

# From the President

## COLA Process Is Top Issue



Fern Foster

As you probably already know from earlier newsletters, Act 497 of the 2009 Regular Session made some substantial changes in the way the state will address

the unfunded liabilities of the LASERS and Teachers Retirement Systems and in the manner which future cost of living adjustments will be handled.

Our primary concerns with the legislation relate to the changes it makes to the cost of living adjustment process. In a joint press release dated July 13, 2009, both Senator Butch Gautreaux, Chairman of the Senate Retirement Committee, and Representative Joel Robideaux, Chairman of the House Retirement Committee, committed to work during the interim to find a way to establish a mechanism to provide regular, dependable COLAs when justified.

Chairman Gautreaux stated, "We will use our time in the interim to design a better method for helping our state's current and future retirees during the next legislative session." Chairman Robideaux stated that, "We are planning interim meetings this year to study the issue further and intend this work to result in legislation for the 2010 session." A copy of the complete press release can be found on our website under "2009 Legislative Session."

RSEA intends to be a part of those interim discussions. In letters to Senator  
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# The New Louisiana Voice

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## 2010 Member of the Year Nominations

Nominations are now open for the 2010 Chapter Member of the Year awards.

Selection Criteria are:

- ✓ Retired Louisiana state employee and member of LASERS and RSEA
- ✓ Service to retirees
- ✓ Service to community
- ✓ Service to volunteer and church organizations
- ✓ Activities/honors that improve image of public employees

Nominations must include a written description about the nominee and should be submitted by January 31, 2010, to your Area Chapter President. Nominations must include candidate's name, address and telephone number, his/her position and state agency name at the time of retirement, and details on his/her qualifications, accomplishments and honors. Please limit your comments to a maximum of 250 words for each category.

A form has been developed to obtain standard information on each candidate. (See page 2.) In the near future, it will be available on the RSEA website as a downloadable pdf document which you can fill in using your computer. It is important to note that if you have the Adobe Acrobat Reader only, you cannot save the completed form, but must print out the document, making a copy for your records. (Only computers with the full Adobe Acrobat software can save forms with data.) Members of the Year for 2010 will be announced at the Chapter meetings and featured in a future issue of the Newsletter.

### RSEA Membership Dues

It is time to renew your annual membership in RSEA. Your dues make it possible for the RSEA Board and staff to work on your behalf within the state of Louisiana--as well as nationally--to address health care and retirement issues.

Other significant advantages of your membership are offered by the Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA), which provides a varied, useful and meaningful menu of "Members Only" benefits exclusively for RSEA. For information about any of these items, please call AMBA at 800-258-7041, or visit the web sites [www.amba.info](http://www.amba.info), or [www.rseala.org](http://www.rseala.org), and click on the "Benefits" button.

Please complete the enclosed 2010 RSEA Dues Request Card and mail it in the courtesy envelope. (A Stamp must be added.) Annual dues are only \$15 and may be paid using "E-Z PAY," with only \$1.25 deducted from your monthly retirement benefit check. You also can pay your RSEA membership dues by personal check, money order, or cashier's check.

### RSEA Email Addresses Have Changed

New email addresses now being used by RSEA headquarters are:  
--rsealouisiana@att.net--to reach Executive Director Allen Reynolds  
--laretiree@att.net--to reach Office Manager Paula Clark

Feel free to contact RSEA by email any time. The AOL email addresses will be discontinued effective December 31, 2009.



# 2010 Retiree of the Year Nomination Form

This completed form is due to your Area Chapter President by January 31, 2010.  
Contact information is located on the last page of the RSEA Newsletter or on the  
RSEA website: [www.rseala.org](http://www.rseala.org).

Nominee must be a LASERS Retiree and a member of RSEA. Attach additional pages if more space is needed to complete any category (for a 250 word total MAXIMUM for each category.) Include the Nominee's name and category number at the top of each additional page.

## 1. Person Submitting Nomination

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Person Being Nominated

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Information:

## 3. History of State Service

Instructions: Give the Nominee's Classification held and Agency immediately prior to retirement. List state career details in reverse order. Need additional room? Attach sheet with Nominee's name and category number at top.

