

The New **Louisiana Voice**

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF RSEA



Spring 2022 | Volume 30 / Number 1



RSEA CHAPTER MEETING via LIVE WEBINAR

Monday, April 11th, 9:30 AM CST

Due to Covid, RSEA cancelled in-person Chapter meetings, however, Access2Day is sponsoring our RSEA Chapter Meeting LIVE via Webinar!!

Register at this link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4829178635732385547>

Presentations by:

David Thomas, RSEA President

Jimmy Anthony, RSEA Administrative Director

Cindy Rougeou, LASERS

Wendy Landry, OGB

Kenny Beauvais, Access2Day Health

Frank Jobert, Jr., RSEA Legis./Govt Affairs Director

**LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION COMING BY
EMAIL, FACEBOOK & WEBSITE!**

RSEA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It's nice to be back to springtime. As I write this the temperature is warming up, leaves are beginning to bud out on our oaks and the grass is starting to turn green. I love this time of year. By now I'm sure you have heard that once again RSEA is not holding Chapter meetings in

March. The RSEA Board met face-to-face in January and unfortunately we had an outbreak of COVID. We were very fortunate that no one experienced severe symptoms. After our first-hand witness to the ease of transmission of COVID the Board decided to not risk the possibility of illness of our members who many are in high-risk categories. I am disappointed about the cancellation and at not being able to meet with all the chapters across the state but certainly agree that RSEA should take a most cautious approach with our members.

As an alternative to the Chapter Meetings, RSEA will take a different approach than last year's pre-taped presentations. We will be offering a live webinar in April that will be hosted by Access2day. It will be structured similar to our chapter meetings and have presentations such as updates on RSEA, LASERS and OGB as well as interesting news about the upcoming legislative session. More information will be in this newsletter. Email and social media invitations will be circulated by Access2day, LASERS and RSEA. I hope many of you are able to attend. For those not attending we will post the recorded session on the RSEA website.

Our newsletters are published three times per year - in the spring, summer and fall - leaving about a five month period from fall to spring without an update. RSEA will next year begin an experiment with an electronic newsletter that would be done in January thus keeping our members more informed and also saving the expense of publishing and mailing an extra newsletter. The electronic version will be emailed to members and posted on our website.

Spring is also the time to submit applications for the RSEA Foundation Scholarship. We have previously announced the scholarship in our Newsletter, via email, on the website and on social media. If you know of an interested student please encourage an application. All guidance and an application are posted on our website.

Please pay close attention to Frank Jobert's message on the 2022 Legislative Session. There is some exciting news about a bill to enact a one-time supplemental payment for LASERS retirees. More specifics from Frank are in this newsletter. As usual, please be vigilant during the session about potential impacts to our benefits. RSEA will keep you up-to-date via email

blasts and social media. Once again, if you have not given us your email address please contact the RSEA office. It is vital we have accurate contact data for our members in order to let you know of anything that may jeopardize benefits. We need RSEA members to contact their legislators quickly during times of critical legislative matters.

That's all for now. I hope you enjoy spring.

And of course a dad joke: I changed all the labels in my wife's spice cabinet. She hasn't noticed yet, but the thyme is cumin.

Thank you for being a member of RSEA!

David Thomas
President

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Unfortunately, RSEA had to cancel our planned in person Chapter meetings for the second straight year, and some have not had an in-person meeting for three years now. This year we are working hard right now to bring members a live webinar that will cover all the

information that would be presented at a live Chapter meeting. The webinar will be on Monday, April 11th, beginning at 9:30 am. It will probably last about an hour and a half, with a question-and-answer period not to exceed 30 minutes. For those that cannot login at that time, there will be a recording of the live event that will be available for viewing on our Virtual Chapters Meeting Page on our website later on. You must register to join in. After registering you will be sent a link and instructions on how to enter the site. Here is the link to the webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4829178635732385547>. After the webinar, you can go the Virtual Chapter meeting page on our website and view other presentations that our other partners have provided. Each Chapter President will also have a short presentation video to discuss your Chapter more specifically. We would like to thank a special partner who has made this webinar a reality, Access2Day Health. They make available health care to our members through a statewide array of urgent care clinics with no co pays or out of pocket costs to members by partnering with the Office of Group Benefits.

For the second straight year the RSEA Foundation will be accepting applications for an Educational Scholarship for RSEA members, or their children or grandchildren. Application forms, qualifications and instructions can be found on our website at <https://>

www.rseala.org or you can call us at the office at 225/930-0961 or you can email me at janthony.rsea@gmail.com. Get a jump start on the application process and start now because applications must be received by April 29th.

Below is a listing of all those that have donated to the Scholarship Fund since our last newsletter. Thank you all so much!

Donor	In Memory of
Gwen Thompson	Betty Breaux
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Marjorie Dobbs	Don Dobbs

Newsletter costs are getting very expensive so in order to save money, we are urging members to opt in for a digital copy instead of a print copy. This could potentially save us thousands of dollars if enough members opt in. Please give us a call or email us to drop you from receiving a printed copy of the newsletter. But don't worry, if you decide later, you would prefer the printed copy, just let us know and we will start resending it to you again. Also, you can always go to our website and download the



current or even past issues of our newsletter.

