December. He has been instrumental in the passage of legislation providing much-needed benefits for LSERS members. He has also been a successful litigator for LSERS in securities litigation cases. Roche has worked on these cases since their infancy stages and has represented LSERS as lead plaintiff in several cases. He is responsible for recouping \$614,594 for LSERS through securities litigation. Roche has worked for LSERS for 14 years. We wish him a wonderful retirement.

LSERS's Board of Trustees Chairman Joe Seymour will retire at the end of December, also. He has been a board member since January 1981 and has been chairman since June 1992. Seymour represents the Third Retirement District, which is the northern part of the state. Seymour participated in effective and successful investment decisions for LSERS for the past 23 years and will be sorely missed. ~

Employee Appreciation Day Held

This year marks the fourth year the governor has proclaimed State Employees' Appreciation Day in Louisiana. In keeping with the governor's proclamation, LSERS chose to honor their state employees on May 7, 2004. Part of the celebration included awards for several staff. New employees Tony

Guzzardo, Lana Todd, and Alice Quinn were recognized for beginning their careers in State government. Gary Simmons was honored for five years in State government. Jennifer Champagne was honored for 25 years in State government. Kathy Hix, Julia LeBlanc (CIO), and Pat Cosper (director) were recognized for 30 years in State government. ~



Back (l to r): Julia LeBlanc, Tony Guzzardo, Gary Simmons, Lana Todd; Front (l to r): Alice Quinn, Kathy Hix



Third Retirement District Board Trustee Joe Seymour (right) presents 30-year service award to LSERS Director Pat Cosper (left).

District 3 Election to be Held This Fall

Two active members of District 3 have qualified for the Board of Trustees' election. Joe Comeaux of Richland Parish and Judith McKee of Caldwell Parish will be competing for the post this Fall.



Joe Comeaux



Judith McKee

Ballots will be mailed on October 5 and the deadline for voting is November 5. If you live in Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, Desoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Red River, Richland, Tensas, Union, Webster, West Carroll, or Winn parishes you will receive a ballot for this election.

Comeaux has been a member of LSERS and a school bus driver for six years. He was a Richland Parish School Board member for eight years and president for one. He is retired from the La. Gas Service after 32 years of service, has been a notary public for 23 years, and is an active member of Woodlawn Baptist Church.

McKee has been a member of LSERS for 30 years, a teacher's aide/bus driver for 26 years, and a teacher's aide for 4 years. She aided in the school employees' last parish raise, helped start Hay Day in Caldwell Parish, and assisted in developing character education in Head Start and preschool. She served on the Healthy Starts Advisory Committee for four years and the 4-H Advisory Committee for 15 years. She is a current member of the La. Board of Elections and is an active member of the Sandy Bayou Baptist Church.

The Active Member District 3 seat has a four-year term, which begins January 1, 2005 and ends December 31, 2008. The incumbent is Joe Seymour, whose term ends December 31, 2004. For more information on this election, contact Judy Wright at 1-800-256-3718.

Report Your Address Change to Us

As your retirement system, LSERS is obligated to keep current contact information on you. Many of you don't remember to notify us when you move, which causes our contact information to become outdated, giving us no way to stay in touch with you. We always want to have your contact information so we can relay important retirement information to you. In an effort to resolve this problem, we are now using U.S. Post Office address information, which is

provided to us with each newsletter mailing. Our records will be automatically updated, using the current mailing address you have provided to the U.S. Post Office.

If you wish for us to use an address for you other than the one you have provided to the U.S. Post Office, you will need to let us know. If you notice you are no longer getting newsletters from us, you will need to let us know that as well.

Change in Contribution Rates

The 2004 - 2005 employer contribution rates have been revised downward from 18.8% to 14.8%; great news!

