

# 2021 RSEA Conference

Save the Date

Be Healthy

Stay Sharp



Get Happy

INFORMATIVE SESSIONS

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS



AMBA REPRESENTATIVE

AARP DRIVING PROGRAM

WHEN

October 12-13, 2021

WHERE

Paragon Casino and Resort  
Marksville, Louisiana

BREAKFAST & LUNCH / DOOR PRIZES / BINGO

For more information visit our website: <https://rseala.org> or call (225) 930-0961

## RSEA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to summer! Or at least the unofficial start of summer after the Memorial Day weekend. It is certainly a hopeful time with the huge reduction in Covid cases and with the rolling out of vaccines. I hope everyone is able to get out and begin to enjoy some of the things we have

been unable to over the past year or so. Judy and I were able to travel to St. Louis to visit my oldest daughter and babysit our 22 month old grandson while my daughter and son-in-law took an anniversary trip. We thoroughly enjoyed the renewed contact and re-bonding with such a precious little guy. Upon our return home we were exhausted from the constant motion of a soon-to-be 2 year old.

Great news! I mentioned in the last newsletter about the RSEA Scholarship and that applications were being received and reviewed. Well, we are proud to announce that Danielle Schexnayder of Port Barre has received the first ever RSEA Scholarship. She is a nursing student at Northwestern State University and her grandfather, Charles Daniels, is an RSEA member since 2011. Congratulations Danielle!

With the easing of Covid restrictions the RSEA Board was able to meet face-to-face for the first time in over a year for the May 4 and 5 meeting dates. Committee meetings were held on the first day with the entire Board meeting on the 5th. It was great to be able to have everyone in the same room for discussions and planning. There was much discussion about the upcoming RSEA Conference and a decision has been made to proceed with the in-person conference in Marksville at the Paragon Casino. We have met there before and it's a central location with all the amenities necessary for a fun and successful conference. The dates are October 12 and 13. More information is included in this newsletter. I hope to see you there!

The 2021 Chapter Meetings were held Virtually via the RSEA website with recorded messages from our RSEA staff, Chapter Presidents and partners with LASERS, Group Benefits and others. We are still accumulating data from the website about visits but what we have seen so far is encouraging that so many were able to check it out via the web. It looks like there were slightly over 500 visits to the Virtual Chapter website as of early May. Thanks for viewing!

As this Legislative session comes towards its end, please be reminded that RSEA fights tirelessly to maintain your benefits of retirement and group insurance and opposes any and all attempts to decrease or damage your benefits. Frank Jobert represents us at the

legislature and will report in this newsletter about his actions during the session. This protection provided by RSEA alone is sufficient justification to retain your membership - \$18 per year is a small price to pay for this protection. Please ask your retired friends and co-workers to join if they are not members and again thank you for your membership.

Enjoy your summer and please consider joining us for the Conference in October. That's all for now. Stay safe...and healthy. And of course, a dad joke: Initially I didn't believe my Chiropractor was any good....but now I stand corrected.

David Thomas  
President

## CONFERENCE CHAIR'S MESSAGE



It is with much excitement that I invite each of you and your guest(s) to the RSEA 2021 Annual Conference to be held on October 12 - 13, 2021, at the Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, La.

See the "Save the Date" flyer in this newsletter and be sure to mark your calendar.

The conference committee continues to make plans for the conference; our theme for 2021 will be "Stay Sharp, Be Healthy, Get Happy" and our goal is to "Let the Sun Shine on us!" After the trials and tribulations brought on us by the Pandemic, hurricanes and relentless rains causing flooding across our state, we feel that a fun, happy, interesting, friends' get-together is exactly what RSEA members need and can look forward to this year.

I promise you that we are looking at some exciting speakers with good information and a lot of fun and laughter! Stay tuned for specifics soon and know that we, along with the Paragon, are planning for ways to keep all members and guests safe and follow the guidelines set forth by Governor Edwards.

