



The ADVISOR

TEACHERS, EMPLOYEES, and JUDICIAL



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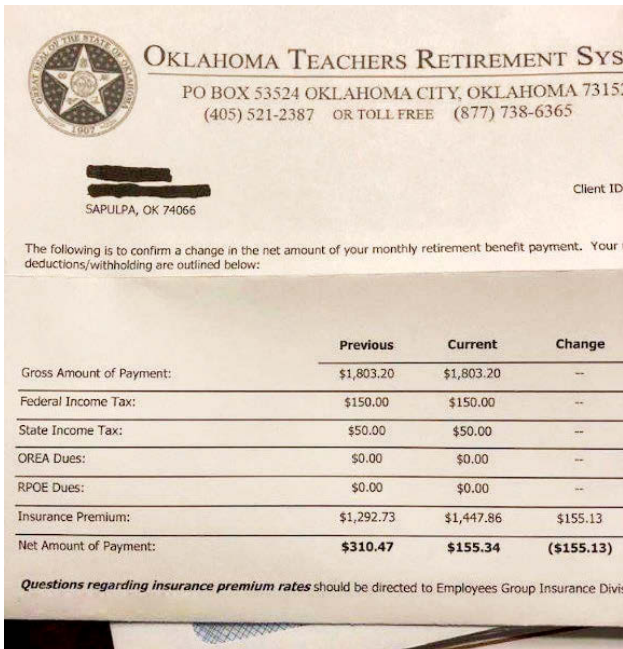
SERVING OVER 350,000 MEMBERS

May 2018

RSA Members Are Fortunate

Geoff Statum and David Harer, along with their 71,000 followers, shared Cody and Kim Duncan’s post from Oklahoma on the “Save Our RSA Retirement” Facebook page.

FROM A TEACHER IN OKLAHOMA



Cody and Kim Duncan: Teacher friends take a look at this. My mom’s **retirement check after 26 years of service**. She receives \$155.34 a month after paying insurance for her and dad. ●

Get Involved

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

Elections for legislative seats and statewide constitutional offices are soon upon us. **The primaries for these seats/offices are set for June 5, 2018**; primary run-offs for July 17, 2018; and the general election for November 6, 2018. If you care about your pension, get involved in the primaries and ask candidates how they stand on the RSA, or you will let those who want to gut the RSA win! Do not ask me, “What happened to my excellent program?” if you did not vote, or if you elect people that want to cut your benefits because you failed to ask these candidates questions about supporting the RSA.

There’s a lot of turnover this election cycle. Twelve of 35 state senate seats and 26 of 105 state representative seats are open. This means 38 new legislators in 2019. That many new faces can change the direction of the legislative body for better or worse. Will the new members push for “pension reform,” or will they focus on keeping the RSA strong in its current form?

It is more important than ever for you to vote and be informed about the candidates. Make sure you know where candidates stand on retirement issues. Do they understand the importance of your retirement benefit? Do they support your current defined benefit plan for public and education employees? If not, do something about it.

It is just as important to support and thank the elected officials who have supported the RSA over the years and have fully funded your pension system every year.

For general election information and to check your voter registration status, see the Alabama Secretary of State’s website at <https://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes>. For more details on candidates, check out information provided by your local news sources, candidate’s websites, your professional associations, and posts from the administrators of the “Save Our RSA Retirement” Facebook page. ●



2018 Legislative Session Update

BY NEAH SCOTT, LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

The 2018 Regular Legislative Session ended on March 29, 2018. The Legislature fully funded both the ERS and TRS in the General Fund and Education Trust Fund budgets. The Legislature also funded PEEHIP at the requested rate of \$800 per employee, per month in the Edu-

cation Trust Fund budget.

It was a relatively quiet session for the RSA. No major legislation was introduced that would negatively impact the RSA and its members.

Three bills were enacted which dealt with retiree bonuses for ERS and

TRS retirees:

- Act 2018-355 (SB215) and Act 2018-493 (SB21), both sponsored by Sen. Dial, provide for one-time bonuses to ERS state retirees and TRS retirees, respectively, in the amount of \$1 per

Marriott Recognizes Grand National with “Hotel of the Year”

BY KARA COLEMAN | OPELIKA-AUBURN NEWS

The Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel & Conference Center at Grand National received honors recently from Marriott International and the editors of *Golf Digest* magazine.

Of Marriott’s 634 classic premium hotels in North America, the company designated six as 2017 Hotel of the Year, including the Grand National location. The Hotel of the Year distinction comes after Marriott reviewed guest satisfaction surveys, financial records, and overall property performance.

“I think a lot of it has to do with all the renovations and improvements that we’ve done over the past year,” said Brooke Kastner, director of sales and marketing for the Auburn Marriott Opelika at Grand National. “We’re adding 93 additional guest rooms that we’re going to be opening sometime next month, the spa that’s coming on line at the end of the summer, a full renovation of the restaurant that has just reopened, with a new concept and brand, and everything that goes along with that.”

“We’re very honored to be included in that upper echelon of hotels within Marriott International. So that was really exciting for us. And we had no idea; it was just kind of a surprise that we found out last week.”