In order for us to better communicate with our membership we are asking that every member with an email address to please join our Email Club and send us your email address. We promise to not bombard you with emails, but will only send you important and timely information that you should be aware of as it pertains to your benefits and well-being as a retiree.

We also had to cancel our planned Statewide Conference last year, but we are hopeful that this year that will be a reality. We are planning to hold the Conference on October 11-12 at the Paragon Casino. You will find more information about the conference elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website.

RSEA would like to recognize three special members who were nominated and received the prestigious Chapter Member of the Year award as voted on by their individual chapters. All three were recognized for their outstanding service to their communities through various volunteer organizations. Mary Ginn- Baton Rouge Chapter, Michael Swarie-Alexandria Chapter, and Virginia Lee-Monroe Chapter. Many thanks to you three and the members who thought enough about your service to nominate you.



In closing, I would ask that each of you take the time to reach out to your fellow state retirees and currently working state employees to explain to them the benefits of membership in RSEA. Our membership is continuing to lose numbers and we must recruit new members to be effective. Your Association's voice will resonate louder the more members that we can say we represent.

Jimmy Anthony
Administrative Director

RSEA LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The 2022 Regular Legislative Session opened at noon on Monday, March 14, 2022 and is "general" in nature. The session convenes for up to 60 days in an eighty-five calendar-day period and must close no later than Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:00 PM.

A general session means that no measure levying or authorizing a new state tax, increasing an existing state tax, or legislating with regard to state tax exemptions, exclusions or credits shall be introduced or enacted.

However, this means that the introduction of retirement legislation or bills in either the House of Representatives, or Senate, or both chambers is allowed. At the time of this writing, two LASERS bills that are of great importance to state retirees and new hires (future retirees) are in the mix.

Senate Bill 5 by Senator "Ed" Price (Democrat-District 2) is of significant importance to LASERS retirees age 60 and above, who have been retired at least one year as of June 30, 2022, and disability retirees who have been retired at least one year as of June 30, 2022. In recognition of the fact that LASERS' retirees have not had a COLA or Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI) since 2016, the LASERS Board has supported a (nonrecurring) one-time, lump-sum, supplemental payment for 2022, payable from the Experience Account.

This is sometimes referred to by some as a 13th check. The supplemental benefit is scheduled to be payable by LASERS no later than September 15, 2022 to all eligible recipients. The amount of the supplemental payment/check will be the lesser of the retiree's or beneficiary's current monthly benefit/check or three thousand dollars (\$3,000). RSEA supports this measure in its present form.

LASERS is also proposing a new retirement plan (NRP) for new state employees or new hires only. (NOTE: As of this writing, the bill has not been introduced or assigned a bill number). This measure, if approved, would NOT impact current state employees, or current retirees of LASERS, or members of the LASERS Hazardous Duty Retirement Plan(s). Also, the measure, if enacted, would not impact Teachers (TRSL), State Police (LSPRS), or School Employee (LSERS) state retirement systems. It is exclusive to new LASERS rank & file employees only!

In short, the proposed bill is a defined benefit (DB) plan, which is equivalent to a Social Security benefit,

and is combined with a defined contribution (DC) overlay or enhanced component. Some have referred to this type of plan as a hybrid. The plan provides portability for those who do not choose to remain in state service, and continues the age 62 minimum retirement age with 5-year vesting.

It will not provide the same benefits as many of current retirees, such as myself, who joined LASERS 30, 40, or 50 years ago. The plan is designed to meet the demographics of today's new hires (millennials) who tend not to stay in one job or field of endeavor for an entire career. The NRP is also designed to minimize the chances of future unfunded accrued liabilities to the LASERS system and the state of Louisiana taxpayers. Another feature of the plan is a built-in (pre-funded) 2% cost of living allowance (COLA) every other year upon retirement. As of this writing, RSEA has not taken an official position on this proposed legislation.

As reported in the last edition of the RSEA newsletter, New Louisiana Voice, the fight to repeal the WEP and GPO Social Security Offsets continues. Our thanks to State Rep. Mike Johnson (Repub.-District 27) who is continuing to lead the battle. He held at least two meetings with all the stakeholders represented by the state retirement systems and their respective

associations, like RSEA, TRSL, LSTA, and LSBOA. He also organized/made a trip to Washington DC to meet with the entire Louisiana Congressional delegation of Representatives and Senators on March 2nd and 3rd. Representative Johnson was also accompanied to DC by Rep. Chuck Owen (Republican-District 30) and Rep. Rodney Schamerhorn (Republican -District 24).

Other meetings of the Louisiana delegation were scheduled with co-sponsors of the Social Security Fairness Act (HR-82): Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA). They were also scheduled to meet with Rep. John Larson (D-CT), Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), Senate Majority Whip-- Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and staff members from the Ways and Means Committee and the Social Security Sub Committee. NOTE: The current number of co-sponsors of HR-82 is 260 (193 Democrats and 67 Republicans). We need to get 290 to force a vote on the House of Representatives Floor. LATE NOTE: After a full day of meetings with key Congressman and Senators directly involved in the repeal of the WEP & GPO effort, Rep. Mike Johnson reports from DC that forcing a vote is within our reach. "Time is running out and NOW is the moment!"

