

GSRA 2020 Annual Meeting

When: October 20, 2020

Where: Video meeting on your phone or laptop

Mark your calendar now!

GSRA Website Changes Coming



GSRA's current website homepage

It is time for a new look on the GSRA Website – coming in October 2020. Almost since GSRA's inception, GSRA has contracted with a company referred to as MemberClicks to manage its membership and to perform many administrative tasks. You have probably experienced changes to software systems that you have periodically used, since most technological systems need upgrading periodically to adjust to technology changes. GSRA's Website and processing system are no different. The new "look" and processing are scheduled to go live in October 2020.

When linking to MyGSRA.com, much of the same information that is shown on the current "front" page will be

displayed. You will continue to see the current news, the meeting schedules, and displays of the current partners. Links to other important information will continue to be shown on the "front" page.

Current plans are to continue the online renewal process with the ability to enroll or renew by credit card, check, or pension deductions. Members are encouraged to make the commitment to manage their renewal process by authorizing a monthly deduction of \$1.67 from their retirement benefit—available for Employees Retirement System retirees. Such deductions are efficient for the members and GSRA processing with no renewal statements required by GSRA and no stamps required for mailing to GSRA.

President Summerville has appointed a small number of GSRA members as a committee to advise on the conversion to a different website. Members are encouraged to email GSRA at help@mygsra.com with any items or issues you would like to suggest for the revised website or any difficulty that you experience while using the current website, <https://www.mygsra.com/>.

GSRA is excited about this opportunity to update and improve our members' website experience! As we continue through the updating process and get closer to rollout, we will advise members of any significant additions and/or changes.

SHBP Update and Retiree Option Change Period Announcement

The Department of Community Health usually presents any changes in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) to the Board of Community Health for approval at a meeting in August of each year. The DCH Commissioner has announced that the DCH staff is scheduled to present SHBP changes to the Board on August 13, 2000. Changes to any benefit provisions, option contractors and premiums that will be effective for the 2021 calendar year will be presented to the Board for approval at this meeting.

Prior to presenting the SHBP modifications to the Board, DCH has scheduled a meeting of the SHBP Advisory Committee for Wednesday, August 5, 2000. The Advisory Committee's purpose is to advise DCH staff on concepts and problems being experienced in administration of the benefit options. The Advisory Committee is composed of persons

representing retirees and active State employees, and local school personnel. Although specific SHBP changes are not usually announced to the Committee, the DCH staff will discuss generic proposals with the Advisory Committee.

Following the Board meeting on August 13, 2000, the Annual Retiree Option Change period will be held, with an opportunity to make changes in the options offered. In addition, active members' Open Enrollment Period will be held simultaneously with changes allowed in options and persons covered.

All of the information will be made available by the SHBP and a brief synopsis will be printed in the GSRA Newsletters. GSRA encourages all members to consider their options carefully and change or not change to best meet their health care needs for the upcoming year.

2020 Annual Meeting Update

GSRA continues to plan for our Annual Meeting to be held on October 20, 2020. While we still have decisions to be made, one thing we know for certain is that we will not be meeting as a large group at the Anderson Center in Macon as originally planned.

We have invited ERS Executive Director Jim Potvin, DCH Commissioner Frank Berry, and SHBP Director Jeff Rickman to provide updates, as well as their outlooks for 2021. Additionally, we have invited both the House and Senate Appropriation Committee Chairs and the Director of OPB to address our members.

Still to be decided is the format of the meeting; whether the GSRA Board and our speakers will be able to meet as a group to have the meeting recorded, or whether it will be an all-virtual gathering. However we do it, we will post a video of the meeting on the GSRA website (www.mygsra.com). We will also have a procedure in place for members to vote on officers for 2021 and any other matters needing membership approval.

As soon as decisions are finalized, we will inform our members of the all the details. Thank you for your patience and your support of GSRA.



Jim's View: Membership Plans in the Works

I hope you are having a great summer in spite of the pandemic.

