

## From the President A Successful Session!



Sona F. Young

Thank goodness the 2006 Legislative Session is over!

It was somewhat harrowing in that the COLA Resolution was passed in the last few days of the session.

Again this year, our Executive Director, Darlene Richard, did an exemplary job of both tracking legislation of interest and providing information to the House and Senate Retirement leadership and committee members.

Congratulations, Darlene. You were both untiringly relentless and extremely effective in your efforts.

Thanks also to Cindy Rougeou, Executive Director for the Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS). Another of our favorite people, Connie Carlton, LASERS Board Chair, worked her "political magic." (As you may remember, Connie is the former RSEA Executive Director, and prior to that, Assistant Director of LASERS.) She was joined in informational efforts by many other LASERS Trustees.

You, our RSEA members, were most active, vocal and visible in your lobbying activities. The RSEA motto states, "Retirees Always Vote," and your elected officials know that you who voted them in—can also vote them out.

Finally, our heartfelt appreciation goes out to Senator Butch Gautreaux and Representative Pete Schneider for "carrying the ball" for us. They really made it happen!

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## Legislature Approves COLA

The Louisiana State Legislature overwhelmingly approved SCR 94 which provides for a 2.4% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for eligible retirees of the Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS).

The COLA will benefit more than 32,000 retirees and it will be effective **July 1, 2006.**

Eligibility for the COLA is based upon the following criteria:

- 1) All retirees who have attained the age of 55 and who have received a benefit for at least one year;
- 2) All non-retiree beneficiaries if benefits have been paid to retirees or the beneficiaries, or both combined for at least one year and in no event before the retiree would have attained the age of 55; and
- 3) All disability retirees or benefits based on the death of the disability retirees.

RSEA extends its appreciation to Senator Butch Gautreaux and Representative Pete Schneider for authoring legislative resolutions for the COLA.

Representative Schneider was instrumental in quickly guiding the COLA resolution through the House of Representatives legislative process in the final days of the session.

In addition, RSEA extends sincere gratitude to Cindy Rougeou, Executive Director of LASERS, for her outstanding efforts in assisting with the passage of the COLA.

RSEA is also grateful for the efforts by

you, our members, for making your voices heard about the COLA through your letters, email messages, faxes and personal visits with the state senators and representatives.

During the 2006 Legislative Session, RSEA monitored thirty-six legislative bills that related to retirement and/or LASERS. Of the thirty-six legislative bills, ten bills were passed.

On page 2 is a listing of a few key bills and their final status. A complete list of the legislative bills monitored by RSEA can be found on the RSEA website, [www.rseala.org](http://www.rseala.org), or you may contact our office at 1-800-256-1818 or in the Baton Rouge area, 344-5448. (continued on page 2)

## Reynolds, Harris Lead Area RSEA Chapters



Allen Reynolds



Benny Harris

Two new Presidents were chosen for RSEA area chapters in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Allen Reynolds, retired Director of the Louisiana Dept. of Civil Service, is leading the Baton Rouge chapter. His predecessor was Glenda Chambers, retired Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS) Executive Director.

Benny Harris, who is retired from the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C), where he was War- (continued on page 3)

## Legislative Update, 2006 Regular Session

### HB 208 by Rep. Toomy

(Failed to pass)

*(RSEA opposed this bill)*

This was a special interest bill that would have provided an early retirement incentive for district, juvenile and municipal court judges in Orleans, St. Bernard or Plaquemines Parish. It would have allowed these judges to retire at any age or amount of service. This "golden parachute" would have also allowed the judges to receive an additional .5% retroactive retirement benefit.

### HB 1058 by Rep. Montgomery

(Failed to pass)

*(RSEA supported this bill)*

This bill related to the rehiring of retirees. Current law provides that a retiree of LASERS who has at least 30 years of service and is at least age 70 to be exempt from any suspension or reduction of benefits if reemployed by the state.

This bill would have removed the 30 year service requirement and changed the age requirement from 70 to 65 for exemption from any suspension or reduction of benefits.

While this bill did not pass, the Legislature did pass HSR 14 which requests the House Committee on Retirement to study the options available to LASERS retirees upon reemployment in a position covered by the LASERS system.

### SB 258 by Sen. Boasso

(Failed to pass)

*(RSEA supported this bill)*

This legislation would have required that in the future, any proposed legislation that changes retirement benefits resulting in an additional impact on the system's unfunded accrued liability, would have to provide for a funding source that completely eliminates the additional created funding liability within five years.

Thus, this bill would have stymied the passage of special interest bills unless funding was provided.

