



COPRA CHRONICLE

Issued by and for the City of Phoenix Retirees Association
Your advocate in pension and insurance matters

September 2011

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH

Issue 2

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QUESTIONS ON MEDICARE?

Copra Health & Benefit Committee representatives, in conjunction with the City of Phoenix Human Resources Department, have met with the new Benefits Assistance Program Director of the Area Agency on Aging to arrange for some informational classes on Medicare to be offered to COPRA members this Fall. We are looking at dates for the programs in mid October and November since annual enrollment this year runs October 15 through December 17. Watch our web site www.phoenixcopra.com and the October COPRA Chronicle for dates and locations. These sessions will provide information on Medicare insurance options for those currently eligible as well as those approaching eligibility that want to be prepared to make decisions on what to do when they reach eligibility status.

In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about Medicare and the options available to you, The Area Agency on the Aging offers Stairway to Medicare, an easy, interactive, free online informational tool. You create your own login and learn at your own pace, starting and stopping the training steps as it suits your needs. Visit www.stairwaytomedicare.org and get started today!

Also available for information and help is the Area Agency on Aging 24-hour Help Line at 602-264-4357(HELP). You can also visit any of the City of Phoenix Senior Center sites where you can make an appointment to see an Area Agency on Aging volunteer to look at your situation and learn more about your Medicare insurance options. Check out the Area Agency on Aging web site at www.aaaphx.org for other good information.

Watch for information on the COPRA and City of Phoenix sponsored informational sessions or get started today with the other options described in this article.



MEMBERSHIP

Changed your address or phone number? For address and/or telephone number changes, or for any questions about your COPRA membership, please contact Marvin Roelse, Membership Chairman. Marvin can be reached by telephone at (480) 288-1046, or by mail at: COPRA Chronicle, 10701 E. Peralta Canyon Dr., Gold Canyon, AZ 85118, or by e-mail at marvinr567@msn.com

"Membership is Our Strength"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to another active season for COPRA in 2011/2012. I hope that all of you had a good summer and were able to do everything you wished to do. I say "had a good summer" since it is still 110 plus degrees in Phoenix as I write this message.

The Board continued to be busy this summer with the sub-committees on Health and Benefits along with the Retirement Board. I also continued my involvement with the Pension Reform Task Force that was charged by the Mayor to examine the Retirement System and prepare a set of recommendations for the Mayor and City Council. To remind everyone, the committee consists of ten citizen members and three members affiliated with the City. These included the chair of the Retirement Board, the head of the coalition of unions, and a retiree, which is the role I have been providing.

My message this month will focus on the Pension Reform Task Force since we have been busy during June, July and August going through "tons" of material and information provided by the City and the consultants that were contracted to assist us in the research. One important element that came out of the meetings this summer for all City General Retirees was an understanding stated by the Chair of the Reform Committee that the recommendations, once finalized for presentation to the Council, will not focus on existing retirees but only focus on the Retirement System as it pertains to existing and future City employees. Again, however, it is important to remember that the committee is charged with making recommendations and it is up to the City Council and the voters of Phoenix in some cases to make the final determinations.

The discussions over the past several months have fallen into six areas of possible consideration. I emphasize "possible consideration" since again the committee is looking at options and these areas, and potentially others, will continue to need more dialog before the committee can begin preparing a study report to the Mayor and City Council. I would also add that there were discussions this summer as well regarding both PEP and the 13th Check and whether some changes in this area may be warranted in reference to future retirees only and not current retirees.

The six areas that have received the most discussion over the past three months include:

1. Discussions on the impact of adding a 5-year smoothing to the calculations
2. Discussions on the impact of changing the employee contribution structure
3. Discussions on the impact regarding possible changes in the future to the accrual multiplier (currently at 2% per year for the first 32 years)
4. Discussions on the impact with changing the eligibility formula (i.e. the rule of 80, etc.)
5. Discussions on the impact of removing the vacation and sick leave pay from the final calculations for retirement
6. Discussions on the impact of eliminating certain allowances for the final calculations in determining annual earnings for retirement pay calculations(e.g. car allowance)

All six of these discussion areas have been researched by the consultants assisting the committee and only Numbers 2 and 3 provide significant savings and improvement in the financial health of the system. The remaining items are of a more minor savings if carried forward. Again, I cannot emphasize strongly enough that this is the very early stages of research and I have been duly impressed with the diligence of the committee and the kinds of questions that have been asked during the lengthy process over the past six months of meetings. Obviously some of the items if presented to Council would require a vote of Phoenix citizens and a few may also have some legal implications that would need further review.