Although we have been unable to meet in person, the GSRA Board has been able to meet using zoom. So while

these are the hot lazy days of summer, your GSRA Board has not been lazy. We are taking this opportunity to sit back and do some short term and long term planning.

You have by now received an email from me concerning the potential development of a long range strategic plan for GSRA. So I will not bore you with that subject.

Increasing GSRA's membership is always an ongoing planning effort. Since the pandemic has stopped most person to person meetings, we are going to try something new - a virtual recruitment campaign (thanks to Melissa Belk-Teague for the idea). Several members of the Board are preparing short videos which, with the help of Melissa's husband, will be turned into a video clip to be included in a special newsletter ERS will be sending out via email to retirees who are not currently GSRA members. The video will also be available on our webpage and Facebook page soon thereafter. We are also looking at other avenues to get GSRA's name in front of as many retirees and soon to be retirees as possible. There is strength in numbers and GSRA needs to increase its' membership in order to be successful in meeting future challenges. I urge you to continue your efforts to attract new members.

While we did have some successes legislatively this year, we did not meet all of our legislative goals. We have begun the process of developing our strategy to turn those unmet goals into met goals. We hope to be meeting with key decision makers over the next several months to lay the groundwork for the upcoming legislative session. You can help here as well. It is an election year, so your representative and senator may be more visible around town. So if you see your elected representative, introduce yourself as a retired state employee and GSRA member and tell them how the lack of a cost of living adjustment for 10 years has adversely impacted your quality of life. They need to hear from GSRA members as often as possible.

Thank you for your continuing support of GSRA. I hope to be able to talk with you in person soon.

Be safe, stay healthy, and follow all CDC pandemic advisories.

Jim

Get to Know Your GSRA Organization Members

In an effort to provide membership more information about the various GSRA Board and Operating Committee members who perform the ongoing work of the organization, we will feature one or more board and/or committee members in the newsletter each month. This month, Joseph Drolet, GSRA Legislative Committee Member, is featured.



Joseph Drolet GSRA Legislative Committee Member

When Joseph Drolet retired from the Attorney General's Office three years ago he was unaware that there was an organization for state retirees. He soon found the website for the Georgia State Retirees

Association and began regularly attending meetings of the Association's Board and Operations Committee; this led to extensive involvement in legislative and other activities of the Association.

Drolet, 76, has been impressed by the dedication and commitment of those involved in the organization. Retired state employees bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, and expertise to the association. Working together, state retirees have pushed for long-overdue cost of living adjustments as well as protection of health insurance and other retiree benefits. The association's activities have raised the profile of state retirees with the General Assembly and the Governor as well as with the Board of Trustees of the Employees' Retirement System.

An Illinois native, Drolet grew up in Kankakee, and received his Economics degree and his Law degree from the University of Illinois. Moving to Georgia in 1971, he spent twenty years with the Fulton County District Attorney's Office and seven years as Solicitor of the City Court of

Atlanta. Following seven more years in the private practice of law, he joined the State Attorney General's Office as head of the Public Safety Section, a position he held for nearly

twelve years. Drolet currently makes his home in the historic Inman Park neighborhood of Atlanta.

If You Think You've Been Exposed to Covid-19

The Georgia Department of Public Health has important guidelines on their site, <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>, that explain what to do if you believe that you have been exposed to the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), and also how the process works if you are identified as having been exposed or test positive.

To avoid this scenario, social distance, wear a mask when you go out, and keep your exposure to others outside your household to a minimum, where possible.



Donate to GSRA Legal Fund

GSRA's Legal Fund was established as a dedicated legal fund in the event that leadership, on behalf of its members, ever has to retain legal counsel. The fund will be used to cover all appropriate legal fees related to ensuring that retiree benefits are not reduced or eliminated.

Every donation makes a difference. For more information and to donate to this fund click on the link below.

[GSRA Legal Fund](#)



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Since 1926, 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 exhibitor table at GSRA. For more information, visit apcu.com, or call us at (404) 768-4125 or toll-free at (800) 847-9431.



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 Shawn 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

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