

**GSRA 2017 Annual Meeting
October 16-17
Columbus Convention and Trade Center
Columbus, Georgia**

ERS Board Approves 2017 One-time Adjustment

Following an appeal to GSRA membership to email the ERS Board in advance of their April Annual Meeting, GSRA President Kip Mann, along with members of the GSRA board and a strong turnout of GSRA members, attended the ERS Annual Meeting on April 20, 2017 to hear the annual report and the ERS Board's decision regarding a COLA or other benefit adjustment for 2017. President Mann's summary of the meeting and results is provided below:

“The ERS pension fund is currently at 75% of funded liability and we are in the 18th year of paying down our twenty-five year unfunded liability.

The ERS Board approved another one-time adjustment of 3% of the first \$30,000.00 of retirement benefits up to a maximum of \$900.00 just as last year, with the same limitations and restrictions.

We had a very good showing of GSRA members (we lined both sides of the board room) with a wide range of experience in different departments of state government. We were well received but were told up front that we were going to receive what was in the Governor's budget.

The ERS Board thanked us for the [letter](#) that was sent to Jim Potvin and the Board. Chair Lonice Barrett said he has shared it with both the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the Governor. He greatly appreciated our comments about their stewardship and said that he looks forward to seeing what can be done in the future when the time is right, after the legislative time limits for signing bills into law has passed and the next budget cycle begins.”

The GSRA Board and leadership would like to sincerely thank all the GSRA members who emailed the ERS Board and made them aware of the impact that not having a COLA for many years has had on them and their families. The board also wants to sincerely thank all the GSRA members who made time to attend the ERS Annual Meeting. Your efforts do make a difference!

[ERS Annual Meeting Board documents](#)



Kip's View: Narrowing the Gap

As you may have already seen, ERS retirees' will receive another one-time adjustment based on 3% of the first \$30,000.00 of a retiree's annual benefit for a maximum adjustment of \$900.00. This amount will be deposited directly into your bank account if you use direct deposit or will be mailed by separate check to your home address. The check or deposit should go out on or about July 28, 2017.

While this amount does not reflect a 3% COLA, and will not be added to our base benefit, it will help defray increased costs of living expenses that we all face daily. GSRA would like to thank the Governor, the legislature, and the ERS Board for all working together to make this adjustment possible.

Your GSRA Board, however, is committed to seeking a long term solution to the issue of improving the funded liability of our retirement fund which will allow for the granting of COLAs as occurred regularly prior to 2008. To that end we have already begun to get ready for a collaborative effort to work with the Employees' Retirement System, its Board, the Governor's Office of Planning and

Budget, and the House and Senate to plan for improving the future funding of the ERS retirement fund and improving our chances of receiving a COLA. By the time of our Annual Meeting this year in Columbus we should have news of how these efforts are progressing.

Even with two straight years of receiving the one-time adjustment to our retirement benefits, I know it's frustrating to see year after year pass with little or no increase in benefits to cover increased costs associated with daily living. It's frustrating to see other state retirees who were in the same position and who retired at the same salary and same retirement benefit receive 3% COLAs each year, year in year out and you receive little or nothing in return.

Here is a clear example of what this means to two retirees from different retirement systems:

“Jan Smith retired in 2010 as an Administrative Assistant under ERS with a retirement benefit of \$20,000 a year. Jan Jones also retired in 2010 as an Administrative Assistant under TRS with a retirement benefit of \$20,000. Below is a representation of what has happened to their benefit each year since their retirement:

Comparison of ERS and TRS Benefit Growth 2010-2017						
	ERS Retiree Jan Smith			TRS Retiree Jan Jones		
Year	Benefit	% Cola	Total	Benefit	% Cola	Total
2010	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$20,000	3%	\$20,600
2011	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$20,600	3%	\$21,218
2012	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$21,218	3%	\$21,855
2013	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$21,855	3%	\$22,511
2014	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$22,511	3%	\$23,186
2015	\$20,000	0	\$20,000	\$23,186	3%	\$23,882
2016	\$20,000	\$600	\$20,600	\$23,882	3%	\$24,598
2017	\$20,000	\$600	\$20,600	\$24,598	3%	\$25,336
	Total		\$161,200			\$183,186

In 8 years the salary of the TRS retiree has increased to more than 25% of the original benefit. In those same 8 years the TRS retiree has earned an extra year of original benefits compared to the ERS retiree.”

The above table and vignette present a clear picture of the discrepancy that presently exists between Georgia's two largest retirement systems. This discrepancy is one of the reasons your Board is dedicated to improving the funded

liability of your retirement fund so that this gap can be narrowed, and so the ERS fund can be replenished, and COLAs can again be approved for ERS retirees. Hopefully, this collaborative effort can show results.

