



MISSION STATEMENT

OEA-Retired is dedicated to meeting the needs of its members, providing member involvement within OEA, and supporting public education.

2015-2016 Officers

John Hoyes, *Chairperson*

Carol Kinsey, *Vice Chairperson*

Peg Ham, *Secretary*

OEA-R NEWSLINE is the official publication of OEA-Retired

Claudia Miller, *Editor*

OEA-R website: <http://oea-r.ohea.us>

OEA FUND FOR CHILDREN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Campaign 2016 has begun. Let's help raise money to elect pro-senior, pro-union, pro-education candidates. It's quick and easy to donate electronically. Go to www.ohea.org. On the left, scroll down to "Quick Links" and then to "Donate to FCPE." VISA and MasterCard are accepted.

STRS

At the October meeting of the STRS Board an Actuarial Valuation as of July 1, 2015 was presented by Segal Consulting. This report is very important because it determines how close STRS is to being fully funded. The Ohio Retirement Council wants all state retirement systems to be at 30 years or less to being fully funded. The report from Segal was that the funding period for STRS was 29.5 years as of July 1, 2014 but according to the report given on October 15, 2015 the funding period has decreased to 28.4 years as of July 1, 2015. This is good news because the goal is to reduce the funding period each year.

John Morrow of the investment department reported on the activity for September 2015. The S&P 500 fell for the second straight month closing down 2.5% for the month. The index is now down 6.4% for the fiscal year. Staff closed the 590 Madison loan refinancing near the end of September. The rate on the new loan is fixed for 10 years at 3.81% interest only, down from 5.46% on the previous loan. The 2016 year to date return for the total fund is an estimated -4.4%. This is the worst first quarter report since 2012 when it was down -8.0%. However, the STRS economic forecast for fiscal 2016 expects U.S. economic growth to move above its long-term potential of 2.5% while growth in private domestic demand heads higher into the mid-3% range.

The finance department reported that the total membership payroll increased for the first time in four years in 2015, The increase of 1.8% was under the actuarial assumption of 3.5% growth. The total number of contributing members also decreased for the fourth consecutive year. The current year reduction in active membership is largely a result of pension reform.

Health Care Plan assets decreased 3.5% to 3.45 billion over the course of the fiscal year as a result of the lack of employer contributions allocated to the health care fund. Program changes, designed to build a long-term financial foundation for the health care program, continue to show results. The changes result in utilization of lower-cost plans, increases in the retiree's portion of premiums and higher generic drug usage. Benefit recipient health care premiums increased as a result of lower subsidies and an increase in retiree health care enrollment. Medicare D reimbursements increased to \$61.1 million in fiscal year 2014 from 46.1 million in fiscal year 2014 due to higher federal reinsurance recoveries.

In the Legislative Report the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate approved a much anticipated conference committee report on October 7 regarding charter school reforms. The amendment pertaining to STRS Ohio and the School Employees Retirement System (SERS) followed an attempt in the

budget bill to carve out community schoolteachers working for management companies. A compromise has been reached.

The Executive Director Reported that the Member Education Staff will again present health care open-enrollment meetings throughout the state with the first meeting occurring on October 19 in Mentor. As of October 6, nearly 4,400 enrollees had reserved a seat at one of the 57 sessions being offered.

Representatives from Aetna and Express Scripts, as well as other health care vendors will be available to those sessions to answer enrollee questions. Due to high demand for this information, the same presentation can be accessed on the STRS Ohio website. *Submitted by STRS Observer Rita Walters*

SERS

Anne Jewel, SERS' director of Health Care Services, presented information on the current status of funding for the Health Care Program. In addition, she discussed factors that could impact future health care funding, including lower investment earnings, the Board Funding Policy revisions, the rising cost of prescription medications, a decrease in Medicare reimbursements, and the upcoming excise tax from the Affordable Care Act. She also reviewed the Board's "Guiding Principles" and the factors used in determining how premiums are subsidized.

