



# Newsletter – Extra!

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September 15, 2011

## **GSRA Invites YOU to Our Fifth Annual Meeting!**

*GSRA and YOU: Facing the Challenges*

**Georgia Public Safety Training Center Auditorium (GPSTC)  
Forsyth, GA**

**October 18, 2011  
1:00 – 5:00 PM**

**Featuring Key State Lawmakers,  
Commissioner David Cook, Dept. of Community Health  
Acting Executive Dir. Jim Potvin, Employees Retirement System**

**Registration/Meet & Greet open at 12:00 PM**

**Please RSVP to [rsvp@mygsra.com](mailto:rsvp@mygsra.com) (not required to attend)  
(Include number attending in subject line)**

## **State Leaders Featured at GSRA Fifth Annual Meeting**

GSRA proudly announces the fifth Annual Meeting of the association. Since its inception in 2007, the Annual Meeting has served as an important cornerstone of communication for the organization, allowing members to re-connect with one another, while giving them the opportunity to hear from key state and other leaders regarding areas critical to state retirees, active employees and the dependents of both.

This year's Annual Meeting is no exception. GSRA is bringing together key state leaders in the areas of state pensions, tax reform/spending limits and

health insurance to participate in discussions and present information designed to bring GSRA members up to date on the important issues currently surrounding these areas, and likely impacts looming in the future.

**House Retirement Committee Chair, Rep. Howard Maxwell, Senate Retirement Committee Vice-Chair, Sen. Fran Millar and ERS Acting Executive Director, Jim Potvin** are the featured speakers to discuss the status of Georgia's pension systems. Bill Tomlinson, GSRA Legislative Chair

and former Director of the Office of Planning & Budget will moderate the session.

**Rep. Stacey Abrams and Sen. Bill Cowsert** will anchor the discussion regarding proposed state tax reforms and constitutional spending limits and their important impacts to members. Chuck Freedman, GSRA Vice-President and former Office of Planning & Budget Division Director, will moderate the session.

Recently appointed **Department of Community Health Commissioner David Cook** will present

comments on the status and condition of the State Health Benefit Plan and the foreseeable impacts on the plans and members in funding and benefits.

Make your plans to attend the October 18, 2011 meeting to send an important message to these key leaders about your vigilance and concern regarding these areas crucial for the continued well-being and prosperity of state retirees, active employees and their dependents.

## Message from GSRA President BJ Bennett

Thank you for honoring me as your President for the past two years. GSRA activities have been very challenging but rewarding.

As we come to the end of another GSRA year, it is my pleasure to invite and encourage you to attend the **FIFTH ANNUAL GSRA MEMBERSHIP MEETING** on OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>. The program is filled with excellent presenters from the Georgia House of Representatives, the Georgia Senate and State departments. These leaders are taking time to talk to you about your concerns.

Some of you may feel that your concerns fall on “deaf” ears, but I assure you that the whole of you are having a greater impact than you had before becoming a GSRA member. You may have thought that once you retired you would have a relatively “financially secure life” because you had an excellent retirement benefit and excellent medical insurance. However, we have seen deterioration in what we thought would be available to us after retirement.

What this means to us as retirees is that we need to stay vigilant and informed about our benefits and other legislative issues that affect our well-being. And most important, we need to communicate with our elected leaders about those issues. As an example of the failure of constituents to inform elected leaders, one of our legislative representatives stated at a recent meeting that 95% of the information received by the representative comes from lobbyists—leaving only 5% of the information received from his/her

constituents. Not only do we need to inform our representatives about our individual concerns but we, as citizens, need to participate in discussions about broad issues, such as transportation, taxes, or the State workforce. We as a body have more knowledge about the requirements and needs of Georgia citizens than most citizens. After all, we worked for these citizens for many years. Our collective knowledge about any state government issue is broad, and our elected leaders need to hear that wisdom and advice.

How important is the 2011 GSRA Annual Meeting—VERY IMPORTANT! GSRA encourages you to attend on October 18<sup>th</sup>. You will hear information that is not readily available through the news media or other meetings.

In planning this meeting, we asked you about the topics that you wanted to hear. You said that you were unfamiliar with some of the tax proposals and the impact that these may have on you; you said that you wanted to know more about the Employees Retirement System Cost-of-Living adjustments and funding issues; and you said that you wanted to know more about the State Health Benefit Plan policies.

Therefore, the GSRA Board has tailored the program JUST FOR YOU.

- You will have an opportunity to hear from the House and Senate Retirement Committee Chair and Vice-Chair—Representative Maxwell and Senator Millar and Acting

Executive Director Potvin about retirement issues.

- Two members of the Joint Legislative Tax Committee, Representative Abrams and Senator Cowser, will talk to us about Georgia’s tax environment. Based on the news articles earlier in the year, there are many conflicting objectives and impacts on citizens, corporations, and the ability to meet Georgia’s stated goals. You don’t want to miss this discussion.
- To round out the program, DCH Commissioner Cook will talk about the State Health Benefit Plan and some of the policies that affect all members and specifically retirees.

- GSRA is inviting representatives from UnitedHealthcare, CIGNA, & Humana to participate in the pre-meeting festivities.
- AMBA will also be available to discuss dental, long term care, vision care, and other benefits that are available to you through GSRA.