Classification	Agency	# of Years or Dates

## 4. Honors and Recognitions

Instructions: Give the Name of the honor, from what organization, and brief description of reason it was awarded.

Honor/Award	Organization	Reason Awarded

## 5. Community Involvement (Including Church and Civic)

## 6. Why Did You Nominate This Person? How Has He/She Enhanced the Lives of Louisiana Retirees?

## Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS) Update

### LASERS Investments

It's been nearly a year since news of the credit crisis and turmoil in our financial markets created cause for concern among our members.

Throughout its 60 year history, LASERS has remained strong as a defined benefit plan constructed to withstand the ups and downs of the market. LASERS is a long-term investor with an asset allocation structure designed such that over time, LASERS will earn at least an 8.25% actuarial return while minimizing risk.

For the one, three, and five year periods ending June 30, 2009, LASERS market returns are -19.1%, -2.5%, and 2.7%, respectively. LASERS significantly outperformed the overall market as measured by the Standard and Poor's 500, which returned -26.2%, -8.2%, and -2.2% for the same time periods.

LASERS 2009-2010 fiscal year is off to a good start. In the month of July, LASERS earned 5.8% on its investments. Looking back, LASERS was also affected by down markets following September 11, 2001. However, by 2004, we experienced a tremendous rebound with a market return of 18.0%. Our plan continued to make impressive gains, achieving a 19.2% market return in 2007. We continue to be guided by seasoned LASERS investment professionals, who adhere to a long term plan established by our Board of Trustees.

### 2009 Board of Trustees Election

Voting began for the 2009 LASERS Board of Trustees Election on September 25, 2009. There is one seat open for a retired member. Four candidates are competing for the seat, named in the order in which they appear on the ballot: Kathy Singleton, Lorry Trotter, John D. Radford, and Benny G. Harris.

Votes will be accepted via mail, telephone, or the Internet. Ballot packets were mailed to eligible voters September 25, with complete instructions for voting. Ballots will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., CDT, on October 23, 2009. Those received after this deadline will not be counted. If you vote by paper ballot, be sure to mail it early enough to arrive in time to be counted.

You can read about the platform and qualifications of each candidate on the *Board of Trustees Election* page of the LASERS website at [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org). Make your voice heard in this important process. If you have any questions about the voting process, please contact LASERS Public Information Director Robyn Ekins at 225-925-7590 or [rekings@lasersonline.org](mailto:rekings@lasersonline.org).

### President's Column

(Continued from Page 1)

Gautreaux and Representative Robideaux dated July 28, 2009, we made several suggestions on areas for study and offered to assist in any way possible. Our letters can also be found on our website. RSEA will do everything we can to insure that those interim discussions lead to a positive result for you.

At press time, we were expecting at least 200 people at the new Fall Conference in Marksville. We look forward to your feedback to assist us with creating an even more meaningful, useful and pleasant event in future years.

Be sure to vote in the LASERS election for your retiree Trustee representative. Warm regards, Fern

### Re-employed Retirees

If you are a LASERS retiree, and wish to work with a LASERS member agency, you must select one of three options when you are rehired. **The option selection is irrevocable, and it is effective for the full term of your employment.**

**Option 1:** You may elect to limit your earnings in any fiscal year to fifty percent of your annual retirement benefit for such fiscal year. You should not select this option if your estimated earnings for the fiscal year exceed the earnings limit. If your actual earnings exceed the limit, then your retirement benefit will be reduced by the amount of excess earnings.

**Option 2:** You may regain membership in LASERS by repaying all retirement benefits received plus interest at the actuarial rate. This option allows you to restore all your service credit, and return to active member status as if you had not retired. **This option is not available to re-employed retirees who participated in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP), or the Initial Benefit Option (IBO), or who elected to participate in early retirement.**

**Option 3:** You may suspend your retirement benefits effective the date of your re-employment, and become a contributing member of LASERS based on your current employment. Employee and employer contributions must be paid, and there is no limit on earnings.

