



Newsletter

Vol. 19, Number 6

www.MyGSRA.com

June 2025

Growing Stronger by Raising Awareness

By Allan Hill

According to the GSRA By-laws, the purpose of the Annual Meeting is the election of officers to the Board of Directors, the presentation of the Treasurer's report, the Legislative report, and the State of the Association by the President. But just as important, the Annual Meeting is an opportunity for members from all over the state and beyond to come together in fellowship to strengthen the bonds and goals of our Association, to attend workshops on critical topics that affect all of us as retirees and seniors, and to spread the message of GSRA to those retirees (and active employees) who are our future members. An important mission of the Annual Meeting is to raise awareness of who we are, what we do, and what our futures should be, and in doing so, make GSRA even stronger.

Last year, GSRA saw significant progress in our fight for a meaningful COLA; this year, we must stay together to continue that fight. Our Annual Meeting is one of the most effective ways we can show our Legislators that we are determined to do just that.

This year, the workshops will be 75 minutes long, and each attendee will choose two workshops to attend. While the committee is still finalizing the agenda, we hope to offer workshops on wellness, caregiving, legal/financial issues, and smartphone technology.

As we do every year, we'll have a general session featuring presentations by ERS and DCH/SHBP. We also hope to have a presentation on ERS funding and, a keynote speaker for our opening session.

We'll also have fun! Our opening reception will once again feature the Mercer University Jazz Band, great food, and great camaraderie. And the always highly anticipated door prizes will be the icing on the cake! Look for registration in July, and make plans to attend.

This year, GSRA has contracted with the same three hotels as last year at the I-475/Hwy 80 (Eisenhower Parkway) exit for special rates.

Hotel	Negotiated Rates	Contact Information
Holiday Inn Express – Macon West	40 rooms/night, 20 King or 20 Double Queen - \$119.00 per night (taxes are extra)	Call the front desk at 478/803-0033 for reservations, and ask for the GSRA group rate*. *A word of caution – reaching the front desk at the Holiday Inn Express is a challenge. You may have to call several times before getting an answer. It's a very nice hotel, however, and worth the effort.

Hotel	Negotiated Rates	Contact Information
Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel	40 rooms/night, 20 King or 20 Double Queen - \$109.00 per night (taxes are extra)	For reservations, use the following link: https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/HD84T7 . The group's name is GSRA Conference Group, and the group # is HD84T7.
LaQuinta Hotel	40 rooms/night, 20 Kings or 20 Doubles - \$109.00 per night (taxes are extra)	For reservations, use the LaQuinta reservation site: www.wyndhamhotels.com , click on special rates, and use group code 1405. You can also call the hotel directly at 478-788-6226.

To get the group rate, reservations must be made for all three hotels by September 25, 2025.

There are also some hotels at the I-475/Zebulon Rd exit, about 7 miles north of the Hatcher Center, with very reasonable rates. They include a Comfort Suites, a Comfort Inn and a Garner Hotel.



Figure 1: Last year's GSRA attendees overwhelmingly approved of the Robert F Hatcher Sr. Conference Center in Macon.



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GSRA MERCHANDISE NOW Available

Our GSRA Merchandise is now available to purchase. We are excited to make available our new T-Shirt design and have included sample pictures below. We will be taking orders to bring to the Annual Meeting in October OR you can pay the postage and we will ship directly to you.

To view all available merchandise and place an order, please visit our website at www.mygsra.com and follow the links for GSRA Merchandise. You can also email or mail an order and mail us a check.

We will have a limited amount of T-Shirts for sale at the Annual Meeting.





New T-Shirt Designs



Keep an Eye on Your Inbox!

Coming in the next few weeks: **FREE webinars**, brought to you by **GSRA** and our partner **AMBA** — packed with information you can use!

Featured Topics

-  **Benefits of/Savings with the AMBA Passport**
-  **Protecting Your Nest Egg**
-  **Long Term Care Resources**
-  *And much more!*

We can't wait to see you there!

