

The New **Louisiana Voice**

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF RSEA



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2020 RSEA Virtual Conference

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November 9 - 13, 2020

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November 8, 2020

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Join Us And Watch From Your Happy Place



RSEA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Unfortunately, Gwen Thompson is recuperating from hip surgery and was unable to provide a message for this newsletter. Please include her in your prayers for a speedy recovery.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



RSEA is breaking new ground this year. We are going to host a Virtual Conference since we cannot have a live conference as in the past due to the pandemic. This Virtual conference will not be live as some of you may be

familiar with software programs such as Zoom. It will be downloaded documents and videos from our many familiar partners, sponsors and vendors, such as LASERS, OGB, AARP, AMBA, Humana, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Access2DayHealth, Louisiana Attorney General's Office, Louisiana Department of Insurance, Pennington Biomedical Center, and others. Our keynote speaker will be former Secretary of State Jim Brown. I know that as a former state worker you will find his talk very informative and decidedly humorous. You will be able to access these instruments on our website at your leisure and in the safety and comfort of your home. Please plan to join us because you do not want to miss these updates on your retirement benefits.

We plan to have the site ready to visit on November 9th. You will not need to register in order to view the information, but you must register from November 1st-8th in order to be eligible for door prizes that we will give away and announce daily. You will be able to download the registration form from our website to mail to us or just give us a call and we will register you over the phone. We also plan to have a fillable registration form on the website if possible, that will be a quick and easy way to register. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for a tentative agenda containing more information on the Virtual Conference.

2 Our heart goes out to all of our members

that have been impacted by Hurricane Laura in Southwest Louisiana. Our President, Gwen Thompson was in the hospital in Lake Charles when it hit recovering from hip surgery. The hospital was without water and power for 3 days after and finally Gwen was relocated to East Jefferson General Hospital and now she has been released and will continue to recover with relatives in Texas. If you are looking to make a donation to help with the Hurricane Laura recovery efforts, please contact AARP because they will match all donations dollar per dollar. You can log in to their website to make your donation, <https://press.aarp.org/2020-8-31-Foundation-Establishes-Relief-Fund-Supporting-Hurricane-Laura-Victims?cmp=SNO-AAPI-TW&socialid=3642346740>.

Jimmy Anthony
Administrative Director

RSEA LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



One of the most oft-asked questions that I receive, second only to questions about Social Security Offsets—WEP and GPO, is “when are the retirees going to get a COLA (cost of living allowance),” also, officially

known as a permanent benefit increase (PBI).

The volume of questions about this topic actually spiked in number in recent weeks when it was learned that state classified employees were receiving market adjustments or pay raises in July, 2020 causing retirees to ask once again, “when are the retirees going to get a raise?”

In fact, LASERS was kind enough to put together a short (2-minute) special video presentation explaining the COLA process at RSEA's request. We posted the video on our RSEA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=external&v=602347923783509> and also sent out an e-blast with the video. Thanks to LASERS for assisting RSEA on this! For the record, the last LASERS retiree COLA was 1.5% and was granted by the legislature on July 1, 2016 to eligible retirees.

Also, adding to the curiosity about COLA's were two legislative instruments this past legislative

session: SR-15 (Senator Ed Price) and HR-21 (Representative Lance Harris). Both resolutions are virtually identical in wording and intent and basically “urge and request the state retirement systems to report (by December 1, 2020) to the legislature on alternative methods for providing permanent benefit increases to retirees.” We are anxiously awaiting the report(s) in hopes that retirees will receive some type of relief from the COLA “drought” we are currently experiencing at this point in time. So, with the above background information in mind, what is the present COLA process and when are the retirees allowed to get a COLA?

The process for System-generated COLAs is as follows: COLA's are granted by the Legislature. They are funded through excess investment returns and paid by LASERS through the Experience Account. COLAs are not guaranteed and the amounts vary. They are paid automatically to eligible retirees. You must have reached age 60 as of June 30th of the year the COLA is authorized by the legislature and you must have been retired effective June 30th of the previous year. COLAs are limited to every other year (until the system is 85% funded) and are limited to the first \$60,000 of benefit (indexed to the CPI-U as of July 1, 2015).