After Director Jewel offered an overview of future funding obstacles, the Board restructured the "Guiding Principles" for its Health Care Program. A revised draft of the "Guiding Principles" that includes the Board's suggestions is to be revisited at next month's Board meeting. *Submitted by SERS Observer Adele Matia*

Medicare B Increase Alert

Included in the recent federal budget agreement were changes that impact Medicare B enrollees. As a result of Congressional action by the U.S. House on October 28 and the U.S. Senate on October 30, beginning January 1, 2016, new enrollees and current Medicare B beneficiaries who do not have Social Security (THE MAJORITY OF STRS BENEFIT RECIPIENTS) - and who do not have high incomes - will notice a 14% increase in monthly Medicare B premiums from the current \$104.90 per month to a total of \$123 per month - a premium of \$120 PLUS an additional \$3 per month surcharge. Additionally, the Medicare B deductible will increase from \$147 to \$167 for all enrollees. It could have been much worse. Without the legislation, 30% of enrollees faced a whopping 52% increase in premiums and the deductible was set to increase to \$223.

On October 15, the Social Security Administration announced for only the third time in the 40-year history of Social Security (2010, 2011 and 2016) there will be no COLA increase for SS benefit recipients in 2016. The COLA is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which has been flat due to lower gasoline prices. The lack of a raise triggers other bad news for some retirees - higher medical costs.

Most Americans have the Medicare B premium deducted directly from their Social Security checks and the COLA increase usually covers any increase to premiums. When it doesn't (like in 2016), a "hold harmless" law protects those roughly 70% of seniors from any increase that would decrease their SS benefit check amount so that they will continue to pay \$104.90. That leaves about 30% of Medicare B participants who do not receive Social Security benefits and are billed for their Medicare Premium to cover the increase that would otherwise be spread among everyone.

Language cited below comes from Senator Portman's office regarding the recently enacted provision for Medicare: This policy would maintain the hold harmless provision in current law and prevent a dramatic premium increase on beneficiaries not held harmless. This policy accomplishes this by setting a new 2016 basic Part B premium for the beneficiaries not held harmless at \$120, which is the amount the Part B premium would otherwise be for all beneficiaries in 2016 if the hold harmless provision in current law did not apply. To effectuate this policy, in 2016, there would be a loan of general revenue from the Federal Treasury to the Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund. To repay the loan, starting in 2016, beneficiaries not subject to the hold harmless would pay an additional \$3 in their monthly Part B premium until the loan is repaid. Medicare beneficiaries who currently pay higher income-related premiums would pay higher than \$3, the amount of which would increase for beneficiaries in each higher-income bracket in proportion to income-related premiums under current law. If there is no cost of living adjustment increase for 2017, this provision would apply again.

Close to 70 groups representing seniors and public retiree groups lobbied Congress to pass legislation to stop the increase in premiums for everyone. NEA/OEA were among those groups. I am aware of the following efforts on behalf of Ohio Retirees; I am sure there are many unknown to me. OEA President Becky Higgins wrote letters to the Ohio Congressional delegation on the behalf of OEA-R members. STRS Executive Director Mike Nehf sent letters to each member of the Ohio Congressional delegation relating to the increase in the Medicare Part B premiums for 2016 and its disproportionate adverse impact on STRS Ohio retirees. Additionally the Executive Directors of SERO, PERI and ORTA wrote a joint letter to our

Congressional delegation asking for the same action. On September 30, 2015, I visited the offices of the following Ohio Members of Congress to lobby for this issue among others: Congresspersons Beatty, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Renacci, Stivers and Tiberi. On October 7, Senator Sherrod Brown introduced a bill to keep premium costs and deductibles as they currently are. That language did not prevail. Questions? Contact your Congressperson's office, a U.S. Senator, or your local Social Security office.
Submitted by Carol Kinsey, OEA-R Vice Chair

CONTACT YOUR RETIREMENT SYSTEM

STRS: 1-888-227-7877 or www.strsoh.org
SERS: 1-800-878-5853 or www.ohsers.org
OPERS: 1-800-222-7377 or www.opers.org

DISTRICT REPORTS

CAPITAL: The following Capital District members attended the OEA Fall Conference: Millie Hart, Mariel Burr, Betty Monahan, Joan Donley, Marilyn Allen, Annie Roegner, Mary Ellen Hall, Dorothy Wilson and Jeff Corbin.

