



COPRA CHRONICLE

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

May 2018

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH

Issue 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	2
Cultivate Better Sleep.....	2
Renew Your COPRA Membership for 2018.....	3
Safety Information for You.....	3
New International Destinations out of America's Friendliest Airport.....	3
New Retirees.....	4
Risk of Falling for a Medicare Card-Replacement Scam High.....	4
Your E-mail is Your Entry.....	4
City Manager Column.....	5
LED FYI.....	6
Travel Confidently.....	6
Jet-Set Pets.....	6
In Remembrance.....	7
New Shingles Vaccine.....	7
COPRA Board.....	7
Meeting Dates.....	8



MEMBERSHIP

Membership for COPRA is \$12 per year or \$50.00 for 5 years. If you have changed your address, email address or phone number or have any questions about dues payments, please contact Linda Henderson.

Linda can be reached by: telephone at (623) 693-9955, or by e-mail at lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com

Mail payments to:

COPRA
PO Box 2464
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

PayPal Payments:

You can send in dues via PayPal. Use our email address Phoenixcopra@gmail.com from your account.

NEW MEDICARE ID CARD MAILING DELAYED A MONTH

But first-time enrollees will get redesigned cards now

Medicare officials say they have delayed mailing out the new Medicare identification cards to current beneficiaries because they are stepping up their anti-fraud initiatives.

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), beneficiaries living in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia will begin receiving their new Medicare ID cards in May, not April, as originally scheduled.

The CMS also announced that new enrollees in Medicare will automatically get the revamped cards, regardless of where they live.

Earlier this year, the CMS released a rollout schedule for the replacement card, which Congress ordered redesigned to prevent fraud. The rest of the schedule remains the same.

The new Medicare card is still red, white and blue, but no longer includes a Social Security number, gender, signature or other personal information that could compromise a beneficiary's identity. The cards have a randomly assigned 11-character number that has no connection to a beneficiary's other personal data. Medicare has until December 2019 to distribute the restyled cards.

If you are a current beneficiary, you should make sure the Social Security Administration (SSA) has your correct address. To make a change, you can contact the agency at ssa.gov/myaccount or by calling 800-772-1213.

Beneficiaries can also sign up for an email alert on Medicare's new card page about when their card is in the mail.

Scammers have already targeted recipients with various ploys about the cards, such as calling beneficiaries and requesting payment for the replacement card. CMS officials say they will never ask a beneficiary for personal or private information or for any money as a condition of getting a new Medicare number and card.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, April 10, 2018

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Laura Ross

Well, here we are going into the summer already. Since this is the last Chronicle before the summer hiatus, I want to share with you as much information as I can on where we are at on a Health Care alternative for Retirees in 2019.

As I told you, our efforts to join the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) Health Care Program is NOT an option for calendar year 2019. In lieu of that option, we are continuing to work with the City to explore a transitional step (probably for a couple of years) that involves negotiating a plan for both pre-Medicare and Medicare eligible retirees directly with United Health Care (UHC). Originally we were looking at a fully insured plan with UHC. That has now changed. While the plan will be through the UHC networks, it looks like it will be a City of Phoenix self-insured plan. The plan design would mirror options offered by ASRS, who also uses UHC as the provider. It looks like it would include four different plan choices for pre-Medicare retirees and a Supplement Plan for Medicare eligible retirees that would be similar to that offered by AARP, but hopefully at a lower rate. Since the City would administer the program, Category MERP would be available as well as regular MERP to decrease premiums that would be deducted from pension checks. It would allow for combination rates (Medicare/Non-Medicare in the same family). We are also looking to bundle other services such as dental and vision, Silver Sneakers and a Real Appeal weight loss program. Negotiations are ongoing. We will continue to work with the City over the summer months to establish a viable healthcare plan for retirees for calendar year 2019. Please be sure to check your September Chronicle for information on this important topic. As in the past, in conjunction with the City, we will have several information sessions to give you the details on what the City will be offering for healthcare for 2019, this coming fall season. I would encourage everyone to plan on attending a session so that you can make an informed decision as to whether the new options will be what works best for you and your family. Also, be sure to watch the mail for notifications on meetings and preliminary information related to this topic.

Have a great summer! See you in September.

Laura

CULTIVATE BETTER SLEEP

Rest easy with these plants in the bedroom.

Insomnia? Allergies? Stress? Let's clear the air. Some houseplants not only remove toxins in our environment but also promote drowsiness, several studies confirm.

Jasmine. Jasmine fragrance, working in ways similar to barbiturates, eases anxiety and encourages sleep. German researchers tested the scent on mice and watched them curl up and sleep.

English Ivy. This plant helps reduce mold spores in the air, says a former NASA scientist who has researched how to keep space station air clean.