### SB 526 by Sen. Boasso

(Failed to pass)

*(RSEA supported this bill)*

This bill would have required the state to pay an additional 2% employer retirement contribution of which 1.75% would have been applied to the unfunded accrued liability (UAL) and .25% would be applied to the Experience Account for COLAs. If this bill had passed, it would have reduced the state system retirement debt and would have also provided a dedicated funding stream for future COLAs.

## EBR Sheriff's New Web Site Enhanced

The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office has a new Web site that provides the calls for service to which the Sheriff's Office responds, according to Chief Criminal Deputy Greg Phares.

"The site contains a great deal of information that we believe will help the citizens of this Parish to be informed about the types of incidents that happen in the area where they live," according to Phares.

To get to the site, type in your browser <http://www.ebrso.org>, and the Sheriff's Office web page appears.

Then, click on to the link that shows "Crime Statistics," followed by a disclaimer page, where you click on "CAD-Calls for Service by Geographic Sector," and the Parish map appears.

From that point you find the Sector in which you are interested and use your mouse to click on the portion of the map you wish to survey.

The Sectors are broken down into smaller subsectors, so viewers can get a better idea as to what is going on in the area surrounding where they live.

The incident list that is on the side of the map shows you the number of calls for service that they received for that month and when you start drill-

## 2006 Medicare Guide

The Louisiana Department of Insurance Senior Health Insurance Information Program has released its 2006 *Medicare Supplement Comparison Guide*. It helps Louisiana seniors make decisions about insurance policies to supplement Medicare benefits.

SHIIP is the state health insurance assistance program from the Louisiana Department of Insurance.

Access the Medicare Supplement Comparison Guide online at [www.lidi.state.la.us](http://www.lidi.state.la.us). The Guide is also available at area Council on Aging offices, or by calling (800) 259-5301.

ing down to the subsectors that chart will show the number of calls for service they received for that area.

Once you get down to the area you are looking for, the list will show what activity took place in that area. If you want to know what burglary took place on that portion of the map, all you have to do is click on the incident you want and a list of streets will show up and provide the street block and date and time this incident happened.

You should only have to click four times to get to the information you would like to examine.

If you wish to learn more about the web site, you can call Fred Raiford at 389-5091 or email him at [fraiford@ebrso.org](mailto:fraiford@ebrso.org). Also check out other parish sheriff office web sites for similar information in other parts of Louisiana.

### Useful Web Sites

- ✓ Senior Citizens Daily News/Information: <http://www.seniorjournal.com>
- ✓ General Health Information: <http://healthweb.org/>
- ✓ LA Attorney General's Office, Programs and Services for Seniors: <http://doj.louisiana.gov/Seniors.aspx>
- ✓ LA Dept. of Insurance, Senior Health Insurance Information Program: <http://www.lidi.la.gov/Health/SHIIP>

## LASERS Update

# Proud to Provide a COLA

On July 1, 2006, eligible retirees of the Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System will begin receiving their first Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase in four years.

The Louisiana Legislature has approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 94, by Senator Butch Gautreaux.

The Resolution authorizes LASERS to grant a 2.4% COLA to over 32,000 system retirees.

In order to be eligible for this COLA, a LASERS retiree must have reached the age of 55 and must have been receiving a LASERS retirement benefit for at least one year as of July 1, 2006.

The COLA is funded through excess investment earnings which accumulate in the legislatively established Experience Account.

LASERS Executive Director Cindy Rougeou said, "We appreciate the legislature's overwhelming support in

authorizing this long-awaited COLA."

"We are grateful that both Sen. Butch Gautreaux and Rep. Pete Schneider, chairmen of the retirement committees in the Senate and House of Representatives, introduced COLA resolutions on behalf of our retirees."

"Additionally, we would like to thank Rep. Pete Schneider for authoring LASERS legislation and for shepherding the COLA resolution through the House of Representatives in the closing days of this session.

"With the ever increasing cost of health care, this cost of living adjustment, though modest, helps to meet a critical need."

Connie Carlton, Chair, LASERS Board of Trustees, expressed her appreciation to the staff and members of the Retired State Employees' Association for their added efforts, support, and assistance in the successful passage of the COLA.

## LASERS Tidbits

### EFT

Have you signed up yet for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)? EFT, also known as Direct Deposit, is the fast, convenient way to receive your retirement benefit.

No more waiting for paper checks to arrive in the mail. With EFT, your benefit is deposited directly into your bank account at the same time each month. Visit the LASERS website to download an Authorization for Direct Deposit form which you can complete.

### Change of Address

Please ensure that LASERS always has your current mailing address on file. The *LASERS Beam* newsletter and your Annual Member Account Statements are among the materials that LASERS sends directly to your home.