Hot Weather Tips



HOT WEATHER TIPS FOR SENIORS

People aged 65 years or older are more prone to heat-related health problems than younger people for several reasons:

- Elderly people do not adjust as well as younger people to sudden changes in temperatures.
- They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.
- They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

HEAT STRESS IN THE ELDERLY

HEAT STROKE - The most serious heat-related illness and occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes.

In the event of heat stroke, call 911. This is a serious medical emergency that can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea

HEAT EXHAUSTION - A milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days' exposure to high temperatures or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps and weakness
- Tiredness, dizziness, or fainting
- Headache, nausea, or vomiting
- Pulse rate is fast and weak
- Breathing is fast and shallow

Seek immediate medical attention in the event of heat exhaustion.

The best defense is prevention. Here are some general guidelines for maintaining well-being when the weather is hot:

1. DRINK PLENTY OF WATER - Don't wait until you're thirsty. You lose a lot of water through perspiration. If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink while the weather is hot.

2. AVOID ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE - These beverages cause your body to lose more water, as do drinks containing large amounts of sugar.

3. STAY INDOORS - If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. If your home does not have air conditioning, visit the shopping mall or public library. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area. Plan any outside activities during the coolest part of the day, early in the morning or later in the evening.

4. DRESS COOL - Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, sunscreen, and a wide-brimmed hat if you are outdoors.

5. AVOID STRENUOUS ACTIVITY - Cut down on exercise. If you must exercise, drink 2-4 glasses of nonalcoholic fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. If you are on low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking sports beverages.

6. KNOW YOUR MEDICATION - The heat may affect your reaction to certain medications.

7. HAVE A FRIEND CHECK UP ON YOU - Plan to have a friend or neighbor check on you at different times of the day when the temperature is extremely high.

WHO IS RX OUTREACH?

Rx Outreach is a non-profit organization that provides affordable medications to people in need. Through the Rx Outreach Program, low-income, uninsured patients have access to over 650 prescription medication strengths through our mail order pharmacy. Rx Outreach serves individuals and families whose income is 300% or less of the federal poverty level. Each year we serve over 80,000 people across all fifty states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.



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From the Banks of the Chattahoochee River

By Judy Bryson

Hello GSRA Members,

Summer is here in all its sun-drenched, humid glory, but this is no time to rest on our laurels. By now, you should have received the one-time bonus payment that was granted to select retirees. This year's COLA has been awarded, and you will see its impact reflected in your end-of-July pension payment. While these payouts have not kept pace with inflation and the evolving economic landscape, they do bring a tangible recognition of your years of service in state government.

Beyond the financial updates, GSRA continues to provide resources and opportunities for enrichment and engagement. We are moving along with sharing ways to improve and support efforts to recruit new members and retain existing ones. Several local chapters have new membership recruitment initiatives underway. Planning for an informative and exciting October Annual Conference is progressing, and registration information will be provided in the coming days.

As we move deeper into summer, GSRA will continue to meet with state leaders who have key roles concerning our retirement and health benefits. With the state election season upon us, GSRA will intensify efforts to engage with candidates. Know that your views are being shared!

While it is tempting to slow down, there is always something new unfolding, and this summer is no exception. GSRA remains committed to keeping you informed and supported.

I wish you a safe, happy, and memorable summer! Thank you for all that you have contributed and continue to contribute to our vibrant community. Here's to making the most of these hot, humid, and exciting days ahead!

Judy



Local GSRA Chapter News

Savannah Coastal Chapter

The Savannah Coastal Chapter had a terrific meeting on Tuesday, June 17 at the Center Parc (APCU) Credit Union. GSRA President Judy Bryson gave an update and a look into the future for the 26 members present.



Figure 2: GSRA President Burson provided an update and Lorr Elias provided information about membership outreach.

We also had a short presentation from Jayme Limbaugh and Allie Zeman of Crystal Coast Wellness, followed by a discussion of our membership outreach efforts by Lorr Elias and her SE Georgia Membership Team. As Lorr emphasized, we all must work together to increase our membership and have our voices heard. Thanks to all for a great meeting!



Figure 3: There were 26 members present at the June meeting.