Lavender. Lavender bouquets and essential oils are popular as sleep inducers, but try a houseplant too.

Aloe Vera. A hardy succulent, it vacuums up unhealthy indoor chemicals called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) while you catch your zzz's, another NASA study showed.

Boston Fern. Back in the day, upscale hangouts were called fern bars because of this ubiquitous decoration. Turns out that Boston ferns remove formaldehyde from the air.

Snake Plant. No green thumb? This plant, an air cleaner, is about the simplest to care for.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, February/March 2018

RENEW YOUR COPRA MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2018

Please check the mailing label on this Chronicle for the “Dues Paid Thru:” year. If the “Dues Paid Thru:” year is “2017”, you need to renew your COPRA membership!

If you receive the COPRA Chronicle by email and your membership expired in 2017, you should have received an email in January advising you of the status of your COPRA membership. As a retiree, it is important that you stay abreast of events happening in the City that may have an impact on your benefits and the retirement fund. Please renew your membership today. As our motto on the front page of the Chronicle says, “Membership is Our Strength.” COPRA membership dues are \$12.00 a year for all members or \$50 for 5 years. To renew your COPRA membership, send a check payable to “COPRA” to the following address:

**COPRA
P O Box 2464
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340**

If you have a **PayPal** account you can send your dues for COPRA via PayPal. Simply logon on to your account, choose send payment, enter our email address phoenixcopra@gmail.com, choose friends, enter the dollar amount, enter your name and email address in the notes section and send. If you have questions regarding paying via Paypal, please call Louis Matamoros at (623) 734-6624 or email him at biglou6415@yahoo.com.

SPECIAL NOTE: Receiving the COPRA Chronicle by email significantly defrays the printing and postage costs for COPRA. An added benefit is that if there is any important information that COPRA wants to send to its members, we have your email address on file and can transmit to you. If you are receiving the Chronicle in the U.S. mail, please consider changing to an email version.

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR YOU

Trees can create safety hazards when they grow too close to power lines. To avoid these hazards, follow these suggestions from SRP Safety Connection:

- v Before planting a new tree, find out its mature height and spread and locate it at least 25 feet away from overhead lines.
- v Never attempt to trim trees near power lines. Instead, call (602)236-8888 and SRP will evaluate the tree for pruning. SRP only hires tree pruners who are qualified to work safely near energized power lines.

Go to srpnet.com/treeplant for more details if you are a SRP customer.

Source: SRP Contact, March 2018

NEW INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS OUT OF AMERICA'S FRIENDLIEST AIRPORT®

Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport is your gateway to the world, offering nonstop service to more than 80 domestic destinations and 20 international destinations! In May, Condor Airlines will begin to offer nonstop service from Phoenix to Frankfurt, Germany. British Airways has also added extra daily nonstop service from Phoenix to London Heathrow. Recently, new, nonstop service began to Montreal on Air Canada Rouge, bringing the total number of cities serviced in Canada to 10.

In addition to numerous flight options, travelers will find award-winning, local dining opportunities like Four Peaks and Cowboy Ciao at the airport and new retail shops like Tumi and Lucky Break. And did you know that Phoenix Sky Harbor was recently named by MileCard as having the fastest customs lines among major airports in the county, making it even easier to get home once you return from your international vacation? For details on flights and amenities, visit skyharbor.com/flyphx.

Source: PHX at Your Service, April 2018

NEW RETIREES (MARCH 2018)

Noe Avila	Water Services	David Martin	Planning and Dev Dept
James Boehnlein	Aviation	Funyung Mon	Housing
Randall Camp	Water Services	Glenn Nelson	Water Services
Joseph Capilla	Public Works	Joseph Niles	Information Tech. Services
Jeffrey Crockett	Water Services	Sally Padilla	Fire Dept.
Daniel Dunlap	Parks & Rec.	John Roe	Street Transportation
Manuel Gabaldon	Aviation	Jonathan Snyder	Water Services
Jose Garcia	Street Transportation	Robert Soza	Water Services
Kim Harper	Finance Dept.	Leslie Stotler	Finance Dept.
Gary Kasem	Water Services	Linda Tarango	Aviation
Linda Kinchloe	Police Dept.	Rufino Uribe	Public Works
Sheryl Kroeplin	Water Services	Carolyn Wilson	Housing
Luanne Lugo	Library	Troy Wolf	Street Transportation

RISK OF FALLING FOR A MEDICARE CARD-REPLACEMENT SCAM HIGH

Most beneficiaries are unaware of the redesigned Medicare card initiative.

Many believe they might have to pay for the revamped Medicare ID cards, making them vulnerable to scammers.

More than three-quarters of Americans over age 65 know little or nothing about the federal government's initiative to replace their Medicare cards. And that makes them susceptible to scammers intent on taking advantage of the confusion.