Without a current mailing address, your receipt of these mailings can be delayed. If you have moved recently, please submit a LASERS Change of Address form, available at **lasers online.org**.

## Reynolds, Harris Lead Baton Rouge, New Orleans RSEA Chapters

(continued from page 1)

den of the Bridge City Correctional Center for Youth for 28 years. He succeeds Shirley Grand, long-time RSEA member who now lives in Mississippi.

Reynolds, a Morganza native, is a 1969 LSU graduate, earning his MBA in 1971 from Nicholls State University. He started in the Civil Service Staffing Division in 1973, holding different positions, including Undersecretary and Deputy Director, being named Director in 1996.

Under Allen's leadership, Civil Service operations and procedures were modernized and streamlined. The agency's web site became an effective major information and communications tool for employees, state agencies and the public at large. So dramatic were the improvements, that the Department was selected as Large Agency of the Year award in 2003 and was featured

in *Governing Magazine*, a national publication for public sector managers.

Allen and his wife, Flory, are the parents of two daughters, and have four grandchildren. He is enjoying retirement, and plays tennis and builds furniture for his family.

Harris retired in 2002 from DPS&C, where he held administrative and managerial positions, including Assistant Secretary.

A Navy veteran, Harris completed his BA from Southern University and his MSW from LSU. He was active in the Louisiana Warden's Association for many years, serving as Assistant President. In addition, he was Past President of the International Conference of Administrators of Residential Centers for Youth and the Louisiana Conference of Juvenile Corrections Workers.

He was a member of the LASERS Board of Trustees for 8 years, which he also chaired, and was a Board member for both the Dept. of Corrections Credit Union and the New Orleans Harbor Police Retirement Systems.

Active in community affairs, Benny is a member of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club as well as serving as Immediate Past President of the Beau Brummell Club. Currently he is President of the N.O. chapter of the Southern University Quarterback Club and is Past Polemarch for the Gretna chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. In addition, he is Past President of the West Jefferson Kiwanis Club. He enjoys retirement as a member of the N.O. Golf Association.

Benny and his wife, Gwen, now living temporarily in Metairie, are longtime mid-city New Orleans residents.

## Office of Group Benefits Update

# New Tricare Supplemental Policy

The Office of Group Benefits wants you to know about a special program designed for military retirees, called TRICARE. TRICARE is available at no cost to eligible military retirees.

OGB plans to offer a low-cost TRICARE Supplemental Policy and pay most of the premium cost on behalf of our employees and retirees eligible for such coverage. TRICARE is the health insurance program provided armed forces by the United States Dept. of Defense. OGB is fortunate to have many military retirees who have initiated a second career in state government or education.

With TRICARE, coupled with the supplemental policy offered by OGB, eligible military retirees can get benefits better

than those offered by OGB with lower out-of-pocket expenses. The program also has no preexisting condition provisions and is a guaranteed issue.

To be eligible for TRICARE, members must be retired from any armed services branch with at least 20 years of service and entitled to retired, retainer or equivalent pay. Coverage also extends to spouses under age 65 and unmarried dependent children under age 21 (or under age 23 if a full-time student).

You will soon be hearing much more about the TRICARE program. If you are eligible to participate, you can significantly decrease your health premiums by choosing TRICARE and the TRICARE Supplemental Policy.

## In Memoriam: Carroll Trahan

Carroll Trahan, age 88, passed away April 15 in Lake Charles. A retiree of the Louisiana Dept. of Transportation--then called the Highway Department, Trahan was a buyer in the right-of-way division.



Carroll Trahan

He also had an extensive career in the business community, both prior to and following his 20 years of service in state government. He is survived by one son, two daughters, 12 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, and a sister. Preceding him in death were his wife, the former Lillian Authement, and a son and daughter.

Always a leader in community organizations, Trahan was also active in the Freemasons, Eastern Star, and the Shrine Temple. He was laid to rest with a Masonic Service. He graduated from Jeanerette High School and Southeastern Junior College. Though he was a youngster in the Great Depression, Carroll had a knack for good business decisions, at one time owning apartments, part-owner of a lumber yard, a hardware store and a service station.

He then went into real estate and became a State Farm agent before going to work for the Highway Department in 1955. He retired in 1975. After retirement, he worked parttime for a Lake Charles clothier, still taking time to do volunteering and travelling with wife Lillian.

Trahan was active in the RSEA's Lake Charles area chapter, having served as President before being elected state President. His lengthy service with RSEA resulted in his being named a Constitutional member of the Board.

### The New Louisiana Voice

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

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