This newsletter also includes the Conference Registration Form and you can remove it, complete it and send in your form and payment as soon as possible to:

RSEA Foundation  
9412 Common St., Suite 7  
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

"You Are My Sunshine" and I look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Gwen Thompson  
RSEA 2021 Conference Chairperson



RSEA Administrative Director Jimmy Anthony hands Danielle Schexnayder a \$1,000 check.



Danielle Schexnayder with her grandfather and RSEA member, Charles Daniels.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

RSEA's Virtual Chapter meetings were a success! Over 500 members visited the site the first two weeks. I hope that those that visited were able to gather information that was useful to them.



The RSEA Board of Directors voted to hold an in-person annual conference at their May Board meeting. The conference will be at the Paragon Casino again and the

dates are October 12-13. A SAVE THE DATE page is included in this newsletter to help you remember. Also, a registration page is attached. I can't wait to see you and hope that you all can attend.

The RSEA Foundation proudly announces our first ever scholarship winner, Danielle Schexnayder from Port Barre, LA. Danielle is a senior at Northwestern State University and plans to graduate in August, 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. After graduation she plans to work in the critical care or emergency care setting for two years. This will give her the experience she needs to go back to graduate school to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA). Danielle was sponsored by her grandfather, Charles Daniels, who has been an RSEA member since 2011.

This Scholarship was made possible by the many RSEA members who generously donated money to the

Scholarship Fund. The \$1000 was funded from accrued interest and no principal was used.

Our thanks to our other applicants who made our decision hard. Unfortunately, we were only able to award one scholarship this year. Maybe, in future years we can build the fund up to where we can award more than one. Please pass on information about our scholarship to anyone who might meet the criteria for next year. You can find information on our Scholarship on our website, <https://www.rseala.org> or you can call us at the office at 225/930-0961 or you can email us at [janthony.rsea@gmail.com](mailto:janthony.rsea@gmail.com).

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

Jimmy Anthony  
Administrative Director

Donor	Amt.	In Memory of
Clinton Cognevich	\$12	Shannon Braley
Fannie J. Aubespain	\$10	Lillian J. Gordon
Sonja Hagen	\$50	Dale Hagen
Gwendolyn Thompson	\$51.81	Allen Reynolds
Carolyn Taylor	\$7	Philip Kitchin
David Thomas	\$75	Allen Reynolds
Linda Bennett	\$43	Joshua Bennett
David Thomas	\$75	Butch Gautreaux

## RSEA LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The 2021 Regular Louisiana Legislative Session is concluded! This year's Regular Session ended (sine die) at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 10th. It is anticipated that a Special Legislative Session on

Congressional redistricting will be held before the end of the year or early next year.

The session was relatively uneventful for RSEA, with the exception of proposed Senate Bill 22 by Senator Barrow Peacock of Shreveport-Bossier. This measure proposed to raise the age for eligibility of regular retirement to the greater of 5 years of service at the age of 67 or the age of retirement set by the Social Security Administration; or 40 years of service at age 62. Fortunately, this bill did not pass, but it can be brought back again next year for reconsideration. RSEA opposed this measure!

Also, for the first time since 2016, a COLA bill (SB 24 by Senator Ed Price) was proposed and passed to become Act 37. It provides for a "minimum benefit increase" for certain retirees, beneficiaries and survivors of LASERS (State Employees),





TRSL (Teachers) and LSERS (School Employees) and a one-time 13th check for certain retirees of Louisiana State Police Retirement System (LSPRS). The bill only impacted about 1200 combined retirees in the above State Pension Systems, whose retirement benefits were below the federal poverty level. That is, they received less than \$1,450 per month in benefits, and had at least 30 years of service, and had been retired for at least 15 years, and did not participate in DROP/IBO.

With the conclusion of the 2021 Regular Session, you will find the 2021 "RSEA Legislative Report" (elsewhere in this newsletter), which details the bills RSEA was tracking during the session, along with RSEA's recommended positions and the bills' final outcomes.