The other Marriott locations that received the company’s top nod were the Buffalo Marriott Harborcenter, Washington Dulles Marriott Suites, Milwaukee Marriott West, Louisville Marriott East, and the Sheraton McKinney Hotel in Texas.

GOLF RESORT

That announcement came at the same time the Grand National location was named a Top Golf Resort by the *Golf Digest* editors for the third consecutive year. The Auburn Marriott Opelika is “one of the five best golf resorts in the Southeast,” as chosen by the magazine editors.

“Overlooking Lake Saugahatchee, the low-profile hotel is adjacent to the 54-hole Grand National golf complex, a key part of Alabama’s famed Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail,” according to *Golf Digest*.

Making the magazine’s list is “a huge accomplishment in itself,” Kastner said. “That takes into consideration the hotel, the golf course, and everything that goes into that,” she explained. “And that’s the editors’ choice, so they really look at a lot of resorts throughout the Southeast to determine who gets those. To be honored with that three years in a row is really exciting.”

The area’s only AAA Four Diamond hotel, the Auburn Marriott Opelika is set to officially become a Marriott Resort this fall.

Pool and tennis memberships are available for local residents, and spa and fitness membership packages are expected to be made available in the future.

“Even more is coming later in the year, with the new rooms opening next month, the 20,000-square-foot spa and fitness facility that’s just going to be an amazing addition to our community, I think, that will be opening in September,” Kastner said. “We’re looking for the chance to really create an even better experience for our guests, as well as folks who are in the area.” ●



2018 Legislative Session Update CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

month of service. These bonuses will be **paid out in June** to members who retired prior to May 2018 and are receiving a benefit as of April 30, 2018. The ERS retiree bonus will be funded in the fiscal year 2020 employer contribution rate. **The TRS retiree bonus will be funded by a monetary transfer from PEEHIP to the TRS**, as directed in the Education Trust Fund budget.

- Act 2018-563 (HB249), by Rep. McMillan, extends the time for local units to choose to provide the retiree bonus allowed for by Act 2017-367.

Additionally, Act 2018-404 (SB23), by Sen. Coleman-Madison, allows for the purchase of service credit for employment after October 1, 2000, with an agency eligible for participation in the ERS. The previous law only allowed for

the purchase of such credit for employment before October 1, 2000.

Finally, three local bills were enacted:

- Act 2018-559 (HB471), by Rep. Knight, authorizes the city of Montgomery and the Montgomery Airport Authority to join the ERS upon approval by the ERS Board of Control.
- Act 2018-388 (HB121), by Rep. Lawrence, proposes a constitutional amendment to allow Montgomery County Commissioners to participate in the ERS.
- Act 2018-37 (HB168), by Rep. Hurst, proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the Clay County sheriff to participate in the ERS. ●

Great Golf Courses Just a Drive Away

BY BLAKE GUTHRIE | ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION

The good thing about being a golfer in the South is that you're close to some of the best golfing in the country. Here are some Southeastern courses worth checking, not only for the links but what else these clubs and resorts have to offer.

ALABAMA: ALMOST HEAVEN FOR GOLFERS

Some of the nation's best golf is in Alabama. Ross Bridge outside Birmingham and Grand National in Opelika are each part of the popular Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, and *Golf Digest* editors selected both last year as the top golf resorts in the Southeast. They also have named the Ross Bridge course one of the toughest in the nation, being "impossibly long with

enormous greens and bunkers" and the kind that "Trent would be building if he were still alive." Renowned golf course architect Robert Trent Jones (he went by Trent), who died at 93 in 2000, designed and redesigned courses on every continent except Antarctica, and was fond of bragging, "the sun never sets on a Robert Trent Jones golf course."

The Trail in Alabama was among his last projects, and he considered it his final masterpiece. Accolades began pouring in shortly after the first 18 courses opened, with *The New York Times* calling it "some of the best public golf on earth" and *The Wall Street Journal* proclaiming it "may be the best bargain in the country." Now up

to 26 courses, the Trail boasts 468 holes at 11 locations.

Many also have full-service resort hotels and spa facilities, including the two mentioned above as well as the Lakewood site at Point Clear on Mobile Bay. This idyllic coastal location is also home to The Grand Hotel, open since 1847 and listed as one of the Historic Hotels of America. The Grand Hotel is open but undergoing major renovations slated to be complete in May. The Dogwood course at Lakewood is undergoing renovations and will reopen in June. The Grand National is so popular that the Marriott hotel there is doubling its occupancy capacity with the new areas expected to be open by May. ●

GolfDigest EDITORS' CHOICE: DESTINATIONS & ACCOMMODATIONS

Best Golf Resorts in the Southeast

Two of the Top Five: RTJ Alabama

AUBURN MARRIOTT OPELIKA (Ala.) HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER AT GRAND NATIONAL

The Lodge at Old Waverly West Point, Miss.

RENAISSANCE BIRMINGHAM (Ala.) ROSS BRIDGE GOLF RESORT & SPA

Reynolds Lake Oconee, Greensboro, Ga.