If the above criteria are met, the following must still take place before a COLA can be granted: 1) The Experience Account must have a balance sufficient to fund the COLA on an actuarial basis. The LASERS Board of Trustees must recommend a COLA to the legislature when funds are available. Legislation to grant a COLA must pass by at least a two-thirds vote of both chambers of the legislature and signature of the Governor. These were set by the Legislature in 2009.

*Note: There is no age requirement for disability retirees to receive a COLA. There is also no limitation on the number of years a retiree can go without a COLA and COLAs are not retroactive. The whole process is driven primarily by the by the system's investment returns, coupled with the rate of inflation, and legislation approved by two-thirds vote of the legislature, and approval of the Governor.

Frank Jobert, Jr.
RSEA Legislative & Governmental Affairs
Director

LASERS UPDATE

LASERS Currently Open by Appointment Only

In compliance with COVID-19 occupancy limits currently in effect, the LASERS office is open to the public by appointment only. We are also continuing to offer appointments via phone and video. You may schedule an appointment by calling 800.256.3000 or 225.922.0600.

Documents may be dropped off at the security desk in the building or may be faxed to 225.935.2856 or mailed to: P.O. Box 44213, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213.

Please check the LASERS website for the latest updates. LASERS has instituted improvements to protect the health of our members and our staff such as hand sanitizing stations, sneeze guards, and required masks.

Watch LASERS 3-minute video containing an overview of our response to COVID-19: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwT-JIUUn5U&feature=youtu.be>.

Important Benefit Payment Information

The following benefit payment dates fall on a weekend or holiday, which could affect receipt of your funds:

- November 1, 2020 is a Sunday;
- January 1, 2021 is the New Year's holiday.

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.

Submit your photos Representing Louisiana Culture

Submission Deadline – October 31, 2020

We are currently looking for original photographs from members that reflect Louisiana culture, business, or industry – think natural landscapes, crawfish farming, the restaurant industry, or more abstract ideas.

Back in 2016, LASERS members submitted hundreds of photos to us with a navigation theme and those are featured throughout our website and digital and print publications. We plan to use the new Louisiana images in the same way. All selected photos for publication will properly credit photographers.

For information on file type, size, and submission instructions, visit the LASERS website: <https://lasersonline.org/submit-photos/>.



IN MEMORIUM

ALLEN H. REYNOLDS



Allen Hale “Haley” Reynolds, age 73, passed away peacefully on Saturday August 15, 2020 after a long and hard-fought battle with cancer. A native of Morganza, Louisiana and a resident of Prairieville, LA., Allen is survived by his wife of 53 years, Flory Contine’

Reynolds; and his two daughters, Georgie and Brandi, and their spouses; along with 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Allen proudly served on active duty in the U.S. Army in Fort Belvoir, VA and served the remainder of his commitment in the U. S. Army Reserves. Allen was a career Louisiana civil servant and rose through the ranks to become the Personnel Director for the entire Louisiana Department of Civil Service, where he served with honor and distinction as a staunch advocate for employee/civil servant rights and benefits until his retirement. Upon his retirement from Civil Service, Allen became a very active member of the RSEA Board of Directors and eventually became Executive Director of RSEA from May, 2009 until July, 2010. Upon stepping down as RSEA Executive Director, Allen returned to the RSEA Board and served in a variety of positions, most

notably, as Secretary-Treasurer until his passing in August, 2020. Allen also served a brief stint in a voluntary capacity as Acting Executive Director in 2017 during the search for a new Executive Director. Allen will always be remembered as a great human being and a friend. He was a wonderful man and respected by all who knew him. He will be sorely missed by all, especially by the Board members and staff of RSEA, for his kindness, humility and compassion. In the words of RSEA Immediate Past-President, Bonita Hearne, “My life has been enriched by knowing such a wonderful person.”