The Columbus Education Association Retired planning committee has chosen its next series of activities. A session on identity theft will be held on Thursday, January 7; a tour of the Anthony Thomas Chocolate Factory on Thursday, January 28; a bus trip to the Wilson Football Factory and a visit to Life Town a realistic city for students with disabilities on Tuesday, February 2; a trip to Motown The Musical on Saturday, February 27; a bus trip to the Wilson Football Factory in Ada on Monday, March 7; a return visit to the Columbus Idea Foundry on Wednesday, March 23; a road trip to the Cincinnati Flower Show on Thursday, April 14; and a tour of the newly expanded Columbus Museum of Art on Friday, April 29. The annual get-together for our members living in Florida will be a cruise in the inter-coastal waterway and the Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday, February 2. CEA-R activities also include lunch. The committee welcomes suggestions for future activities! *Submitted by District Representative Jeff Corbin*

ECOEA: Several of our members have supported our website with weekly visits to learn more about upcoming events, educational issues, printed reports to the OEA-R Advisory Council, the Summer Newsletters as well as any positions currently available. Our district website address is: ecoea-r.ohsea.us and email information is: ecoearetired@yahoo.com. We need more retirees to identify any needs and/or concerns of retired members to make us stronger.

Only one of our district's 647 retired members has filed the Declaration of Candidacy form for election as a delegate to the OEA Representative Assembly for 2015-2016. This opportunity is available to any OEA-Retiree, so be sure to consider this meaningful service as we move our district retirees forward.

The four standing committees on the 2015-2016 ECOEA Executive Committee will have the following retirees: Carol Kinsey, Kathleen Purdy, Sally Smith and Joyce Hawkins Williams to serve members. It was an invigorating "Not Back to School" social at Mulligan's Pub. Plan to join us for our upcoming annual Holiday Happenin' at PineTree Barn. Located on State Route 226, south of US Route 30 between Wooster and Shreve (4374 Shreve Road), Wooster, OH 44691. It is Tuesday, December 1, 2015, beginning at 11:30 a.m. The event is self-pay, but the menu is well worth it. RSVP to Kathleen at ecoearetired@yahoo.com or for carpooling information. *Submitted by District Representative Kathleen Purdy*

NEOEA: The Intergenerational Mentoring Program at Kent State University and Youngstown State University are off to a great start with education students joining OSEA on their respective campuses. We are looking forward to doing Read Across America in March 2016. We need many volunteers. "You're never too old, too wacky, too wild to sit with a book and read with a child." (Dr. Seuss). Please volunteer for this worthwhile program.

We are joining the Cleveland Sight Center to volunteer for a vision screening training program for pre-schoolers. It is a critical period for development of visual skills with pre-schoolers.

To volunteer for any of these programs call Linda Grunden, NEOEA Office (216-518-0200). We will get back to you ASAP. *Submitted by District Representative Beryl Burkle*

SEOEA: Retired Members of SEOEA-R/OEA-R are becoming more active, however, we are handicapped because OEA does not have current email addresses for so many of our Retired Members. For example, some of you have already received information by email about the first ever SEOEA-Retired Conference & Luncheon which will be held at LaRossa's at the intersection of SR 32 and SR93 in Jackson OH on Thursday, November 12th with registration beginning at 11 a.m. Plus, you are receiving this reminder in the emailed edition of the NEWSLINE while there is still time to register and arrange to pay the \$10 fee at

the conference by contacting Pam Smith at smithpam@zoomnet.net or 740-418-8875 by the November 10th deadline. Unfortunately, the NEWSLINE hard-copy mailings will occur after our event. We urge you to share your email address with OEA by emailing memberweb@ohea.org or by requesting Membership at 1-800-282-1500. It is essential that you update OEA each time you change your email address.