On a special note it is also great to see some of my fellow retirees that have attended many of the committee meetings and also who have spoken up when the opportunity was provided during the public input segment of the meeting. As always, those of you who are interested in attending one of these meetings please check the public calendar on the City of Phoenix website as to time and place.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you at our October "State of the City" meeting with David Cavazos, Phoenix City Manager. These meetings are always informative and allow attendees to ask questions at the end of the planned presentation. It is always appreciated that the City Manager makes the time to join us for this important meeting and I hope you can be there as well.

See you in October, Jack

DID YOU KNOW?

BlueCross BlueShield and Cigna provide discounts on health-related products and services.

BlueCross BlueShield has discounts for Jenny Craig, fitness clubs and vitamin & mineral products. The "Choose Healthy" program provides yoga tools, exercise DVDs, books, and skin care items. Additionally, you can save on acupuncture, massage therapy and chiropractic services when you go to an American Specialty Health Networks participating service provider. BC/BS members may be eligible to receive savings on LASIK surgery, eyeglasses and contacts. For more information visit: azblue/Discounts or call 800-678-9133.

CIGNA Medical & Cigna Dental members have access to the Healthy Rewards Program. The program includes savings for Weight Management and Nutrition services including: Healthyroads Weight Management Program, Registered Dietitians, Jenny Craig, Weight Watchers, and NutriSystem. Also you can receive fitness club and equipment discounts as well as the Just Walk 10,000 Steps a Day Program. Discounts are also offered on vision exams & eyewear, Lasik vision correction, hearing exams & aids. Substantial discounts are also available for acupuncture, chiropractor & therapeutic massage services, tobacco cessation, mind/body services, dental & blood pressure products and vitamins & herbal supplements. For more information visit: www.myCIGNA.com or call 800-870-3740.

MHN Welcomes You!

On July 1, 2011, your eldercare benefits began being administered by MHN, a Health Net company. The new program is called Caregiver Assistance, and it features:

Geriatric care coaching

- Moderated family meeting (by phone)
- Help getting consensus on next steps

Geriatric care management

- In-home assessment or onsite facility reviews of up to two housing options
- Help developing a tailored support plan and arranging for services

Referrals and online resources

- Confirmed, matched referrals (by phone or online)
- Articles on relevant topics, from aging well to caregiving
- Online seminars and interactive skill builders

And more!

Call toll-free 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

(602) 534-5433 / (800) 977-7594

TDD callers, please dial: (800) 327-0801

or visit us at: members.mhn.com

company code: phoenixeap

Visit employee.phoenix.gov/hr/benefits

HOLIDAY PARTY

This year's Holiday Party will be held on December 1, 2011 at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center on East Dunlap in Phoenix. **Tickets will be on sale at the October 13, 2011 general membership meeting, which will be held at the Washington Activity Center, 2240 W Citrus Way, Phoenix.** Tickets also will be on sale from Barbara Kellogg, COPRA Treasurer, by mail beginning in late September.

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University offers a variety of learning opportunities for all areas of interest to keep your education going.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University provides stimulating, university-quality learning experiences for adults ages 50+. Non-credit courses, lectures, workshops and educational trips are specifically designed for adults with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and interests. Classes are taught by ASU faculty, emeritus faculty, and talented community scholars. There are no tests, no grades, no educational requirements . . . simply learning for the joy of learning, alongside of like-minded peers. Locations include ASU and community sites around the Valley. They stand committed to serve lifelong learners because becoming better informed and contributing to thoughtful learning experiences not only lead to a healthy and joyful life, it also leads to transforming the world.