As the new Office Manager of RSEA, Susan Jandle remembers that Allen trained her and advised her with patience and kindness throughout the past two years. In Susan’s words, “Allen was a ‘gentle soul’ and I will miss him terribly.”

“Since I was hired as the Communication & Membership Coordinator at RSEA three years ago, the memory that I hold dearest to my heart about Allen was his sincerity. Whenever he visited the RSEA Office, I was greeted with a huge smile and a hug and he would always ask how the job was going. I will truly miss him, says Linda Price.

Administrative Director Jimmy Anthony remembers Allen as a kind and gentle soul who had the ability to light up a room when he walked in. “I will always remember the smile on his face and the twinkle in his eye. He helped me tremendously when I became the Director of RSEA”, says Jimmy.

DUDLEY A. “BUTCH” GAUTREAUX, JR.



Dudley Anthony “Butch” Gautreaux, Jr. age 72 passed away on February 22, 2020. A native of Morgan City, Louisiana, Butch retired in Thibodaux, LA in 2017. Butch is survived by his wife of 51 years, Marilyn Mire Gautreaux, and his two sons, Michael and

Lee, their spouses along with 7 grandchildren. Butch proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1968-1972 as a 2nd Class Petty Officer. In the early years of his career, Butch was a small business owner for 30 years in Morgan City. Later he became

interested in politics and served the people of Louisiana for 16 years in the state legislature representing House District 51 for 4 years and Senate District 21 for 12 years, including a position as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Retirement. He was a true statesman and served admirably as a well-respected problem solver and tireless worker for the citizens of Louisiana. Upon retirement from the legislature in 2012, Senator Butch Gautreaux graciously accepted an appointment to the RSEA Board of Directors as a Director Emeritus in recognition of his body of work in the legislature on behalf of state employees and retirees. Butch continued to serve RSEA with dignity for 8 years in that capacity until his untimely death in 2020. In honor of his accomplishments on behalf of state employees and retirees, Senator Gautreaux will be inducted into the Retired State Employees Association (RSEA) Hall of Fame in November of this year!

RSEA 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

November 9-13, 2020

Video and Documents Include:

- Entertaining Keynote Speaker
- Interesting Topics
- Vendor and Sponsor Information
- LASERS/OGB Benefits Update
- RSEA Staff Updates

Activities Include:

- AARP Driving Program Online Link
- Daily Door Prizes

****FREE REGISTRATION****

ELIGIBLE FOR DAILY DOOR PRIZES
IF YOU REGISTER BY NOVEMBER 8

GO TO [HTTPS://RSEALA.ORG](https://rseala.org) OR

CALL 225-930-0961 OR

DOWNLOAD AND PRINT THIS FORM
SEND TO THE ADDRESS BELOW

RSEA 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Retired From (Agency): _____ Year: _____ Veteran (Yes/No): _____

Address: _____

Email*: _____ Telephone: _____

** Your email address will be shared with conference vendors **

The Conference Schedule and description of sessions will be in the next Newsletter

NO REGISTRATION FEES

Mail Your Completed Registration Form to:
RSEA Foundation, 9412 Common Street, Suite 7, Baton Rouge, LA 70809
Questions? Call (225) 930-0961 or email janthony.rsea@gmail.com; <https://rseala.org>



OGB UPDATE

OGB ANNUAL ENROLLMENT: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Annual Enrollment for the 2021 plan year is upon us. The Office of Group Benefits (OGB) would like to update you on a few changes you will need to know going into annual enrollment this year.

The ever changing costs of healthcare requires OGB to occasionally make changes to our health plans in order to continue to provide our members with the coverage they are accustomed to. Therefore, effective January 1, 2021, premium rates for the Pelican and Magnolia plans will increase by 5.5 percent. Vantage Health Plan also will raise their rates by 6 percent. A copy of the premium rates for plan year 2021 can be found on our website, info.groupbenefits.org/premium-rates/.