Visit LSERS' Web Site
www.lasers.state.la.us



LSERS Member Change of Address

Be sure to notify LSERS if your address has changed recently. Please complete this change of address card and mail it to LSERS, P.O. Box 44516, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

Name _____ Home phone: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Membership status: (check one) Active _____ Retired _____

Signature _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 (required)



Mailing and Direct Deposit Dates for Monthly Benefit Checks

Retiree Checks		DROP & IBRP Checks	
Mailed	Deposited	Mailed	Deposited
Aug 31	Sept 1	Sept 3	Sept 6
Sept 30	Oct 1	Oct 5	Oct 5
Oct 29	Nov 1	Nov 5	Nov 5
Nov 30	Dec 1	Dec 3	Dec 6
Dec 31	Jan 3	Jan 5	Jan 5

New Publications Distributed to Employing Agencies and on Web Site

LSERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Joe Seymour, Chairman

3rd Retirement District, 318-728-2729

Betty Jacobs, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

2nd Retirement District, 225-925-5667

Earl Richard, Jr.

1st Retirement District, 504-947-2133

Sylvia Myers

4th Retirement District, 337-478-7162

Betty Crain

Retiree Representative, 985-735-5359

Jeffrey Faulk

Retiree Representative, 337-893-3315

Ex Officio Members:

Larry Wilmer, Vice Chairman

President, La. School Bus Operators

Association, 318-964-5928

W. Fox McKeithen

Secretary of State, 225-342-4479

John Kennedy

State Treasurer, 225-342-0010

Lambert Boissiere, Jr.

Chairman, Senate Retirement

Committee, 225-342-2062

Pete Schneider

Chairman, House Retirement

Committee, 225-342-2445

Patrick Cospér

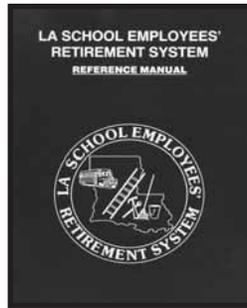
LSERS Director

Debra Dudley

LSERS Assistant Director

Judy Wright

LSERS Public Information Director and
Newsletter Editor

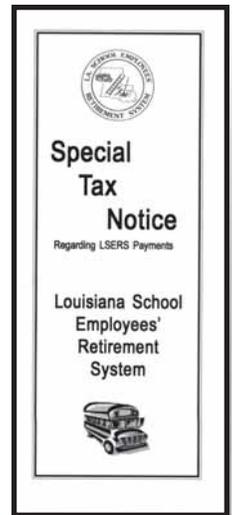
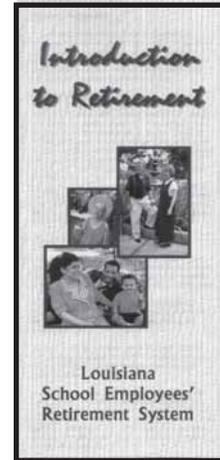


LSERS has completed the new *Reference Manual for Employer Agencies*, which is full of “how to”

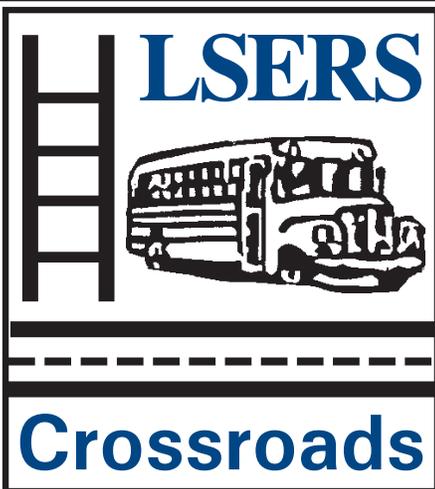
We also have a new brochure called “Introduction to Retirement,” which gives basic facts to the new employee on retirement topics.

information, as well as all the forms needed to assist in managing and processing LSERS members. The entire manual, including the forms in typeable format, may be found on the LSERS web site in the “Employer Services” section.

We have a new booklet titled “Special Tax Notice” that has all the information on taxes needed when planning for retirement. These booklets and the reference manuals were sent to the employing agencies on July 1.



This brochure was distributed to the employing agencies in August and may be found on the LSERS web site.



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Visit LSERS' Web site at: www.lasers.state.la.us

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