Of special note is HCR-7 by Representative Michael "Mike" Johnson of Pineville, LA. This measure impacts all state and statewide retirement systems and memorializes (urges and requests) the United States Congress to take actions necessary to review and eliminate or reduce the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) better known as the Social Security Offsets. The House Concurrent Resolution passed both chambers of the legislature with unanimous votes!

It is now up to the U.S. Congress to undertake legislation at the Federal level to repeal one or both of these dreadful federal offsets. This leads us to a discussion of legislation currently pending in the U.S. Congress (in Washington, D.C.) pertaining to the GPO and/or WEP.

I will first start with H.R. 82 by Congressman Rodney Davis (R-IL). This bill was first introduced on January 4, 2021 as The Social Security Fairness Act of 2021. It successfully passed and signed by the President, it would eliminate the GPO and WEP effective for Social Security benefits payable after December, 2021. It currently has 156 Cosponsors, 116 Democrats and 40 Republicans, including the entire Louisiana congressional delegation: Graves, Higgins, Johnson, Letlow, and Scalise; with the exception of recently-elected Troy Carter.

Another measure, S.1302 (Social Security Fairness Act) by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) was recently introduced on April 22, 2021 and has 30 Cosponsors (24 Democrats, 4 Republicans and 2 Independents). Both of Louisiana's Senators, Cassidy and Kennedy are currently signed on as Cosponsors. This measure, like HR-82 above, would repeal the WEP and GPO for months beginning after December, 2021.

Finally, the only other pending Federal legislation I am aware of regarding the Social Security Offset(s) is H.R. 2337 by Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA), Chairman of The House Committee on Ways and Means. The bill was introduced on April 1, 2021 as the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2021 and it has 160 Cosponsors, all Democrats. No Louisiana Congressional Representatives have signed on as

Cosponsors to this measure as of this writing!

H.R. 2337 by Rep. Richard Neal-MA – this legislation was recently introduced and calls for a partial repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) only. Current beneficiaries (and those turning 62 before 2023) who are affected by the WEP due to their own public service work would receive an extra \$150 a month, starting nine months after enactment and continuing for as long as the eligible individuals are receiving Social Security benefits. The relief amount cannot exceed the size of each person's current WEP reduction. Future retirees (those turning 62 in 2023 and later) would be eligible for a new benefit formula, called the Public Servant Protection (PSP) formula. Several members of the WEP National Coalition have expressed this legislation has a higher chance of moving through Congress. Currently, none of Louisiana's U.S. Representatives have cosponsored H.R. 2337.

RSEA is supporting all three of the above "Social Security" measures. While H.R. 82 and S.1302, which repeal both the WEP and GPO, are our preferred bills, the likelihood of passage is not as likely as H.R. 2337. Therefore, we are also supporting H.R. 2337, as we feel the chances of passage are more likely due to the reduced cost to the Social Security Trust Fund than the other two measures. In addition, we feel that this bill (H.R. 2337), if approved, will at least show some progress toward reducing these inequities, and will set the stage for future reductions of the WEP penalties, as well as those penalties associated with the GPO.

Of particular note concerning H.R. 2337, "Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2021" by Chairman Richard Neal (D- MA), mentioned above, please contact your Louisiana/U.S. Congressional Representative and ask them to co-sponsor this legislation, as no Louisiana Representatives have signed on to this measure as of yet. Also, contact your friends and relatives in other states, and ask them to contact their U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives in their states, and request they too co-sponsor the above proposed federal legislation.

Frank Jobert, Jr.

RSEA Legislative & Governmental Affairs Director

## 2021 Legislation Impacting RSEA with Recommended Positions:

### HB 19 – Mack

#### Systems Impacted: LASERS

Provides relative to the selection of certain optional survivor benefits for a member of the Louisiana State Employees Retirement System (LASERS), who has a mentally disabled child. Provides procedures for and limitations on such an election.

*RSEA: Neutral / Outcome: Passed*

### HB 89– Bagley

#### Systems Impacted: Individual Income Tax Deductions

Establishes an individual state income tax deduction and adds to the list of income not included in “tax table Income” the costs of premiums an owner or operator of a personal automobile pays to secure a motor vehicle liability insurance policy up to a \$1500 maximum premium effective January 1, 2022.