Individuals new to Medicare are receiving the updated card, which displays a unique combination of 11 letters and numbers rather than a beneficiary's Social Security number (SSN). Current beneficiaries will begin receiving their replacement cards next month.

Most Medicare recipients mistakenly believe they might have to pay for the revamped cards. The new cards are free. Most might not be suspicious if they received a call — supposedly from Medicare — asking them to verify their SSNs as a prerequisite to getting a new card. Medicare officials have emphasized that they will never call beneficiaries about the cards, which are being mailed out by the Social Security Administration.

Scammers posing as Medicare representatives have already been calling beneficiaries demanding a processing fee. Other fraudsters are telling beneficiaries that they are owed a refund from transactions on their old card and then asking for bank account information to process the reimbursement. Medicare will never ask an enrollee for a bank account number, and no refunds are owed.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, April 10, 2018

YOUR E-MAIL IS YOUR ENTRY

As you all know, receiving the COPRA Chronicle by email significantly defrays the printing and postage costs for COPRA. An added benefit is that if there is any important information that COPRA wants to send you, we have your email address on file and can transmit to you in a timely fashion.

In order to encourage our COPRA members to receive the Chronicle by email, your COPRA Board started a new program! Each month, we will randomly select one member who receives their Chronicle by email and that member will receive a \$25 gift certificate to a grocery store (Fry's or Safeway).

April winner is **CYNTHIA PETERS! CONGRATULATIONS CYNTHIA!**

If we already have your email address, you are automatically entered! If you do not receive the Chronicle by email do so NOW! You can provide your email to Linda Henderson at lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com. She can also be reached by phone at (623) 693-9955.

Sign up now!

CITY MANAGER COLUMN

ED ZUERCHER, City Manager

One of the best aspects of being City Manager is to be a member of a team that provides excellent service 24/7. As you know, the work we do matters and every day we positively impact the community in a number of ways. I want to share with you some recent examples from this year, which includes comments from the residents who experienced memorable interactions with our employees.



Ed Zuercher

"I wanted to take a moment and say thank you to JaVaughn Blackwell who took the time help my son get enrolled into a basketball league at the Sunnyslope Community Center. We showed up on a busy Saturday with games going and she kindly told me that the leagues were full but if we waited she might be able to find a spot for him, which she did. She handed my son a jersey and he played that day. What she didn't know is that it's been a hard year for my family. People like JaVaughn are special and I wanted to tell someone. My son is so excited and looks forward to his games and practices. His love for basketball inspires me along with the patience and kindness JaVaughn showed us that busy Saturday."-Sunnyslope Resident

"I had a terrific experience today at the commercial property I own. Michael Perez and Carlos Lara from the Water Services Department were quick and professional when handling a water runoff problem. They went above and beyond to solve the issue. They followed up via text with an update."-Phoenix Business Owner

"I live in North Phoenix and my husband and I drive the same route to work every day. We noticed that there seemed to be a change in the timing of the light that was causing traffic to back up and cause significant delays (7-10 minutes). I reached out to the Phoenix Traffic via the Contact Us page - to just let them know that we noticed an issue. I didn't expect to hear anything but to my surprise James Baker called me to ask me follow up questions. He let me know that he'd have someone check out the light timing and traffic flow. The next day he called me back and let me know they went down to the light and did notice that there was an issue and did something with the program and we should notice a difference. I wanted to let you know how blown away I was about the service provided!"-North Phoenix Resident

"I am writing you today in regards to Ranger Chris Webb and her unselfish act of following up on a potential hazard at Apache Wash. I couple of weeks ago I mentioned that a large saguaro branch was dying and dangling precariously above the popular Esplanade Trail. Yesterday I ran into her at the park and was pleasantly surprised to see her getting ready to ride a mountain bike out to the spot to address my concern. She was a true professional and even answered many "desert-type" environmental questions while riding the 2.5 miles to the potential hazard. Her actions may be normal duty for you, but as a concerned citizen, she went well beyond the call of duty. I appreciate her, and the fact that she has a bicycle to respond to this and other potential hazards and emergency responses."-Avid Phoenix hiker

These everyday interactions are important as City employees communicate the value of local government to our residents. As retirees, you know that these actions are more normal than people expect. But it's what makes Phoenix unique as a large city with a personal touch. Thanks to all who demonstrate the value of Phoenix employees. As I like to tell folks, it's our home, too.

LED FYI

The retail price of LED light bulbs has dropped roughly 90 percent since their early days. LEDs use 80 to 90 percent less electricity than incandescent bulbs and last for years, saving you big cash and trips up the ladder. But know your terms.

Replacement wattage. It's the wattage of the incandescent bulb that the LED is meant to replace—a rough brightness equivalency.