To become an Osher member you will pay a \$15 membership fee once a semester. As a member, you can take classes at as many of our open-admission sites as you would like. Once you pay the registration fee at one site, you pay only the course fees at additional sites. Registration dates and costs for each site are available in the schedule.

Visit <http://lifelonglearning.asu.edu/> for more information and class schedules.

NEW RETIREES

March 2011

Joseph Bilbrey II
Raymond Burd, Jr.
Lydia Carrillo-Garcia
Ezequiel Castro
Michael Cynecki
Maria Del Jesus
Brian T. Forsberg
Ford McCleakey
Jeffrey Mitchell
Judith Moskop
Frances Nevarez
Dorothy Richards
Kathryn Salmon
Gail Sutter
Jesse Trevino
Julaine Warner

April 2011

Vicki Chamberlin
Barbara Glaus
Gordon Guge
Randi Hill
Kenneth Hill
Maureen Hymel
Janice Jacobo
Lydia Lebario

Jose Minero
Jeannette Neal-Diggs
David Peterson
Edgar Snelling
Denise Watson
John Wiehn

May 2011

Loretta Brewster
Roland Brown
Reed Caldwell
Shera Fernham
Laura Fritschi
Joyce Grossman
Roy Huerta
Stuart Kalmbach
Jack Lujan
Patrick McGreevy
Stewart Moore
Cleophus Moore
Milan Nelson
Alfred O'Shuna, Jr.
George Paulsen
William Ponder, Jr.
Bertha Rotta
Karen Rude
William Sikes
Randall Spenla

Rose Surface
Jeffrey Young

June 2011

Fatimah Abdul-Halim
Diane Allen
Angie Ayala
Juanita Baca
Evelyn Backwell
Roswitha Barnhill
Joseph Belval
Karen Bienias
William Bock
Carl Boss
Sharon Brady
M. James Callahan
Debbie Campbell
Jose Campos
Spencer Cherry
Ronald Cheshier
Susan Cheshier
Helen Copeland
Elizabeth DeMichael
Kay Diaz
Patricia Earby
Robert Goodman, Jr.
Joe Gray
Tyrone Hibbs

Carmen Hunt
Michael Meloy
Simona Mendez
Norma Mendivil
Jeffrey Menke
Rebecca Mietzner
Robert Murphy
Jack Ogilvie
Conrad Orosco
Catherine Parker
Daniel Reger
Joe Rivera
Steve Rossi
Roxanne Sales
Lorenzo Sanchez
Wayne Scott
Carl Smith
Virginia Speciale
John Steidley III
Brian Suggs
Kimberly Tax
Susan Thorwaldson
Veronica Tieskotter
Linda Tuck
Stephan Waltz
Brenda Williams
Lauri Wingenroth

CITY MANAGER'S CORNER

Hello again, friends. I hope all of you are having an enjoyable summer.

This is my first column since COPRA's summer break, and I am excited to be back in touch with all of our retirees.

We have some good news to share: The city of Phoenix finished fiscal year 2010-11 with revenues right on target, expenses under budget and a AAA credit rating, the highest credit rating of the six largest U.S. cities, and now, the federal government.

The 2011-12 budget is off to a great start, with no reductions in services to the community and no increases in taxes or fees. This represents an amazing turnaround, considering that in 2009-10 the city faced a \$277 million deficit.

Here are some other highlights from the past fiscal year:

- The city used its AAA credit rating to refinance and restructure debt, for a savings of \$44.5 million during the last fiscal year. The city's rating exceeds Houston (AA); New York City (AA); Los Angeles (AA-); Chicago (A+); and Philadelphia (BBB).
- We increased the city's contingency (rainy day) fund to \$36 million, the highest level in the city's history.
- The Innovation and Efficiency Task Force has identified \$35 million in savings since January 2010. The Task Force is comprised of city management and private-sector members from the business community.
- Phoenix continues to do more with less, with the smallest government in 40 years. Since it peaked in 2007-08, staffing levels in Phoenix have dropped dramatically. More than 2,500 full-time positions have been eliminated, and the number of employees per 1,000 residents is now 10.4, the lowest in nearly 40 years. The budgeted salary costs for employees also have dropped by \$67 million over the last two years.
- The City Council voted to retain the city's property tax rate. Phoenix residents are paying lower property taxes. Since 2009-10, property taxes paid to the city have dropped by \$98 million; the average Phoenix homeowner's property tax bill has dropped from \$397 to \$235, or more than 41%.