Six Retired Members from SE attended the always informative Fall Conference in Columbus on September 3 which was a significant increase. We hope to see more SEOEA-R members at the statewide Spring Conference (& adult field trip) in Columbus in April. Keep an eye on NEWSLINE for details. *Submitted by District Representative Christine McVicar*

SWOEA: The SWOEA-R Executive Committee met on September 11 to discuss the 2015-2016 year and begin looking at ways we can serve our members. We decided to take on two projects for the year, and we need your help to reach our goals. The first project is to collect items and make donations to the Clermont County Homeless Shelter. More information will be coming prior to any of our meetings, workshops, and outings, so look for this in each flyer that comes out. The second project is aiding the SWOEA Legislative Committee in getting out FCPE Packets - postcards, talking points, local and state legislator's names and addresses - and then mailing these. You will be hearing more about this at the President's Plus Meeting, the Fall SWOEA RA and workshops. If you have any ideas or suggestions for projects, please notify us at SWOEA-R@gmail.com. We're always open to new ideas and community needs.

Upcoming Events: Flyers will be sent with more detailed information.

February 16 - Retirement Workshop w/SWOEA

Protecting Ohio's Families from Fraud and Identity Theft - Date TBA

May 17 - General Membership Meeting - Topics will be Social Security and elections for all SWOEA-R offices (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer)

The NOT BACK TO SCHOOL BRUNCH was held at Panera, Union Centre on August 25, and even though we had a small turnout we had a great time. Lots of information was shared and members were encouraged to run as OEA Delegates to the OEA Representative Assembly for the 2015-2016 year.

Submitted by District Representative Judy Buschle

WOEA: The mission of WOE-R is to support continued leadership and the maintenance of professional skills and to enhance the unique potential of each participating member. The purpose shall be to maintain professional contact with the education community and support legislation and benefits for retired education employees. WOE-R has meetings at 11 a.m. that include a program, meal and business the third Wednesday of the month from September-December 2015 and March-June 2016. Locations vary throughout the district and all retirees are welcome to attend.

Nov 11: WOE-R Fall Forum will be held at Tippecanoe High School, 15 E. Kessler-Cowlesville Road, Tipp City 45371. The retirees are presenting one of the program options.

Nov. 18: "Dayton International Peace Museum", 208 W. Monument Ave., Dayton 45402. A boxed lunch will be served and attendees must RSVP with payment and choice one week prior to meeting. Contact Emmy Brudzynski for choices and amount at 937-610-9917 or at emmy.brudzynski@wright.edu.

Dec. 16: Shen's Szechuan & Sushi, 7580 Poe Ave. Dayton, OH 45414. Order from the menu and RSVP to Emmy Brudzynski one week prior to the meeting (see above). In the spirit of thanksgiving and giving, bring food items for Food in a Bag/Backpack program. Items include jar of peanut butter, individual puddings, fruit or jello, breakfast bars, protein bars. Members will have the opportunity to write notes to the young children who will receive the food items. *Submitted by District Representative Jane Rahn*

OEA-R IN ACTION: Mary Binegar (pictured below) addressed the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans (Ohio ARA) Fall Convention. This was a first for OEA-R! Her speech was similar to the one she gave at the Columbus Labor Rally in August representing OEA.



FCPE: The OEA Fund for Children and Public Education State Council (FCPE), met on August 8, 2015 to screen candidates for U. S. Senate. Those candidates who attended the screening, and filled out the screening questionnaire (requirements for endorsement) were former Congressman and Governor Ted Strickland, and Cincinnati Councilman P.G. Sittenfeld. Senator Rob Portman did not attend, nor did he fill out the questionnaire. However, he did send a letter to thank us for the invitation to screen, and he indicated he had a previous commitment.