Upon subsequent retirement, your retirement benefit will be resumed. If you worked for at least thirty-six months, a supplemental benefit will be calculated for the additional employment based on service credit and average compensation for that time. If you worked less than 36 months, your employee contributions will be refunded.

## Office of Group Benefits Update

### OGB Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Nov. 15 through Dec. 31

No two OGB plan members have exactly the same health history and medical needs. That's why an OGB health plan that's right for you may not be the best choice for your parent, your friend or an OGB retiree in another part of the state.

As in previous years, OGB Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment takes place from November 15 – December 31, 2009. During this time, retired OGB plan members with Medicare have up to 9 possible options in choosing an OGB health plan for 2009:

- 4 OGB health plans (PPO, EPO, HMO and Medical Home HMO)
- Up to 5 OGB Medicare Advantage plans, depending on where you live

While the PPO, EPO, HMO and Medical Home HMO health plans are available to all OGB plan members, the OGB Medicare Advantage plans are available only to retired OGB plan members who have Medicare Parts A and B and whose covered dependents, if applicable, all have Medicare Parts A and B.

When selecting a health plan, it's important to look carefully at the benefits and coverage offered by OGB health plans and OGB Medicare Advantage health plans. Answers to these key questions can help you decide:

- ✓ Is the plan available in my area?
- ✓ Are my doctors and hospitals included in the plan?
- ✓ Does the plan have out-of-state coverage if I need it?
- ✓ Does the plan have an open or closed (restricted) drug formulary?
- ✓ If the formulary is closed, are my prescriptions drugs covered?
- ✓ What is the monthly premium cost?
- ✓ How do the costs and benefits compare to my current OGB plan?

To get more information, be sure to attend an OGB Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment meeting in your area during October. A list of meetings can be found in the fall issue of OGB's newsletter for retirees with Medicare and on the OGB website ([www.groupbenefits.org](http://www.groupbenefits.org)).

## RSEA Annual Meetings Set for 2010

Below in date order is RSEA's 2010 annual meeting schedule. Be sure to mark your calendar now for these very important events.

**Shreveport** – Tuesday, March 2, 10 a.m., La. Technical College, 2011 North Market St., Bldg. E; President: Marshall McKenzie, 318-797-4356.

**Monroe** – Wednesday, March 3, 9:30 a.m., West Monroe Convention Center, 901 Ridge Ave.; President: Dianne Guillot, 318-396-6275.

**Alexandria** – Thursday, March 4, 9:30 a.m., Community Center, 708 Main Street, Pineville; President: Vic Dennis, 318-623-4547.

**Lake Charles** – Tuesday, March 9, 10 a.m., Contraband Room, Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Dr.; President: Fern Foster, 337-477-5250.

**Acadiana/Lafayette** – Wednesday, March 10, 10 a.m., Fezzo's III, 100 Lions Club Road, Scott; President: Cheryl Smith, 337-237-8634.

**North Shore** – Thursday, March 11, 10 a.m., Bogue Falaya Room, Greater Covington Center, 317 North Jefferson; President: Kathy Singleton, 225-222-6567.

**Baton Rouge** – Tuesday, March 16, 9:30 a.m., West Baton Rouge Conference Center, 2750 N.

### Retired State Employees Association of Louisiana The New Louisiana Voice

is the official RSEA publication. The mission of the Association is to advance the quality of life of retired state employees who have given generously of their talents to the State of Louisiana. The name and distinctive logo of the publication are registered with the Louisiana Secretary of State. Permission is hereby granted for the use of any materials within these pages, provided proper acknowledgment is made.

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Russell Culotta--Baton Rouge 225-766-1733

Westport Dr., Port Allen, LA (*New Location*); President: Lorry Trotter, 225-627-6264.

**Coastal** – Thursday, March 18, 9:30 a.m., Quality Hotel, 210 South Hollywood Road, Houma, LA; President: Cathy Schweitzer, 985-873-7795.

**New Orleans** – Friday, March 19, 10 a.m., VFW Post #6640, Malta Room, 3314 Richland Ave, Metairie; President: Benny Harris, 504-888-7638.

Notices will be sent to all members with current mailing address. Please update your address with LASERS if you moved in the past several months.