The city is on track financially because of the leadership of the Mayor and City Council and the focus of city management, employees and the community.

Finally, I'd like to invite you to an upcoming city event – the “Never Forget Memorial Walk” that commemorates the 10th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The walk will begin at 7:30 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, at Chase Bank Tower, 201 N. Central Ave., and ends at CityScape Center, Central Avenue and Jefferson Street, with a memorial ceremony beginning at approximately 8 a.m.

The Mayor, City Council, and Police and Fire Honor Guard will lead the walk, which is open to the public. I hope you can make it.

I look forward to sharing more city news with you in future columns and welcome your suggestions for topics, which you can email to contactus@phoenix.gov.



2011 COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND DRIVE

**City of Phoenix retirees are invited to participate in the
2011 COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND DRIVE
<http://employee.phoenix.gov/csfd>
September 15 – October 14**



This year marks the seventh year that retirees have contributed to the City of Phoenix Employee's Community Service Fund Drive (CSFD) and we are excited to be able to offer you this opportunity again. As you know, giving back to the community is a big part of the City's culture and the CSFD campaign provides an easy way to do it.

Last year in Maricopa County, CSFD agencies and agencies supported by donations to the United Way were used by more people than ever! Did you know that (based on 2009 statistics)

- 35% of homeless persons sheltered in Maricopa County are families with children?
- 22% of sheltered persons are children under the age of 18?
- 36% of the homeless are female?

Your generosity gives much needed assistance to residents in the Valley. This year, the 2011 CSFD Executive Committee invites you to once again give back to your community. This year's campaign theme is "**Exercise Your Power to Change Lives!**"

A special retiree pledge card will give you the opportunity to make a cash, check or credit card contribution. Your donation will be entered immediately, meaning that it will be part of your 2011 tax year. You may select up to four agencies for your donation. A complete list of agencies can be found on the internet at <http://employee.phoenix.gov/csfd>. Your gift goes far – but not far away as all contributions stay in the Valley to address our most critical health and human service needs.

In this economic decline, we ask that you "**Exercise Your Power to Change Lives**" by helping those less fortunate and in real need of health and human services. We look forward to your continued support as a member of our City family. Help us reach our goal of **\$1 million** and enrich the lives of countless people in our community.

Sincerely,
Laura Neal
Program Coordinator
Community Service Fund Drive



Please join us at this year's
Hands and Hearts Faire!
It will be held in the City Hall atrium on:
October 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Come join the FUN!

RETIRED CITY OF PHOENIX EMPLOYEES
COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND DRIVE
PLEDGE CARD
www.phoenix.gov/csfd



_____ Last Name (please print) _____ First Name _____ MI

Address: _____
Street, City and Zip Code

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

CHECK/CASH CONTRIBUTION: Please make checks payable to CSFD
I would like to make a one-time contribution of \$ _____ Check # _____

AGENCY SELECTION: You may select up to 4 agencies from our list found at <http://employee.phoenix.gov/csfd>, or you may want to select the Helping Other Phoenix Employees Fund (HOPE Fund, #9021) or donate to the Valley of the Sun United Way programs for a community wide reach (#9000).

Agency: _____ Agency # _____ Amount \$ _____

Agency: _____ Agency # _____ Amount \$ _____

Agency: _____ Agency # _____ Amount \$ _____

Agency: _____ Agency # _____ Amount \$ _____

RETURN FORM TO: CSFD Program Coordinator, Human Resources Department, 135 N. 2nd Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85003. Questions? Call (602) 261-8864 or email csfd@phoenix.gov