Enjoy your summer and we'll see you in the fall in Columbus at our Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,
Kip

GSRA Voluntary Legal Fund – Establishment by Policy

Since the 2008 recession and increasing financial pressure on public pension systems, the GSRA leadership and board have heard from members expressing concerns about our ability to react quickly with legal representation to any challenges to our ERS pension benefits or SHBP health insurance benefits. Because of this, the board put together a proposal for establishing a Voluntary Legal Fund, which GSRA President Kip Mann presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting in 2015.

Once the membership approved the concept, the GSRA Board appointed a committee to work on developing guidelines for the fund, a process for members to contribute and controls for appropriately overseeing the fund. GSRA is now in the final stages of establishing the GSRA Voluntary Legal Fund, with final drafts currently under review by our attorneys. The GSRA Board expects to receive a final draft from our attorneys to be approved by the board before the 2017 Annual Meeting so the final approved policy can be reviewed with membership attending.

Local Chapter News

Northeast Metro

The Northeast Metro local chapter held its first FFF&P (Food, Fun, Fellowship and Politics) Breakfast on April 25, 2017 at Sweet Baby Jane's in Lawrenceville, GA. Thirty GSRA members, two guests and three legislators were in attendance.

Each legislator spoke to us about various issues, but focused upon their areas of expertise. Rep Brett Harrell discussed State budgeting and tax policy, while Sen Renee Unterman concentrated on healthcare. She plans to re-introduce her "surprise billing" bill in the upcoming session and is on study committees working on the opioid epidemic and mental health issues. She and Rep Brooks Coleman also discussed the retirement system with us, with Rep Coleman indicating that retirement study committees were about to begin work for the next legislative session. One area of focus for Rep Coleman is education, and he relayed some interesting information about last session's bill to aid failing

schools. In addition, as always, he was entertaining and regaled the group with stories of his days as an educator.



Representative Brooks Coleman addresses Northeast Metro members

Overall, the session was fun, productive and informative, and chapter members appeared to enjoy the opportunity to interact with their legislators. Northeast Metro would like to thank John Latta from the Athens local chapter for providing us guidance in pulling this event together.



Representative Brett Harrell and NE Metro member Mike Murdock



Senator Renee Unterman speaks to NE Metro members

Thomasville

The Thomasville local chapter is getting ready to host its third *GSRA Regional Meeting*. The meeting will be held at the Thomas County Public Library at 201 North Madison Street on June 14th beginning at 11:00 am and lunch will be provided. All area active and retired state employees and educators are invited. RSVP to Lynell Hayes at 229-200-9535.

**The Northeast Metro chapter is planning for
*GSRA Night at the Gwinnett Braves!***

All GSRA members are invited to join in on the fun.

The date is **Saturday, June 10th.**

Ticket price for our group will be \$15 per seat and includes a Free G-Braves hat.

Make your check payable to Ernest Melton and mail it to:

406 Lake Club Circle, Lavonia, GA 30553.

The deadline for mailing in your check is May 25th.

First pitch is scheduled for 7:05.

2017 Annual Meeting – Make Your Reservations Early!

The 2017 Annual Meeting Planning Committee has been hard at work identifying hotels and negotiating the best rates for members who plan to attend the 2017 Annual Meeting and lodge in Columbus. The following information has been

carefully vetted and is provided so that members can go ahead and make their reservations early to take advantage of the 2017 Annual Meeting rates.

Hotels in Columbus for Annual Meeting

Columbus Marriott 800 Front Ave Columbus, Ga. 31901 706-324-1800	\$129 for King or Double by noon on 9/18/17	Group code GSRS See link below for reservations 800-228-9290
Doubletree by Hilton 5351 Sidney Simons Blvd Columbus, Ga. 31904 706-327-6868	\$119 by 9/18/17	See link below for reservations
Candlewood Suites 661 Whittlesey Blvd Columbus, Ga. 31909 706-940-0900	\$74 for Queen Studio or Queen Double by 9/15/17	Contact the hotel directly at 706-940-0900 Code GSRA
Wingate by Wyndham 1117 Rollins Way Columbus, Ga. 31904 706-225-1000	\$79 for single or double by 9/17/17	Contact the hotel directly at 706-225-1000 Code GSRA
Extended Stay America 1721 Rollins Way Columbus, Ga. 31904 706-563-9938	\$79.99 for a single \$84.99 for queen or double	Contact the hotel directly at 706-563-9938 Code GSRA

For Columbus Marriott reservations: Booking link:

[Columbus Marriott Link](#)

For Doubletree By Hilton reservations: Booking Link:

[Doubletree by Hilton link](#)

Notes for Hotels:

The Columbus Marriott is our host hotel. It is directly across the street from the Convention Center and the Riverwalk, and is within easy walking distance of a number of downtown restaurants and shops. It offers free parking and Wi-Fi, but not breakfast. A Houlihan's restaurant is located in the hotel and serves breakfast.