Wattage. This is the actual power used by the LED bulb. A typical household LED uses about 8 to 20 watts, so if a fixture says 60W max, you have plenty of capacity to spare.

Lumens. It's the real measure of brightness. The more lumens per watt, the more energy efficient the bulb is.

CCT. Correlated color temperature is measured in kelvins (K) and describes the tone of light emitted. In general, use “warm” or “soft” white bulbs (3000K or below) for bedrooms and living rooms; “cool” white (3100 to 4500K) for bathrooms; and “daylight” (above 4600K) for outdoors or workrooms.

Dimmable. An LED bulb will work with a dimmer switch only if the package explicitly says so.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, April/May 2018

TRAVEL CONFIDENTLY

International travelers seeking detailed safety information on destinations around the world will find the U.S. State Department's new only travel advisory system more useful and specific than ever. Previously, it offered broad advisories for the world's most dangerous countries; now it evaluates every country and labels each with the level from 1 to 4. Level 1 indicates that a country (such as Canada) is relatively safe: “Exercise normal precautions.” Level 4 (Afghanistan, for example) means “Do not travel.”

There are safety levels within a country, too. For instance, although Mexico overall is level 2 (“Exercise increase caution,” due to crime), five Mexican states with worse crime are level 4.

You can also register with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (step.state.gov) to receive travel alerts about your destination country and record contact information so the U.S. government can reach you with information and help in case of emergency.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, April/May 2018

JET-SET PETS

It's getting easier to vacation with your fur baby,

Flying. Airline's policies on pets in the cabin vary, but American Airlines and Delta Airlines allow dogs or cats (Delta also allows birds) to fly in carriers that can fit under the seat; the fee is \$125 each way on domestic flights (international travel, however, gets complicated). Southwest Airlines charge \$95. Service animals fly free.

Riding. On most routes, Amtrak allows animals that are 20 pounds or less to ride in a pet carrier for \$25 if the trip is less than seven hours.

Lodging. Seventy-five percent of luxury, midscale and economy U.S. hotels now allow pets, according to a recent American Hotel & Lodging Association Survey.

Walt Disney World is testing pet inclusivity by welcoming dogs at four of its 26 resort hotels. Though fees start at an addition \$50 a night. Rover gets a bag of toys and treats.

(Continued on page 7)

IN REMEMBRANCE

Melva Freeman	09/05/2017
William White	01/29/2018
Alvin Smith	03/19/2018
William R. Kowall	03/22/2108
John Mohr	03/22/2018
Carolina Morales	03/23/2018
Edward Schlar	03/30/2018
Amelia Sanchez	04/01/2018
John McNeill	04/02/2018
Helen Mueller	04/03/2018
David A. Schreiner	04/06/2018
Shriley Lachance	04/08/2018
Lumduan Berletic	04/10/2018
Michael Jean Merideth	04/10/2018
Carmen Morales	04/15/2018

JET-SET PETS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 6)

Some chains, including Red Roof Inn and Kimpton Hotels, welcome pets for free. Other hotels charge a fee but include pet perks. The Cypress Inn in Carmel, California, where your dog can stay or an extra \$30 per night, hosts “yappy hours” most evenings. Humans sip wine; pooches eat grilled chicken.

Dining. Many restaurants are allowing diners to eat with their dogs in outdoor patio areas, in part thanks to loosening city laws.

Planning. Before setting off, research pet friendly businesses at your destination or at points along the way, at bringfido.com or gopetfriendly.com.

Source: AARP / Real Possibilities, February/March 2018

NEW SHINGLES VACCINE

Adults age 50 and up should be vaccinated against shingles with the new vaccine Shingrix, advises Kathleen Dooling, MD MPH. (The original vaccine, Zostavax, was given starting at age 60.) Shingrix is more effective - 97% versus 51% - at preventing shingles, caused by the chicken pox virus. Get it even if you don't remember having chicken pox or have received Zostavax. You'll need two shots, two to six months apart. Side effects include muscle aches, fatigue and soreness at the injection site.

Kathleen Dooling, D MPH, is a medical officer at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta.

Source: BottomLine Personal, April 2018

COPRA website.....	www.phoenixcopra.com
COPERS website.....	www.phoenix.gov/phxcopers
COPMEA website.....	www.copmea.com
City Retirement Systems (COPERS).....	(602) 534-4400
Human Resources - Benefits Section.....	(602) 262-4777
COPMEA.....	(602) 262-6858

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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.

MAY COPRA CHRONICLE

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PO Box 2464
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



2018 MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership meetings held at the
Washington Activity Center
2240 W Citrus Way, Phoenix, AZ

Future Meeting Dates to be Determined

Board meetings are held quarterly on the 2nd Thursday of the Month
Except for June, July and August. These meeting dates will be announced