*RSEA: No Position / Outcome: Failed*

### SB 3– Milligan

#### Systems Impacted: Office of Group Benefits

Requires certain employing agencies to provide health insurance coverage from date of hire under certain circumstances, if the employee is assigned duties in declared disaster area performing risky activities integral to the duties of the employee & that involve risks to health or well-being of the individual.

*RSEA: No Position / Outcome: Failed*

### SB 11-Talbot

#### Systems Impacted: Individual Income Tax Exemptions

Provides for individual and corporate income tax exemption for state and federal COVID-19 relief benefits. Proposed law excludes unemployment compensation benefits to a taxpayer from the individual income tax exemption above \$10,200 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for the tax year 2020.

*RSEA: No Position / Outcome: Passed (Act 54)*

### SB 22-Peacock

#### Systems Impacted: LASERS, TRSL and LSERS

Changes retirement eligibility for new hires on or after July

1, 2021 (excluding Hazardous Duty Plan) to: 5 years of service at the greater of age 67 or the age of retirement set by the Social Security Administration; 40 years of service at age 62; or 20 years of service at any age (with actuarial reduction). And also changes disability retirement reporting requirements. For more info see accompanying newsletter article.

*RSEA: Oppose / Outcome: Failed*

### SB 190–Gary Smith

#### Systems Impacted: LASERS, TRSL and LSERS

Transfers the operation and maintenance of the weights and standards police officers from the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C) to the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD).

*RSEA: Neutral / Outcome: Passed*

### HB 516–Zeringue

#### Systems Impacted: LASERS and Teachers (TRSL)

Supplemental Appropriations from the FY 2019-2020 surplus certified by the JLCB at the 1/22/2021 meeting for payment to the balance of the UAL existing on June 30, 1988 in proportion to the balance of the UAL 6/30/20.

*RSEA: Support / Outcome: Passed*

### SB 24–Price

#### Systems Impacted: All four (4) State Retirement Systems

Provides a minimum retirement benefit increase for certain retirees, beneficiaries & survivors of LASERS, Teachers Retirement System (TRSL), School Employees Retirement System (LSERS) & State Police Retirement System. For more information see accompanying newsletter article.

*RSEA: Support / Outcome: Passed*

### HCR 7- Mike Johnson

#### Systems Impacted: All State and Statewide Retirement Systems

Memorializes Congress to take actions necessary to review and eliminate or reduce the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

*RSEA: Support / Outcome: Passed*

## LASERS UPDATE

### Did You Miss the RSEA Virtual Tour? Watch LASERS Presentation Online

The RSEA Tour was virtual this year due to COVID-19, but

you can watch the LASERS presentation anytime online. LASERS Executive Director Cindy Rougeou was joined by Trustees and staff to share the latest important information with active and retired members. The presentation can be found



# 2021 RSEA CONFERENCE

## OCTOBER 12th–13th



711 Paragon Place, Marksville, LA 71351  
www.paragoncasinoresort.com

### Sessions Include:

- Entertaining Keynote Speaker
- Interesting Topics
- Informative Exhibits
- LASERS/OGB Benefits Update

### Activities Include:

- Celebration/Bingo – **WEAR YOUR BRIGHT & HAPPY COLORS!!**
- AARP Driving Program \*\*
- Breakfast and Lunch
- Door Prizes

### Lodging Rates (plus taxes/\$1 Resort fee):

- \$99.00 Standard (North & South Towers)
- \$129.00 Deluxe Atrium

### For Reservations Call:

- (800) 642-7777 — Ask for the 2021 RSEA Conference Group Rate—**RETO12G**
- To receive this special rate, you must reserve your room **by: September 28, 2021**

### Registration Fees:

- RSEA Member—\$40
- Non-Member and Guests—\$50

### RSEA 2021 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest 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.\*\* AARP Driving Class Fee is Collected at the Door the Day of the Class. Cost: \$20 Members/\$25 Non-Members.*

