

**2018 GSRA Annual Meeting**  
***Your Vote, More Important than Ever!***  
**When: October 15-16, 2018**  
**Where: Anderson Conference Center**  
**Macon, Georgia**

Make plans now to attend this two-day annual membership conference where the gubernatorial candidates—Stacey Abrams-Democratic Party, Brian Kemp-Republican Party and Ted Metz-Libertarian Party have been invited to address issues important to you and to all Georgians. There will be additional presentations from the Commissioner of the Department of Community Health, the Chief of the State Health Benefit Plan and the Executive Director of the Employees Retirement System. Workshops will provide a variety of discussion topics to guide you in making life choices of importance to you. The conference is not all work—it will include time for very important activities—fun and a forum for after-hours camaraderie with your friends and former co-workers.

***Stay Tuned for the official announcement coming in early August with all the details and registration***

## ERS Benchmarking Report

As we reported in the June Newsletter, the Employees Retirement System board received a benchmarking report from CEM Benchmarking at its June meeting. ERS had commissioned CEM Benchmarking to do the benchmarking study and determine how ERS's performance has compared to other, relatively similar public pension systems. The study findings generally found the Georgia ERS to be low cost and efficient, however with less than average service,

primarily in its presentations to its members, surveying its members and operating its call center.

GSRA members who are interested in the findings of the study can review the CEM Benchmarking slide presentation to the ERS board, including its study methodology, benchmarked pension systems, and more detailed findings [here](#).

## AMBA Provides Value for GSRA Members

As many members already know, one of the benefits of membership in GSRA is access to products and services of interest to retirees. To gain access to those products and services, GSRA has an association with Associated Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA), having partnered with them for a number of years. AMBA also partners with the Georgia Retired Educator Association (GREA).

This association provides GSRA with needed partnership resources, but more importantly it provides GSRA members access to all of the products and services provided by AMBA. Some of these products include a

discount program, medical evacuation insurance, dental insurance, long term care and other products. Additionally, AMBA is rolling out a new in-home health care service that you will hear more about in the future.

GSRA is appreciative of the support we receive from AMBA and is pleased to provide our members with access to AMBA's products and services. The GSRA Board will hear a presentation from AMBA at its next meeting on August 9, when they will update us on their products and services offerings. Look for more information in a future newsletter.



### Steve's View: Transitions Coming, GSRA Ready

Summer is moving along quickly, albeit with cooler weather still a good while away. Members (those who are eligible) should soon be receiving the first of two "one-time" bonus payments for this fiscal year, with election runoffs just a couple of days away (at this writing). I know all retirees appreciate the bonus payments, yet earnestly look forward to restoration of cost of living adjustments, once a staple of our benefit.

The state's budget development process for this next fiscal year is well underway. Although the next Governor of Georgia will certainly have say over what budget issues are taken up in next year's legislative session, he or she will inherit a budget plan developed by the current administration. Given the time constraints imposed by the timing of the fall election and the start date of the next legislative session, major changes in whatever budget is developed would be unlikely. Another factor in play is that the next Governor will also inherit a budget surplus estimated to be over \$2 billion with which to begin office. This is very much different than what the current administration took office with in 2010.

Members should know that one possible glimpse we may see of what is being proposed for ERS retirees might be evident at the August 2018 Board meeting of the ERS. At this meeting we would expect the Board to consider and approve the agency budget proposal before it is submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget on or by September 1. If you are interested in this, plan now to attend

the next ERS Board meeting at the ERS headquarters in Atlanta on August 16, 2018 at 10:30 AM. Remember, the ERS Board is in place *"to be the guardian of the State of Georgia's retirement plans and promote a dignified retirement for the members, retirees, and their beneficiaries."* All members should have an interest in the oversight and management of the ERS which exists for no other purpose than to manage the retirement system for the benefit of retirees.

GSRA looks forward to maintaining contact with leadership at the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget on behalf of retirees. As any new administration transitions to its new role and responsibility, so will GSRA transition toward advocating for retirees with a new administration. We look forward to the task and believe that we have a good case to make that retirees have sacrificed tremendously in order for the state to make the financial strides it has over the course of the last administration. At the March, 2018 ERS Board meeting, GSRA appreciated the opportunity to share with the Board many comments made directly by members, who expressed what the lack of regular cost of living adjustments had meant to them in their daily lives. As your retiree organization, we are committed and confident that we will be able to successfully advocate for retirees, regardless of which candidate emerges from the race as our new Governor.

Steve

## ERS Investment Portfolio Exceeds Earnings Target

GSRA recently learned that the ERS investment portfolio earned a return of 9.18% for the year that ended June 30, 2018. The target for the portfolio's earnings was 7.4%. Earlier this year the ERS Board acted to reduce the investment return target which, over time, should make the target easier to reach and would be expected to yield a greater earnings surplus. The portfolio earnings target for the next year that began July 1, 2018 (fiscal 2019) is 7.3%. GSRA will provide additional information as it becomes available. This is all good news.

## ERS Retiree One Time Benefit Adjustment Reminder

As a reminder to our membership, the Board of the Employee Retirement System voted unanimously at their April 19, 2018 meeting for two retiree bonus payments as follows:

### For eligible Employee Retirement System retirees:

- a one-time, 2%, non-compounded payment (maximum \$600) effective July 1, 2018. This will be paid on or just after August 1, 2018.
- a one-time, 2%, non-compounded payment (maximum \$600) effective January 1, 2019. This will be paid on or just after February 1, 2019.
- So be on the lookout for your first bonus payment right after the first of August!

