



The Feedbag

Staying Connected



MoDOT & Patrol Employees' Retirement System

December 2017

Volume #3



Director's Note

How financially secure would your retirement be without the benefit you receive from MPERS? For some of you that only spent a short period of time with one of our covered employers, the MPERS benefit you receive may only cover a minor expense or support an entertainment budget each month. But for those who spent their careers working in state government, the benefit is likely more meaningful. Stop for a moment and ask yourself "where would I be if I did not receive my MPERS benefit each month?" For many, the answer to that question would send a cold chill down your spine. I am not suggesting that MPERS provides some extravagant, wealth-building benefit. But it does provide basic financial security that you can count on for your lifetime. Last year, the average annual benefit for a new MPERS retiree – one who retired directly from active employment – was almost \$30,000. By itself, that number may not garner much attention. Consider for a moment that a retiree may receive that amount for 25 years, ignoring cost-of-living adjustments that would amount to \$750,000. I ask again, "where would you be without your MPERS benefit?" Imagine the level of personal savings you would need to set aside to achieve that sum.

The truth of the matter is that most of us do not do a good enough job saving for retirement or simply saving for any reason. Too many retirees that do not have a pension like MPERS' end up trying to live on their social security benefit alone. The average annual social security benefit paid to retired workers in 2016 was \$16,207. What makes that even more worrisome is that by the 2030s, social security benefits are projected to be paid at 75% of their normal value unless some legislative action is taken.

Did you know?

95% of Americans now own a cellphone of some kind...

...77% of those people have a smartphone.

80% of US adults own a desktop or laptop computer, while roughly half now own tablet computers...

...and 20% own e-reader devices.

Source: Pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile

So what is the point of all this? Defined benefit pension plans, like MPERS, are on the decline. In the private sector, traditional pensions are being replaced with 401k-style savings plans that provide a much smaller and less efficient benefit, not to mention that most owners of these 401k plans do not adequately fund or manage them. The pressure to replace defined benefit plans in the public sector has been steadily building for years. As a retiree, your benefits are set in place with little to worry about, but the current and future workforce is at risk of not enjoying the very benefit you will receive for the rest of your life.

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No Paper Ballots!!! Board Election 2018

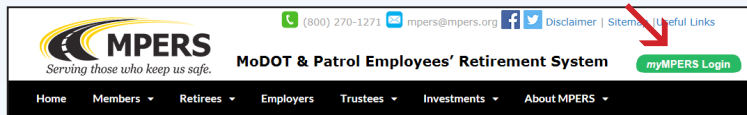
Coming in March 2018, MPERS will conduct elections for the active and retired representatives for our Board of Trustees. Over the last few years, the election process has been slowly converted to an electronic process. The March election will be the first that is totally electronic for both our retired and active members. What does that mean? In short, it means that voters may only cast their ballots via the secure portion of MPERS' website.



Many of you have already registered for access to our secure portion of our website and we thank you for using that feature. In fact, you will find an article in this newsletter about updates to that member-only website.

If you have not registered, we encourage you to do so soon so there is no impediment to your election participation. To register for secure access, please call our office at 800-270-1271. You will be connected with a benefit specialist who will ask you a few security questions to verify your identity, and who will then set you up with a username and passphrase.

Once your account has been established, logging in is simple. Go to our website, www.mpers.org and click on the green button in the top right hand corner that says "myMPERS Login."



The electronic voting process has a number of advantages relative to the paper ballots of the past. The printing, distribution, and manpower costs required to create, issue, and tally the paper ballots was significant. The electronic voting process has practically no cost and requires only a few hours of staff time, not to mention it is free of human error in tallying the votes.

We realize everyone does not have a computer or possibly internet access to routinely use our website. For these occasions, we would encourage you to use a family or friend's computer, go to the public library, use one at church, or use your smartphone. Regardless of the means, always be sure to protect passwords/passphrases and other personal information.

Final Printed Newsletter

As we have mentioned several times in this newsletter, we are moving as many of our communications as we can from paper to electronic formats. Therefore, in an effort to reach this goal, this will be our final **printed** newsletter. The Feedbag - Staying Connected is distributed to payees every December & June. If you wish to continue receiving notice that the newsletter is available, please update your distribution preference to "email" under your myMPERS Secure Member Access.

Newsletters are also available on our website, www.mpers.org under Publications/Newsletters. We hope you find this newsletter informative and entertaining and will continue to read it going forward.

Current MPERS Board of Trustee Members



Sue Cox
Board Chair



Bill Seibert
Board Vice-Chair



John W.
Briscoe



Sgt Matt
Broniec



Col Sandra
Karsten



Patrick
McKenna



Michael B
Pace



Rep Shawn
Rhoads



Sen Dave
Schatz



Gregg C
Smith



Todd
Tyler

Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

February 15, 2018

April 26, 2018

June 21, 2018

September 27, 2018

November 29, 2018



Coming Soon - Summary Annual Financial Report (MPERS FYI)



In the past, MPERS published an annual information brochure entitled, *MPERS FYI*, which provided various financial, statistical, and operational information about MPERS and the benefits provided. This year, we have taken information from *MPERS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)* and combined it with information from *MPERS FYI*, to create a *Summary Annual Financial Report*. This report provides an abbreviated version of the detailed information found in the CAFR as well as continuing to provide the informational items that were previously available in the *MPERS FYI*. We hope you find this report useful and informative. The report will be available on our website soon under Publications.

