

We work better, when we work together....

January 2015

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Congratulations Mariel!



As most of you know, Mariel Hale retired January 1, 2015. She had 37 years of dedicated state service, 20 of which were right here at MPERS. Mariel was a great asset to our team. We will miss her experience and historical knowledge, but most of all we will miss Mariel herself. Mariel had a special flare and style that kept Pre-Retirement Seminars entertaining and informative.

Below is a write-up by Mariel, which was recently showcased on our website under “Meet MPERS Staff”. We wish Mariel all the best in her retirement!

I am a 20-year veteran of retirement benefits for MPERS and have worked in a variety of positions during this time. I currently keep members informed of their benefits through retirement counseling and educational seminars. My first assignment as a benefits specialist was to develop an MPERS' member education program. This first began as pre-retirement seminars presented around the state for members within five years of retirement. These seminars reach more than 1,500 future retirees every year. In addition, the Retirement Benefit Basics presentation was developed to better educate younger employees about their benefits. This information has been presented on an ongoing basis around the state once every three years and reaches more than 900 active employees each year. I also encourage any office or location to call us to schedule this presentation wherever there is any interest.

I have worked at MPERS with many different people and seen numerous exciting changes over the years. The most significant changes have been the appearance of the computer compared to keeping records by hand to the current system of everything being available at our fingertips through the computer – all of which has made our jobs so much more productive!

As of January 1, 2015, I will retire with 37 years of state service and from this current position of doing what I love most -- working with future retirees! Woo hoo! The first day I started with MPERS, the person training me said, “You’re gonna love this job ... everyone you work with is HAPPY!” For the most part, that is exactly right!!!

I will really miss the people I have worked with at MPERS who have always been like a second family to me!

My plans for retirement include: reading more books; binge watching my favorite TV shows I haven't had time for; sleeping in until I want to get up – not when the alarm says I have to get up; cleaning closets; painting walls; and of course, working on some new Christmas decorations!

My advice for future retirees is exactly what I say at retirement seminars:

1. *Pay off as many bills as possible;*
2. *SAVE, SAVE, SAVE;*
3. *PLAN, PLAN, PLAN;*
4. *Never hesitate to call a benefit specialist with any questions - retirement could be a 30-year decision - you definitely want to make it an informed decision; and*
5. *APPRECIATE your wonderful lifetime retirement benefit that has been provided to you by the State of Missouri!*

I am looking forward to moving on to another chapter in my life – “Hopefully, lots of chapters to go before the book is complete.”

Salary for Benefit Statements

Just a reminder, every year MPERS issues benefit statements to our active employees. Included in the benefit statements are estimates, which include projected salary, **based on the member's pay for the month of February**. Please note that for any employee with “OHW” and flex, the salary projections may be skewed. Also please try to avoid any corrections or additions to the February payments, that may also distort their estimates....or try to keep them in mind if a member comes to you concerned about the amounts shown.

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Attached is a copy of our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for FY2014. MPERS realized a 17.58% rate of return on our investments during FY2014, and our funded status has increased from 46.2% to 49.2%. If you have any questions about the report, please feel free to contact us.

FYI 2015 Brochure

Also attached is the latest version of “MPERS FYI”. This brochure (which can also be found on our website) provides a brief history of MPERS, a summary of our benefit provisions, as well as the most recent statistical information pertaining to our membership, investments and funding status.

Updated \$5,000 Beneficiary Designation

We have recently revised our \$5,000 Beneficiary Designation form. We had several members incorrectly list their primary & contingent beneficiaries in the wrong sections. Therefore we have added additional space and a separation line between where members should list their primary & contingent beneficiaries. The revised form is attached and can also be found on our website under “Forms”.