After the interviews, the Council voted to recommend the endorsement of Ted Strickland to the NEA-FCPE Council. OEA President Becky Higgins represents Ohio on that Council and delivered that recommendation to NEA during its Superweek meeting the first week in October. On October 2, the NEA FCPE council concurred with OEA's recommendation and Ted Strickland is now the "official" endorsed candidate for OEA. Please be sure fellow retirees are aware of this!

Also, the OEA-R Screening Committee for internal OEA statewide candidates will be screening candidates for NEA Director #2 vacancy (created by the retirement/resignation of Janifer Trowles). There are 2 candidates who have filed for that position: Tammy Koontz (SCOPE), currently an OEA Board of Directors At-Large member and Sophia Rodriguez (Coldwater TO), currently the President of WOE and an Ohio Board of Directors member. The screening will be held at the next OEA-R Advisory Council meeting on December 4, prior to the delegate briefing on the 4th. The delegates will have the opportunity to hear brief comments from the candidates at that time.

JUST A REMINDER - You can donate to FCPE any time by going to the OEA website www.ohea.org!

We need your donations to help fund candidates who are PRO-PUBLIC EDUCATION! *Submitted by*

Pamela

Smith FCPE Representative

ELECTION NOTICE FOR RETIRED POSITIONS

Declaration of Candidacy Forms with a filing deadline of February 15, 2016, are available for the following OEA-R Advisory Council positions: EOEVA vacancy (unexpired term ending 8/31/18), NEOEA, SWEVA, WOEVA, Higher Education, ESP, and OEA Board of Directors with a term of office beginning September 1, 2016, and ending August 31, 2019. These positions serve as automatic delegates to the OEA Representative Assembly.

Forms are also available to be a retired Ohio delegate to the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly and NEA-R Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. The filing deadline is February 15, 2016. Forms may be obtained by contacting Carol Price at 1-800-282-1500 or pricec@ohea.org.

Names of persons interested in being considered for appointment to the position of OEA-R Representative to the OEA Legislative Committee are now being accepted. This is an unexpired term ending August 31, 2016. The appointed Representative will then be considered for appointment to a full three (3) year term beginning September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2019. The appointed Representative serves as an OEA-R

Advisory Council member in a non-voting capacity and co-chairs the OEA-R Legislative/FCPE Committee. The Advisory Council meets four (4) times a year, usually September, December, March and May. The duties may be found in the OEA-R Guidelines Article VIII, Appointments by the Advisory Council, Section C, 3 and 4. The Guidelines are posted on the OEA-R Website in the Reports and Updates section.

Please submit your name to OEA-R Chair John Hoyes jhoyes@columbus.rr.com by November 25, with a copy to the Vice Chair Carol Kinsey at Cskinsey@aol.com indicating you wish to be considered for the appointment to this position. Please include a brief statement listing your qualifications and reason for wanting to serve OEA-R in this position.

OEA-R SPRING CONFERENCE

Schedule for Tuesday, April 26, 2016 • 9:30 a.m.

9:30-10 a.m. Registration/Continental Breakfast

10-10:10 a.m. Introduction/Welcome

10:15-10:45 a.m. Legislative Update (Dan Ramos, OEA)

10:45 -11 a.m. Break

11-11:30 a.m. NEA Value Builder (Guy Kendall-Freas)

11:30a.m.-12 p.m. Museum Overview (Museum Docent)

12-12:45 p.m. Lunch

1-3 p.m. Columbus Museum of Art Tour

This event will be held at the STRS Building, 275 E. Broad Street, 7th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215. The Columbus Museum of Art is located at 480 East Broad Street. Parking is free at both locations.

Send the registration form, along with your check for \$25 made payable to Capital District, by **Friday, April 15**, to the Columbus Education Association, Attention: Jeff Corbin, 929 E. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43205-1101.

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone (Home & Cell) _____

I am planning to attend the Columbus Museum of Art Tour: ___ Yes ___ No