In Remembrance

Edna Hoffman	04/15/11	
James Kucaba	04/29/11	
Charles L. Brown	04/30/11	
Lorraine Parks	04/30/11	Survivor
Julia McGowan	05/01/11	Survivor
Peter S. Lopez	05/04/11	
Joe Carrasco	05/10/11	
Dale Casad	05/13/11	
Donald R. Taylor	05/23/11	
Carlos F. Hernandez	05/24/11	
William Korbitz	05/29/11	
Blanche Thompson	05/31/11	Survivor
Kelsey Johnson	06/02/11	
Hendrika deRonde	06/02/11	
Gus Tomich	06/06/11	
Hazel Bailon	06/09/11	Survivor
Servando Cienfuegos	06/11/11	
Elizabeth Saylor	06/11/11	Survivor
Francis Kelly	06/13/11	
Mark O. Williams	06/13/11	
Josephine Moreno	06/14/11	Survivor
Bonnie Greff	06/14/11	Survivor
Richard H. Brown	06/16/11	
Richard McNamara	06/17/11	
Tony Monje	06/25/11	
Janeth Meendering	06/30/11	
Arnulfo Samaniego	07/02/11	
Samuel Pendergrass	07/03/11	
Ray Carpena	07/04/11	
Martha Throne	07/04/11	
Aaron Alldredge	07/04/11	
Ralph Cruz Jr	07/06/11	
Jay F. Jacobson	07/06/11	
Norman Johnson Jr	07/09/11	
Betty Fenn	07/11/11	
Robert B. Ross	07/12/11	
Jean F. Williams	07/23/11	
William K. Datson	07/23/11	
John Drazkowski	07/27/11	
Larry Landrum	07/30/11	
Mary Dusenberry	08/04/11	
Ronald Sands	08/09/11	
Patricia J Smith	08/17/11	
Jerry Hayes	08/17/11	
Peter Starrett	08/19/11	
Bernice Lanning	08/20/11	Survivor

HEALTH AND COMPASSION

We care about our members and their families. If someone in your family is ill, whether at home or in a care facility, or if a loved one has passed away, please call Mary Dysinger-Franklin at (602) 705-8822

2011 COPRA BOARD

President:	Jack Thomas	(623) 825-6999
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	E-mail	avidgolfer@aol.com
Secretary:	Dawnell Navarro	(623) 412-0854
	E-mail	navarro2@cox.net
Board Members:	Marvin Roelse	(480) 288-1046
	E-mail	marvinr567@msn.com
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	Vacant	
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	Karen Clifford-Anderson	(623) 772-7472
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	E-mail	yimmons@yahoo.com
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	E-mail	lross50@gmail.com
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Member Support and Social Chair:	Vacant	
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	E-mail	copranewsletter@gmail.com
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COPRA website.....	www.phoenixcopra.com
COPERS website.....	www.phoenix.gov/phxcopers
COPMEA website.....	www.copmea.com
City Retirement Systems (COPERS).....	(602) 534-4400
Personnel - Benefits Section	(602) 262-4777
COPMEA.....	(602) 262-6857

Chronicle Article Deadline

Please be advised that the deadline for submitting articles for the Chronicle is the **20th day of the month** before you want the article to appear. Any member may submit material for publication, but the Editor determines what will appear in the final copy based on suitability and available space.

This is your Chronicle. Help us by submitting articles of general interest. Tell us about yourself, your family, a trip you've taken or an interesting hobby you have. Suggestions are always welcomed.

E-mail to: COPRAnewsletter@gmail.com

Or mail to: Mary Dysinger-Franklin
6208 E. Desert Cove Ave
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Disclaimer

Acceptance of advertisements or articles in the COPRA Chronicle does not constitute an endorsement by COPRA of goods or services.



SEPTEMBER COPRA CHRONICLE

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10701 East Peralta Canyon Dr.
Gold Canyon, AZ 85118

ENJOY YOUR LAST DAYS OF SUMMER!



MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Washington Adult Center
2240 W. Citrus Way
Phoenix, AZ**

*Hope to see you at the
Oct. 13th Meeting!*

**October 13, 2011 at 1:30 pm - City Manager
December 1, 2011- Holiday Party (11:30 am) and Annual Meeting
(Mountain Preserve Center)**

**Board meetings are at 10 am on the 2nd Thursday of the Month
Except for June, July and August**