There is no time like the present for you to begin or continue to voice your concerns about the issues affecting you. We all know that the “squeaky” wheel is the one that is greased. Let’s make this **FIFTH GSRA Annual Meeting** productive. Come; join your friends and former co-workers.

We know that you will leave the meeting with more information than when you came. Be a supporter! Get Involved! And enjoy seeing many of your previous co-workers.

## GSRA and You: Facing the Challenges Agenda

<b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>Registration Opens</b>	
<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	<b>BJ Bennett, GSRA President</b>
<b>1:05 PM</b>	<b>Pension Issues Discussion</b>	<b>Rep. Howard Maxwell Sen. Fran Millar Acting Ex. Director Jim Potvin, ERS Bill Tomlinson, Moderator</b>
<b>1:50 PM</b>	<b>Tax Reform &amp; Constitutional Spending Limits Discussion</b>	<b>Rep. Stacey Abrams Sen. Bill Cowser Chuck Freedman, Moderator</b>
<b>2:35 PM</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>3:00 PM</b>	<b>State Health Benefit Plan</b>	<b>Commissioner David Cook Department of Community Health GSRA Strategic Planning Committee</b>
<b>3:45 PM</b>	<b>GSRA Strategy For the Future</b>	
<b>4:15 PM</b>	<b>GSRA Plenary Session</b>	<b>GSRA Leadership</b>
<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>	

### Annual Meeting Important Information

<b>Address:</b>	GPSTC, 1000 Indian Springs Dr., Forsyth, GA 31029
<b>Directions:</b>	See below
<b>Registration:</b>	<b>FREE!</b> At the door
<b>Refreshments:</b>	Bottled water provided during the <i>Meet &amp; Greet</i> and break sessions
<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>On you.</b> GPSTC Cafeteria is right next door to the auditorium and opens at 11:00 AM. See below for other lunch location suggestions.
<b>GSRA Phone #</b>	<b>770-312-2799</b> Will be manned before, during and after the meeting should you need help or information.

### Directions to Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC)

The city of Forsyth, GA is located off I-75 just north of Macon. Take Interstate 75 to Exit #188. Ga. Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) - directional signs are posted prior to the exit.

**If northbound on I-75**, take exit #188; turn right, go under the I-75 overpass to the stop sign and turn right; Go 0.5 mile and turn left across the railroad tracks onto the Training Center access road (Indian Springs Drive). Turn right and proceed to the GPSTC entrance. Bear left and turn left inside the Center Guard tower –south side of the building. **Park in the South lot (left of the Center).** The entrance to the auditorium is on the left side of the building.

**If southbound on I-75**, take exit #188; turn right at the stop sign. Go .5 mile and turn left across the railroad tracks onto the Training Center access road (Indian Springs Drive). Turn right and proceed to the GPSTC entrance. Bear left and turn left inside the Center Guard tower –south side of the building. **Park in the South lot (left of the Center).** The entrance to the auditorium is on the left side of the building.

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### Area Restaurants

<b>Fine Dining</b>	Grits Café	17 W. Johnston St., Forsyth
	The Club at River Forest	1 Clubhouse Dr., Forsyth
<b>Southern Cookin'</b>	Ebbyz Bar & Grill	1182 Hwy. 83, Forsyth
	Forsyth County Cookin'	15 E. Johnston St., Forsyth
	Prime Palate	22 W Main Street, Forsyth
	Little Piggy Bar-B-Q	866 Indian Springs Dr, Forsyth
	Warthen Hall 1921 Diner & Gifts	211 Tift College Drive, Forsyth

<b>Bistros</b>	Johnah's	E. Johnston St, Forsyth
<b>Chinese</b>	Hong Kong Palace	465 Tift College Dr., Forsyth
<b>Deli</b>	Ann's Deli	33 W. Johnson St., Forsyth
<b>Cajun</b>	Maw-Maw Jo's	4992 High Falls Road, Jackson
<b>Diner</b>	Waffle House	Lee Street, Forsyth
<b>Fast Food</b>	<i>All Kinds</i>	N. Lee Street & Patrol Rd, Forsyth
<b>Japanese</b>	Lucky Café	306 Harold G Clarke Pkwy., Forsyth
<b>Mexican</b>	El Tejado	310 Cabaniss Rd., Forsyth
<b>Pizza</b>		E. Johnston St. & N. Lee Street, Forsyth

### **Important!**

- **If you receive your GSRA Newsletters via U.S. Mail and you have an email address, please send your email address to [help@mygsra.com](mailto:help@mygsra.com) so we can add you to email distribution.**
- **If you are not receiving GSRA Newsletters via U.S. Mail or via email, please send your email address to [help@mygsra.com](mailto:help@mygsra.com) so we can correct GSRA records and you will receive information from GSRA.**

**GSRA thanks you!**

### **Your Annual Meeting RSVP is IMPORTANT!**

GSRA asks you to RSVP to let us know if you and guest(s) will attend.

**This is not a requirement to attend the meeting**—it is to let us know the number of persons so that proper arrangements can be implemented.

**RSVP here: [rsvp@mygsra.com](mailto:rsvp@mygsra.com)  
(include number attending in subject line)**

**We're looking forward to seeing you there!**