Due to health concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, annual enrollment will be a little different this year. The informational meetings will be limited in size and attendees, as well as OGB staff and vendors, will be required to wear a mask. Please call OGB customer service at 1-800-272-8451 to have your name added to the list for the meeting you wish to attend. Our hope is to provide our members with the information they

need in the safest way possible. Please take note of the new locations for the Lafayette and Monroe meetings. Additionally, due to the devastating damage inflicted on the Lake Charles area by Hurricane Laura, we will not be able to host annual enrollment meetings in Lake Charles this year.

Retirees who are unable to attend a meeting or do not have internet access may schedule an appointment with an OGB customer service representative to ask questions and go over the 2021 benefit options. Appointments are available on a first come, first serve basis between 7:00am - 9:00am and 4:30pm - 7:00pm, Monday through Friday. To schedule an appointment, please call OGB customer service at 1-800-272-8451. On the date and time of your scheduled appointment, an OGB customer service representative will call you at the number you provided. Walk-in visits at the OGB offices are by appointment only.

A recorded version of the presentations can be found on the OGB annual enrollment website, annualenrollment.groupbenefits.org/meetings.

BENEFITS STILL FIT?

TIME TO EXPAND YOUR COVERAGE.

As your life changes, consider some of these benefits and discounts from **RSEA & AMBA**:

- Dental & Vision Insurance
- Long-Term Care
- Home Health Care
- MASA (Air and Ground Ambulance Plan)
- Cancer, Heart & Stroke Policy
- Accident Policy
- Medicare Supplement Policy
- Easy Issue Life Policy
- Tax Deferred Annuity
- Hearing Benefits
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

Learn more: **1-877-556-4582**

myambabenefits.info/rsea

RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF LOUISIANA



OGB UPDATE

OGB Annual Enrollment Meetings for Non-Medicare Retirees

DATE	LOCATION	START TIMES
September 29-30	DoubleTree by Hilton Lafayette **NEW LOCATION** 1521 West Pinhook Road. Lafayette, Louisiana 70503	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 5-6	Bossier City Civic Center, 620 Benton Road, Bossier City, LA 71111	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 13-14	Country Inn Conference Center, 2727 Monroe Hwy., Pineville, LA 71360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 16	Southeastern Louisiana University (Student Union Annex Theater) 303 Texas Ave., Hammond, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 20-21	State Police Headquarters Auditorium 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 23	Southeastern Louisiana University (Student Union Annex Theater) 303 Texas Ave., Hammond, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 27-28	Monroe Civic Center ** NEW LOCATION** , 401 Lea Joyner Expressway, Monroe, LA	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 27-28	Houma – Terrebonne Civic Center, 346 Civic Center Blvd., Houma, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm

OGB Annual Enrollment Meetings for Medicare Retirees

DATE	LOCATION	START TIMES
October 1-2	DoubleTree by Hilton Lafayette **NEW LOCATION** 1521 West Pinhook Road. Lafayette, Louisiana 70503	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 7-8	Bossier City Civic Center, 620 Benton Road, Bossier City, LA 71111	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 15-16	Country Inn Conference Center, 2727 Monroe Hwy., Pineville, LA 71360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 22-23	State Police Headquarters Auditorium 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 29-30	Monroe Civic Center ** NEW LOCATION** , 401 Lea Joyner Expressway, Monroe, LA	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
October 29-30	Houma – Terrebonne Civic Center, 346 Civic Center Blvd., Houma, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
November 5-6	University of New Orleans (University Center Ballroom) 2000 Lakeshore Drive, New Orleans, LA 70148	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
November 6	Southeastern Louisiana University (Student Union Annex Theater) 303 Texas Ave., Hammond, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm
November 13	Southeastern Louisiana University (Student Union Annex Theater) 303 Texas Ave., Hammond, LA 70360	9:00 am or 2:00 pm





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RSEA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Thanks to the following who donated to the RSEA Foundation Scholarship Fund:

Martin Audiffred, David Thomas, Mary Jetson, J. N. Domos, David Ledet, Gwen Thompson and Association Member Benefits Advisors.



RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

"WORKING TODAY FOR YOUR TOMORROW"



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