Sea Island (Ga.) Resort



The Top 10 States for Firearm Violence

SOURCE: LEADA GORE, AL.COM

1. Alaska - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 23.0 per 100,000
2. **Alabama - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 21.4 per 100,000**
3. Louisiana - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 21.2 per 100,000
4. Mississippi - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 19.8 per 100,000
5. Oklahoma - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 19.6 per 100,000
6. Montana - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 19.0 per 100,000
7. Missouri - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 18.8 per 100,000
8. New Mexico - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 18.2 per 100,000
9. Arkansas - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 17.7 per 100,000
10. South Carolina - Firearm deaths per 100,000 people: 17.7 per 100,000

The state with the least reported gun violence was Massachusetts, with 3.4 firearm deaths for every 100,000 residents.



Start Planning Your Spring/Summer Getaways at RSA's Outstanding Hotels, Spas, and RTJ Golf

RETIREMENT SYSTEMS OF ALABAMA
201 SOUTH UNION STREET
P.O. BOX 302150
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-2150

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MONTGOMERY, AL
PERMIT NO. 402



Member Hotel
Discounts Webpage

ENJOY YOUR SPRING/SUMMER
A Special Deal
FOR RSA MEMBERS

The Battle House,

A Renaissance Hotel—Mobile—\$119

- May 1-3, 6-10, 13-17, 20-31
- June 5-6, 8-14, 15-21, 22-30
- July 1-3, 13-15, 18-26, 29-31

The Renaissance Riverview Plaza—Mobile—\$109

- May 1, 6-9, 20-24, 27-31
- June 1-3, 8-9, 13, 20-27 • July 18

Marriott Grand—\$127 plus a 15% resort fee

- May 6, 13, 23-24, 28-29
- June 3-4, 13 • July 7-9, 22-23

Marriott Grand—RSA Golf Package—\$199 plus a 15% resort fee —Promotional code—R2A

Includes: Deluxe Room, One Round of Golf for Two People. Call for Tee Times after booking package

- May 6, 13, 23-24, 28-29 • June 3-4, 13
- July 7-9, 22-23

Marriott Shoals—Florence—\$109

- May 4-6, 13, 27-28 • June 3-4, 6, 10, 17, 25
- July 5-6, 8, 15, 22, 29-30

Renaissance Ross Bridge—Hoover—\$119

- May 1-3, 5-17, 20, 27-31
- June 3-7, 9-14, 17-30 • July 1-31

Opelika Marriott—\$109

- May 1-2, 7-8, 13-16, 23-24, 28-31
- June 3-7, 10-12, 17-21, 24-28
- July 5-12, 15-19, 22-26, 29-31

Prattville Marriott—\$89

- May 6-7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 25-30
- June 5, 8-9, 17-18, 23-25, 29-30
- July 1-5, 8-9, 15-16, 22, 26, 29

Renaissance Montgomery—\$119

- May 6-9, 11, 13, 25-31 • June 10-11, 17, 20
- July 2-12, 21, 26, 29

RSA Spa Package—\$199—Promotional code—R2A

- May 8-9, 11, 25-26, 29-31
- June 20 • July 3-7, 10-12, 21, 26

Specific room requests may require additional charge.
Rates available the 1st of the month and are not applicable to groups.

800-228-9290 Ask for RSA rate. **Promotional Code: R2A** on www.rsa-al.gov
Book Online and Save RSA \$4.

Candidates Sought for Six TRS Board Positions

Candidates are being sought for six positions on the TRS Board of Control: Teacher Position No. 1, Teacher Position No. 2, Support Personnel Position No. 1, Retired Position No. 1, Postsecondary Position, and Higher Education Position No. 1. Elected members will begin their three-year term of service on July 1, 2019.

Teacher Position No. 1 is currently held by Cathy McNeal; Teacher Position No. 2 by Ricky Whaley; Support Personnel Position No. 1 by Susan Lockridge; Retired Position No. 1 by Peggy Mobley; Postsecondary Position by Susan Williams Brown; and Higher Education Position No. 2 by Joseph Van Matre. The election will take place this October.

Nomination packets are available at www.rsa-al.gov or by contacting the Elections Coordinator at 334.517.7192 or 877.517.0020. The completed packet must be returned to the TRS office no later than 4:00 p.m., September 7, 2018. ●



New ERS Board Member

Mr. John Free of the Alabama Public Service Commission takes the Oath of Office as a governor's appointee to the Employees' Board of Control from Vice Chair Jackie Graham. ●



CEO

David G. Bronner

Deputy Director

Donald L. Yancey

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Communications

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Chief Accountant & Financial Officer

Diane E. Scott

Employees' and Judicial Retirement

William F. Kelley, Jr.

Field Services

Christopher C. Gallup

Information Technology Services

Michael T. Baker

Investments

R. Marc Green

General Counsel

Leura G. Canary

Legislative Counsel

Neah M. Scott

Member Services

Penny K. Wilson

PEEHIP

Donna M. Joyner

RSA-1

Rhonda H. Peters

Teachers' Retirement

Christopher P. Townes

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877.517.0020

RSA Website: www.rsa-al.gov