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RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF LOUISIANA



LASERS UPDATE

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: LASERS SUPPORTS ONE-TIME SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT BILL

One important LASERS-supported retirement bill is proposed for the upcoming session. If passed, the legislation would positively impact our retirees.

SB 5, sponsored by Sen. Ed Price, would authorize a one-time supplemental payment, funded by the System's Experience Account to certain retirees and beneficiaries. The payment would be equal to the lesser of:

- The retiree or beneficiary's current monthly benefit.
- \$3,000.

Why is LASERS supporting SB 5? The average rank-and-file retiree has not received a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) since 2016. The Experience Account does not have enough funds to provide a typical COLA, but we are able to provide some relief in the form of a one-time supplemental payment.

Who is eligible for the one-time payment? All retirees and beneficiaries who would qualify for a normal COLA are eligible. The following requirements must be met as of June 30, 2022, to qualify:

- Retired for at least one year; and,
- At least 60 years of age.

The LASERS staff estimates that this will impact almost 46,000 retirees and beneficiaries. The average one-time payment per eligible retiree or beneficiaries is expected to be about \$1,846. Members would see relief no later than September 15, 2022, if the proposed legislation passes.

For more details about the one-time supplemental payment, visit the LASERS website: <https://lasersonline.org/one-time-payment/>

For a complete list of retirement legislation that would impact LASERS if passed, please visit our website: www.lasersonline.org.

CHANGES TO LASERS BOARD IN 2022

In January, the LASERS Board of Trustees elected Judge William Kleinpeter and Shannon Templet as new Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Both are eager to fill Board leadership roles in 2022.

Judge Kleinpeter has served since 1991 as judge with the City Court of Port Allen. He previously chaired the LASERS Board in 2016, led the Legislative Committee for six years, and most recently, the Investment Committee.

Templet is the Director of Human Resources of the House of Representatives and has served as an active member LASERS Trustee since 2012. She has held key positions during her tenure as a Trustee.

Three new active members were elected in the 2022 Board Election: Byron P. Decoteau, Jr., Director of the Louisiana Department of State Civil Service, Ternisa Hutchinson, State Director of Planning & Budget with the Division of Administration, and Amy A. Mathews, Investment Manager for the State General Fund & Trust Funds with the Louisiana Department of the Treasury. Barbara McManus, retired from the Department of Social Services, Office of Family Support, filled the one open retiree position on the Board. All were sworn in at the January Board meeting.

Representative Phillip DeVillier, Chair of the House Retirement Committee, is LASERS newest ex officio member, replacing Representative Lance Harris. Rep. DeVillier represents District 41 and is from Eunice.

MAY 1 BENEFIT PAYMENT FALLS ON SUNDAY

Please note that the May 1, 2022, benefit payment date falls on a Sunday which could affect receipt of your funds.

Direct deposits are guaranteed to be in your bank or credit union on the first day of the month. Be aware that if the first falls on a weekend (Saturday or Sunday) or holiday, funds may not be available until the following business day. In these cases, please contact your financial institution directly for information on when your funds will be made available to you. That decision is made by your financial institution, not LASERS. If you have not received your monthly benefit payment by the first business day of the month, please contact LASERS in Baton Rouge at 225.922.0600 or toll-free at 800.256.3000.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Before visiting LASERS, check the website for the latest information on building safety protocol and restrictions, <https://lasersonline.org/covid19/>. Thank you!

OGB UPDATE

SAVE \$120 WITH ONE DOCTOR'S VISIT RECEIVE DISCOUNTS ON HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS WITH CATAPULT

As part of your Access2day membership, you can receive a \$10 monthly discount on your 2023 health insurance premium

with a Catapult preventative check-up. When you visit your local Access2day clinic for a Catapult check-up, be sure to take the Catapult form with you. The deadline is August 31 to get your \$120 savings for 2023.

Access2day has more than 80 clinics across the state of Louisiana that you can visit to participate in the Catapult

program. To find a list of clinics nearest you, go here:
<https://access2dayhealth.com/locations.php>

YOUR ACCESS2DAY MEMBERSHIP: WHAT TO KNOW

Access2day saves you money every time you visit the clinic. You and your covered dependents can visit any Access2day clinic to

receive primary or urgent care services with no copay, no out-of-pocket expenses, and no appointment is necessary. Access2day is available to all state employees, school board employees, retirees and covered dependents on the Magnolia Local, Magnolia Local Plus, Magnolia Open Access and Pelican HRA1000 health plans. Have questions about your membership? Feel free to call us at 800.797.9503.

2022 RSEA Fall Conference

Save the Date

Be Healthy

Stay Sharp



Get Happy

INFORMATIVE SESSIONS

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS



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RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
"WORKING TODAY FOR YOUR TOMORROW"



The New
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Spring 2022 Newsletter

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