Eligible employees are as follows for the August bonus payment:

- non-disability retirees must be at least 45 years of age or older
- disability retirees have no age restrictions
- not available to GSEPS retirees with a membership date on or after 7/1/2009 (this group is specifically excluded by law from receiving post retirement adjustment payments)
- Early Retirement Exception – Post retirement adjustment eligibility is based on attaining age 60, or the date 30 years would have been attained if continuous employment had continued, whichever is earlier
- First payment will be paid during the first week of August 2018 for eligible retirees with a retirement effective date on or before 12/1/2017 and a pension benefit in July 2018

## August ERS Board Meeting

**When** Thursday, August 16, 10:30am – 11:30am

**Where** [2 Northside 75 Northwest, Atlanta, GA](#)

**Show up and be counted!**

## June New Members

Name	County		Name	County		Name	County
Carter Adams	Spalding		Jimmy Foster	Franklin		Dianne Phillips	Franklin
Wes Anderson	Rockdale		Janice Garrett	Meriwether		Richard Potratz	Coweta
Jane Atkinson	Newton		Jerry Harris	Newton		Sharon Pruitt	Henry
James Belvin	Glynn		Shirley Hayes	Toombs		Maria Russell	Columbia
Christy Bowens	Fulton		Rick Henderson	Newton		Betty Sawyer	Thomas
Larry Brannon	Fayette		William Hodges	Newton		Juliane Schell	Newton
Janet Brownlee	Bryant		Gail Jacobs-Moody	Cobb		Karen Swann	Franklin
Sherry Bryant	Gwinnett		Marie Loftis	Franklin		Stephanie Taylor	Chatham
Vanessa Cantrell	Newton		Johnny McCall	Thomas		Willie Weatherspoon	Thomas
Diane Collum	Henry		Charles McComb	Pickens		Linda Williams	Thomas
Jean Cottier	Chatham		Lynne Mercedes	Fulton			
Sandra Daniell	Carroll		Gloria Mills	Thomas			
Michael Dougherty	Oconee		Gregory Patrick	Bibb			
Elizabeth Evans	Franklin		Pearl Perez	Fulton			
James Evans	Meriwether		Michael Perkins	Emmanuel			

### GSRA Day at the Capitol

As a reminder, GSRA has scheduled February 6, 2019 as **GSRA Day at the Capitol**, including the **GSRA-GPHSA Legislative Reception**. The most important thing we as GSRA members can do to make this day a success and further our objectives is to show up in numbers on Capitol Hill and make our presence known to legislators and the new administration. While we understand it's not as easy for our members outside the Atlanta area to make the trip, we have plenty of members in the metro Atlanta area who can help us make a big impression that day. Please make plans now to be there in 2019!

### GSRA's Buy One Get One Membership Offer for New Members

As a reminder, GSRA is offering a Buy One Get One membership deal through December 31, 2018 for NEW MEMBERS. Go to [www.mygsra.com](http://www.mygsra.com) and register online or contact [help@mygsra.com](mailto:help@mygsra.com) or call 770-312-2799 to obtain the mail in form. The registration fee of \$20.00 covers two years of membership through this offer.

If you know of an active or retired state employee, educator or spouse of either who isn't already a GSRA member, please share this offer with them and urge them to join.





**You have a choice!**  
Choose a BCBSGa Medicare Advantage plan and enjoy this chapter of your life.

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.  
Y0114\_18\_32445\_J 09/01/2017

## Endorsed 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
- Cancer Treatment Policy
- Life Insurance
- Medicare Supplement Insurance
- Medical Air Services Association (MASA)
- Identity Theft Protection
- Travel Discounts
- Hotel Discounts
- Car Rental Discounts
- Computer Discounts
- Tax-Deferred Annuity

Review your benefits at: [www.myAMBAbenefits.info/gsra](http://www.myAMBAbenefits.info/gsra)

Home made available through

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

**800.258.7041**

## YOU ARE OUR PRIORITY

OUR MEMBERS FORM **THE FOUNDATION** OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.

Since 1920, we've guided 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 State and Federal workers, retirees and their families in Georgia. Visit APCU's website today at GSRA. For more information, visit [apcu.com](http://apcu.com), or call us at (404) 768-4125 or Toll-free at (800) 848-8431.

APCU partners with Members Wealth Management, a financial services program, to help our members with financial planning, investments, insurance, as well as retirement and estate planning strategies.

APCU has invited Sharon Roman, a Managing Associate with Members Wealth Management, to offer a great workshop, "Money Talk 101," at GSRA. This seminar is designed to facilitate conversations around financial milestones for retirees.

Topics will include:

- ★ The importance of setting financial goals
- ★ Understanding your current financial position
- ★ Preparing for a successful retirement
- ★ Income tax considerations
- ★ What your loved ones need to know

**Medicare Advantage Plans from UnitedHealthcare®**

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

UnitedHealthcare continues to be a proud sponsor of the GSRA Annual Meeting for 2018.

\*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.

IR\_BPLH0219 BPLH0219

## SHBP RETIREES, OUR ADVANTAGE IS YOUR SATISFACTION.

**Medicare Advantage Plans from UnitedHealthcare®**

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

UnitedHealthcare continues to be a proud sponsor of the GSRA Annual Meeting for 2018.

\*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.

IR\_BPLH0219 BPLH0219