The Doubletree is located at I-185 at the Airport Thruway exit, about 6.5 mile drive to the Convention Center. It offers free parking, Wi-Fi, and breakfast. There are a number of local and national restaurants nearby.

The Candlewood Suites, the Wingate, and Extended Stay are all located at JR Allen Pkwy (Hwy 80), about a 6 mile drive to the Convention Center. All offer free parking, Wi-Fi and breakfast. There are a number of local and national restaurants nearby.

March New Members

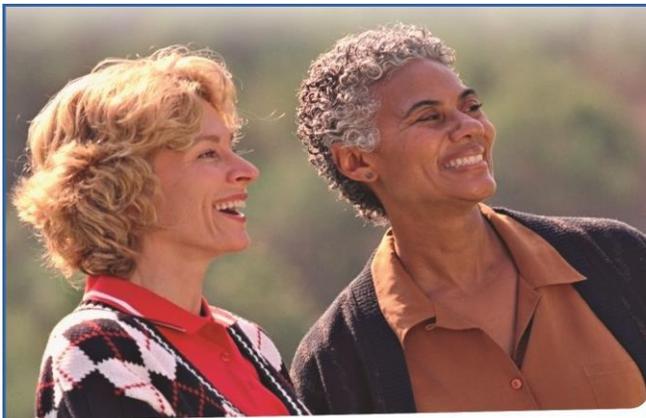
Name	County		Name	County		Name	County
Barrett Cappelto	Paulding		Gennie Jackson	Muscogee		Bill Rountree	Gwinnett
Tony Colvin	Marion		Thomas Keenan	Fulton		Mary Rowland	Meriwether
Brenda Farmer	Bryan		Richard McGee	Ware		Annelle Saunders	Chatham
Vicki Galbreath	Chatham		Renee McMunn	Walton		Frank Spencer	Thomas
Rick Hawkins	Baldwin		Annie Milner	Fulton		Carol Tufo	Gwinnett
Daphne Hollingsworth	Chatham		Margaretha Morris	Bibb		Kayrethea Wilkie	Fulton

Enroll in Pension Deduction

If you receive a retirement benefit from the Employees Retirement System, keep your GSRA membership current the convenient way. Consider having your GSRA dues deducted from your benefit. It’s easy! Go to www.mygsra.com (Select Join US, Benefits, and Pension Deduction form.) Complete the Authorization, complete your “pension ID number” and mail as instructed on the form.

How Can We Help?

If you have questions or need help with anything to do with GSRA, please contact help@mygsra.com or call 770-312-2799. Let us help you!



BlueCross BlueShield
of Georgia

**You have a new choice,
and it's an old friend**

Looking forward to working with you again!

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia, Inc. is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield name and symbol are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Yo114_17_28916_I 09/08/2016

Endorsed GSRA Benefits

The Georgia State Retirees Association (GSRA) makes many member only benefits available to its members. GSRA endorses the following member benefits:

- Long Term Care / Home Health Care Policy
- Life Insurance
- Medical Air Services Association (MASA)
- Travel Discounts
- Car Rental Discounts
- Tax-Deferred Annuity
- Cancer Treatment Policy
- Medicare Supplement Insurance
- Identity Theft Protection
- Hotel Discounts
- Computer Discounts

Review your benefits at: www.myAMBAbenefits.info/gsra

Benefits made available through

**ASSOCIATION MEMBER
BENEFITS ADVISORS**
*Providing the Best-in-Class
Benefits to Association Members*

800.258.7041

Medicare Advantage Plans from UnitedHealthcare®

SHBP RETIREES, OUR ADVANTAGE IS YOUR SATISFACTION.

UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage plans achieve over 97% satisfaction* with SHBP retirees.

UnitedHealthcare continues to be a proud sponsor of the GSRA Annual Meeting for 2016.

UnitedHealthcare®

*2015 UnitedHealthcare Customer Experience Survey scores for Group Medicare Advantage plan members. Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare.
UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 877-246-4190 (TTY: 711). 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 877-246-4190 (TTY: 711). H2001_160930_141057 SPRJ31284

YOU ARE OUR PRIORITY

**OUR MEMBERS FORM
THE FOUNDATION**

OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.

And for over 90 years, we've prided ourselves on helping members build a solid financial foundation for their own families.

We're not salespeople, we're solutions people. That's why nobody can serve our members like we can.

APCU serves all State and Federal workers, retirees and their families in Georgia.

**We have an exciting
SUMMER MORTGAGE
PROMOTION!**

Call today for
more information.

MATT BAUM
Membership Development Coordinator
800-849-8431 * 404-684-8056

Atlanta Public Credit Union
A TRADITION OF SERVICE

3908 CROWN ROAD, ATLANTA, GA 30358-8881 * WWW.APCU.COM * MBAUM@APCU.COM