

PASR

Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees

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Next Up: Public Employee Pension Reform

Richard C. Rowland, Executive Director

All attention in Harrisburg is currently focused on constructing and passing a budget. Discussions on all other issues, including cost-of-living-adjustments (COLAs) and pension reforms, are on hold until the budget is passed. According to legislative leaders on all sides, House and Senate, Democrat and Republican, pension reform is expected to top the agenda when the budget is finally passed and the legislators return to session in September.

When the legislative leaders construct and present a pension bill for the rank-and-file legislators to act upon this fall, it will most likely be a comprehensive reform bill that addresses a multitude of issues related to public employee pension funding and benefit structures. According to PASR's governmental consultants monitoring activities and conversations "on the Hill," no one is suggesting that the legislature is prepared to pass a COLA for retirees, until something is done to remove the threat that state and school district (i.e. taxpayer) contributions will increase dramatically in a few years and trigger massive state and local tax increases. Also, all sides are reportedly saying that any bill dealing with public employee pensions will likely contain provisions to reduce the disparity that exists between retirement benefits provided to workers in the public and private sectors.

PASR has been at the forefront and, to date, alone in presenting ideas to the legislators on how they might address these issues in a comprehensive manner. The legislative volunteers serving in PASR's Legislative Contact System met with their assigned legislators in April to present and discuss our ideas for eliminating the projected "spike" in employer contributions, slated to occur in 2012, and remove the threat of massive tax increases that the spike would entail. In May our volunteers presented ideas for reducing the pension disparity that exists between public and private sector employees, a plan to help private sector employees increase their retirement savings instead of achieving greater equity by reducing the retirement benefits afforded public employees. Finally, in June our volunteers presented sound economic arguments for enacting a COLA for all state and school retirees at this time.

A copy of the information that our volunteers presented to their legislators on the COLA issue is included in this NEWSLETTER, beginning on page 12. Please, read it carefully and echo some of the main points when you talk with your legislator! To review the

CONTINUED ON PG. 15

Get Ready for some exciting changes coming to PASR's web site (www.pasr.org)

If you haven't heard already, PASR has contracted with an outside firm to completely redesign the Association's web site, making it more member-friendly and adding many new state-of-the-art enhancements. PASR selected the firm of Albertson Consulting for the job, most notably because of their experience designing sites for other state associations including Michigan, Maryland, and Colorado.

One of the biggest enhancements to the new site will be the online payment center allowing members (new as well as current) to pay for and/or renew their membership dues online conveniently with a credit card.

The new home page will feature a completely different look and interface. Under the "chapter directory" section of the site, there will be an interactive Pennsylvania state map broken out by region. When a visitor clicks on a section of the map, it will automatically direct them to the region associated with their selection and display the current roster of officers—all of which are now tied directly to PASR's membership database, ensuring that the most current information is always available in real time. From the region pages, visitors will be able to navigate to the individual chapters that currently have web sites established.

And for those chapters who have not yet created their own web site, there has never been a better time to think about doing so. For as little as \$5 a month, a chapter can host its own web page through the state Association's main site. Chapter-appointed web masters will have access to their chapter's site via a secure password-protected login. No special software is needed to make updates to your chapter site. This will save chapters from spending hundreds of dollars investing in stand-alone software packages. Because the interface is entirely web-based, updates can be done from any computer, whether it is a PC or Macintosh. The chapter web master simply needs to have an Internet connection and be using a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox, to make changes to the site via a web portal. If a chapter currently has its own independent web site, or utilizes the services of Gino Carlotti for updates...nothing has changed. Headquarters will continue to link directly to your site as always.

PASR's home page will also feature links to breaking news and legislative alerts. In addition, a new "links" section has been

CONTINUED ON PG. 11


IN THIS ISSUE

- President's MessagePage 2
- Affordable Family Fun Close to HomePage 5
- TechTalk Q&APage 6
- Region and Chapter NewsPage 7
- Retirement Security for ALL Pennsylvanians ...Page 12

To view this publication in its entirety, join PASR and become a member today!

As a PASR member, you will be given *exclusive* access to the “members only” section of our web site where you can access past copies of the *AFTERSCHOOL* magazine as well as the state *NEWSLETTER*. These are just two of the many benefits you will receive when you join PASR.

What are you waiting for? Apply for membership now by using the form printed below, or online via the PASR web site.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION		Phone	Date of Birth
 PASR <small>Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees</small>	Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees 878 Century Drive Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-8406		____/____/____
		E-mail Address	Retirement Date & Yrs. of Service
Please print name/address below:		Would you like to receive information about a local PASR chapter? (PLEASE SPECIFY)	School District Retired From
		Please select your membership option. Make check payable to: PASR <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership Dues ■ \$45.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Membership Dues ■ \$45.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership Dues ■ \$500.00	
Phone: 717-697-7077 ■ Fax: 717-697-8742 ■ pasr@pasr.org ■ www.pasr.org Note: Membership dues payments may not be deductible for federal income tax. PLEASE ALLOW 4-6 WEEKS FOR PROCESSING			