Macon-Middle Georgia Chapter

The Macon-Middle Georgia chapter of GSRA held its quarterly meeting at Ole Times Country Buffet on Saturday, June 14th in Macon. President Clay Teague welcomed 23 members, including four who attended via Zoom. One new member joined before the meeting with three others renewing their membership.



Figure 4: Macon-Middle Georgia members enjoyed an information chapter meeting.

Debbie Scarborough, AMBA representative, made a presentation explaining AMBA and the different offerings available to GSRA members. Afterwards, she answered members' questions.

After approval of the minutes and treasurer's report, Melissa Teague told members about the Membership Roundtable held in Macon in May. President Teague brought members up-to-date on the ERS one-time payment in June and the 0.5% COLA to begin in July.

Members were asked to think about volunteering to attend and help again at the Annual Meeting in Macon on October 27th and 28th. Plans were made to collect items for a gift basket for the Annual Meeting at our next meeting, September 13.

GSRA-CSRA Chapter

The GSRA-CSRA chapter met on June 17, 2025, at the Chop House Restaurant in Augusta. The group enjoyed a delicious meal and congenial conversation with our fellow retirees.



Figure 5: GSRA-CSRA enjoyed lunch and fellowship at their June meeting.

The next meeting will be held at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant, 460 Park West Drive, Grovetown (by I-20), on July 15, 2015 at 12:30 pm. We hope all will join us. Please follow us on Facebook at GSRA-CSRA.

Tift Area Chapter

The new GSRA Tift Area Chapter met at the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) D4 Office on Second Street, Tifton on Wednesday, June 18th with 25 retirees/members in attendance with seven retirees joining our local Chapter. All First Time Attendees were recognized, and all Five Chapter Officers were present and recognized.



Figure 6: The Tift Area Chapter recently met and had seven new members join.

The following topics were discussed:

1. AMBA Representative, Debbie Scarborough discussed the many benefits & MASA that AMBA offers to retirees and family members. She discussed Medicare different parts, Medicare Advantage Plan and how to contact her. Open the floor for Questions and Answer.
2. Bob Pollock, President of the SW Ga GSRA Chapter introduced himself and spoke about his chapter. He discussed COLA'S, One time annual bonus, Open- Enrollment, GSRA Annual Meeting registration for October 27th and 28th in Macon.
3. Drawing for Door Prizes.
4. Georgia Senior Medicare Patrol Representative, Reveen Stewart discussed the fundamentals of fighting Medicare fraud. Recognizing the ways that Medicare fraud happens -by way of phone scammers, wrong billing codes on statements, beware of gift card scams and grandkids scams. Medicare would never call asking for your number nor would the IRS call inquiring personal information. Questions and Answer session and gave out prizes and packets of SMP packets with her contact information in it.
5. The next meeting date planned for September 18th with the location to be determined. We took a group photo and adjourned. Several went to Golden Corral for lunch.



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May 2025 New GSRA Members, Welcome!

Name	County	Name	County
Cynthia Clayton	Appling	Tommy Sturdivan	Catoosa
Kris Hemphill	Catoosa	Fred Ellis, Jr	Cherokee
Laura Ellis	Cherokee	Jana Galloway	Cobb
Janice Mitchell	Colquitt	Daniel Blevins	Dade
Sherrie Milburn	Douglas	James Schank	Douglas
David Hunt	Elbert	Darryl Irvin	Fayette
Joseph Teet	Fayette	John Burnette	Floyd
Herman Scoggin	Floyd	Ronnie Hudson	Floyd
Emmett Jump	Glynn	James Buchanan	Gwinnett
Dan Jones	Hall	Peggy McIntyre	Henry
Wanda Roe	Lowndes	Teri Harris	McIntosh
Brenda Williford	Meriwether	Jesse Tarplin	Newton
Adrian Cahill	Out of State	George Crawford	Pierce
Brian Gilmore	Polk	Marcia Duffey	Spalding
Dean Whittaker	Sumter	Kerry Dyer	Walker
Jom Spurgeon	Walker	Jackie Roper	Whitfield

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Anthem. 

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