### REGISTRATION FEES

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$40 Member / \$50 Non-Member Registration Fee

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Guest Registration Fee

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL ENCLOSED



Mail Your Completed Registration Form and Check to:

**The RSEA Foundation**, 9412 Common Street, Suite 7, Baton Rouge, LA  
70809 Questions? Call (225) 930-0961 or email janthony.rsea@gmail.com



# LASERS UPDATE CONTINUED

on the LASERS website, <https://lasersonline.org/lasers-update/>. In addition, you may access helpful resources that are referenced in the video.

## NOMINATIONS CLOSE JULY 13 IN LASERS BOARD ELECTION

Nominations will be accepted by LASERS in the 2021 Board of Trustees Election until July 13, 2021, 4:30 p.m. Central Time. Every two years, LASERS members cast their ballots for candidates for the thirteen-member Board of Trustees. In this election, three seats will be filled by active members and one by a retired member. Voting will occur in September and October and results certified and published by the Board in November.

## LASERS COVID-19 BUILDING POLICY

The LASERS office is open to the public with current occupancy limits in effect. Face masks are encouraged for unvaccinated individuals entering the Retirement Systems Building.

Phone, video, and in-person appointments are offered. You may schedule an appointment by calling 800.256.3000 or 225.922.0600. Lobby seating is minimal and spaced on social distancing protocol. Members arriving for individual counseling and walk-in appointments may be

asked to wait in their cars until called.

Documents may be dropped off and picked up at the front desk lobby Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Documents may also be faxed to 225.935.2856 or mailed to: P.O. Box 44213, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213.

## IMPORTANT BENEFIT PAYMENT INFORMATION

The following benefit payment date falls on a weekend which could affect receipt of your funds:

- **August 1 – Sunday**

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

## HAVE YOU CREATED A myLASERS ACCOUNT?

If you have not yet created your **myLASERS** account, please do so **NOW**. Our new online account management tool includes new features and improved security through the use of multi-factor authentication. This modern

## 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](http://myambabenefits.info/rsea)**

RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF LOUISIANA





Working Today for **Your** Tomorrow

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Baton Rouge, LA 70809

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## LASERS UPDATE CONTINUED

security feature protects your myLASERS account and helps prevent online hacking. Please visit our website, <https://lasersonline.org/mylasers-info/>, for video instructions on myLASERS, FAQs, system requirements, and much more.

### IS YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION UP TO DATE WITH LASERS?

LASERS is very serious about the security of your information. Due to the rise in data breaches, it is imperative that your address, phone number(s), and email address are kept up to date to ensure receipt of communications from LASERS.

If you are not sure what LASERS has on file, you may check your contact information in myLASERS to see if updates are needed. If you are an active member, make sure your Human Resources office is aware of any contact information changes. If you are a retiree, you may complete a Contact Information Update form and submit it to LASERS.

### LASERS 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONTINUES

On July 15, 2021 LASERS will officially celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Check out the history section of the LASERS website, <https://lasersonline.org/about/history/>, for background

information about the retirement system. Interesting profiles in the Who's Who section include past Board Trustees, executive directors, staff members, and legislators who played vital roles in creating and building LASERS.

During this legislative session, the Senate and House issued resolutions recognizing LASERS achievements over the past 75 years. In addition, Governor John Bel Edwards signed a commendation honoring LASERS in celebration of 75 years of service to the State of Louisiana.

### HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE. BE PREPARED!

Are you enrolled in direct deposit? If so, that's great news! Your LASERS benefit payment goes straight into your financial institution with direct deposit. No worries about delayed paper checks because of post office and road closures, or other emergency shutdowns.

If you are not yet enrolled, sign up today! The Direct Deposit Authorization form is available for download on the LASERS website at [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), or LASERS can mail one to you.



Working Today for **Your** Tomorrow

The New  
**Louisiana Voice**

#### — EDITORIAL OFFICE —

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