Updated myMPERS Secure Member Access

The Secure Member Access portal (*myMPERS*) on MPERS website has recently been improved. The new design will allow members to use a variety of devices (i.e., smartphone, tablet, laptop, and desktop computer) to access their individual account information. Additionally, the new design will allow the display to automatically resize based on the size of the screen.

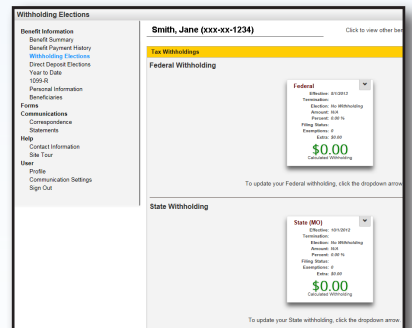
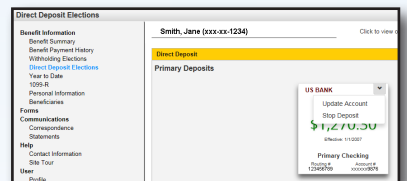
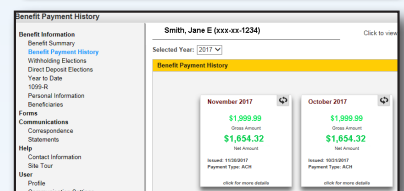
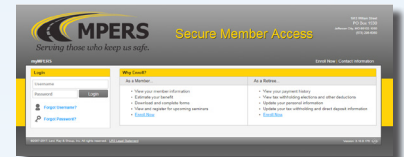
You must have a username and passphrase to access the secure member access portal. If you have never used *myMPERS* before, we encourage you to do so. The new website offers a “site tour” that will provide you with an opportunity to learn about what the new website has to offer. Some of the improvements are:

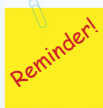
- Copies of your 1099-R will display exactly like the 1099-R printed version. You can print it if you have lost your original form.
- Members can edit withholding elections
- Members can edit or stop direct deposits
- Members can see information displayed on cards or in grid view
- Beneficiary information display is improved

We hope you like the new design and have a better experience when accessing your retirement data at MPERS.

Director's Note...continued

It is increasingly important that individuals like yourself communicate how important these pensions are to your retirement security. You can do that as an individual or by joining an advocacy group like the Association for Active & Retired Missouri State Employees (ARMSE). I have watched ARMSE for almost 20 years attempt to make a difference for Missouri state employees and retirees. Recently the group has ramped up efforts because they recognize the risk of our pension plans disappearing. One of the constant struggles for ARMSE however is low membership. All of you likely know a retired teacher in your area. Ask a teacher you know if they belong to the Missouri Retired Teachers Association. The answer will very likely be “yes.” The teachers’ association is one of the most powerful voices in the state capitol each legislative session. There is no reason why ARMSE cannot join those ranks but it cannot get there without your membership. I strongly encourage you to contact your local chapter or to create a local chapter in your area. To get started, go to the ARMSE website, www.armse.org, or call (573) 291-8277 to inquire. Your participation could make a difference for generations to come.





Annual Reminders

December 2017

MoDOT/MSHP Medical & MCHCP Dental/Vision Premiums

The new 2018 medical, dental, and vision insurance premiums begin with your **December** benefit payment.

Reason it changes in December: The premium you pay in the current month is for the following month's insurance coverage. For example, the premium deducted in December is for your January coverage.

If you have medical coverage through Employee Benefits and have questions regarding the premium or coverage, please call Employee Benefits at (877) 863-9406.

If you have dental/vision coverage through MCHCP and have questions regarding the premiums or coverage, please call MCHCP at (800) 487-0771.

January 2018

1099-R Information

1099-R forms will be mailed to you by January 31, 2018, but will be available via your *myMPERS* Secure Member Access as soon as the information is finalized (around mid-to-late January). You will receive a separate 1099-R for each type of benefit payment you received from MPERS in 2017 (e.g., monthly benefit payment, BackDROP distribution, survivor benefit, etc.).

For your convenience, the 1099-R contains the total medical, dental, and vision premiums that were deducted from your 2017 monthly benefit payments from MPERS. The amounts do not include any refunds or manual premium payments.

Federal Tax Withholding

The IRS generally changes the federal tax withholding tables every **January**.



The new tables are used to calculate your deduction if your withholding election is based on marital status and number of allowances (e.g., single with 1 allowance, married with 2 allowances, etc.).

If you have questions regarding your federal or Missouri state tax withholding, please contact a tax professional.



2018 COLA Rate

The 2018 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be calculated and announced in **late January**, which is when the U.S. Department of Labor generally releases the December Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) numbers needed for the calculation.

Once the 2018 COLA rate is determined, MPERS will post it online at www.mpers.org.

Contact Information

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Mailing Address:

PO Box 1930
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1930



Phone	Fax	Email	Website
(800) 270-1271	(573) 522-6111	mpers@mpers.org	www.mpers.org

"The Feedback" was conceived to get attention for a specific purpose - feedback. It worked! So we decided to keep the theme and return the favor by delivering important information to our members via these newsletters. Input on the content of these newsletters, or anything related to MPERS for that matter, is always welcome. Keep the exchange going and share your **feedback feedback with us at mpers@mpers.org.**