



Board of Directors

Officers

Joel W. Pafford - Ratón

President

Joseph Luna - Estancia

First Vice-President

Michael J. Francis - Las Cruces

Second Vice-President

Isabel T. Clendenin - Albuquerque

Secretary

Michael D. Hansen - Albuquerque

Treasurer

Board Members

Susan H. Biernacki - Albuquerque

Lee Caruana - Ratón

Barbara Castillo - Ratón

Gerald L. Chávez - Mountainair

Doug Crandall - Scottsdale

RHCA Representative

Wayne M. Lucero - Estancia

Jason Quintana - Manzano

Executive Director

Miguel A. Gómez - Albuquerque

RPENM Albuquerque Office

10501 Montgomery NE, Ste 320

Albuquerque, NM 87154

(505) 280-8459

rpenm@rpenm.org

President's Report

Dear Friends and Neighbors

I hope you and your family are doing as good as can be expected during these strange and trying times. As you know, we have been unable to communicate with you through our newsletter over the last few months due to the limits on nonessential business. Thus, we have some catching up to do as well as some important new information to pass along.



Most of this newsletter is devoted to recognizing our champions at the 2020 legislative session and holding accountable those legislators and other officials that unnecessarily imposed austere and callous legislation harmful to retired public employees and to our state. We hope all RPENM members and their families use this information to inform how you vote in the upcoming primary election as well as in the general election this Fall, and beyond.

Our legislative focus for the 2020 legislative session was trying to defeat a bill (SB 72) that severely curtails retirees' COLA benefits. We stopped an almost identical bill in the 2019 legislative session, but we had a difficult challenge in 2020 as Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham created a phony task force to "study" the issue and make recommendations. For clarification, SB 72 suspends the COLA benefit for most retirees for three years and likely significantly reduces the COLA benefit moving forward. Without going over the numerous objections we raised during the task force process and 2020 legislative session, RPENM believes we made a compelling case against this legislation. We had strong academic, economic and public policy arguments supported by reports from the prestigious Brookings Institution and others that affirmed our position. I encourage all RPENM members to review these materials available on our website, rpenm.org.

As you are aware, retirees reluctantly agreed to a thirty-three percent reduction in the COLA benefit several years ago to help improve and sustain the overall PERA system. There were also supposed to be regular increases in the contribution rates for current employees as well as other structural changes to improve

Continues on page 2

Continued from page 1

PERA, but those changes only lasted a short time or were never implemented. The primary long-term change that went into effect and became permanent was the significant reduction to the COLA benefit.

Although politicians such as Michelle Lujan Grisham promised not to raid retirees' COLA benefits during their campaigns, that's exactly what Governor Lujan Grisham and many legislative leaders did during the 2020 legislative session. RPENM vehemently opposed SB 72 as unnecessary, poorly thought-out, and bad public policy, but we ultimately narrowly lost this battle in both legislative chambers. During the lengthy process that included the task force, RPENM and our allies were able to make some important changes to help protect retirees from this poor legislation. First, RPENM was able to change the legislation to include a 13th check concept. While the COLA will be suspended for three years, meaning that your COLA benefit will not compound over the next three years, most retirees will receive a 13th check equivalent to two percent of your current pension for the next three years. Also, retirees with a pension less than \$25,000 and retirees 75 years old and above will continue to receive a COLA benefit that increases to 2.5%. These are important and helpful changes that RPENM and our allies fought hard to secure in this process.

Nevertheless, we must recognize and thank our

champions during the 2020 legislative session as well as hold our legislative opponents accountable. As many of you may know, my public service career was as a Game and Fish Officer and I am still happiest when I'm on a horse out on the range. I guess I'm an old cowboy at heart. I also enjoy a good western and one of my favorites is the old Clint Eastwood classic, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Well, the title of this movie pretty much describes our legislators and other officials during the 2020 legislative session. Obviously, the most vociferous, strident and fervent proponents and sponsors of this hurtful legislation are The Ugly. Other legislators that went along with this harmful legislation are The Bad and our champions and supporters are The Good. I hope you enjoy and understand that's how RPENM has decided to describe our legislators in the following pages of this newsletter.

Thank you for your dedicated public service, membership and hard work on behalf of RPENM. I hope you and your family stay safe and remain strong in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Joel W. Pafford

Joel W. Pafford

President, Board of Directors

Computer Services



your
friend
armando

Armando S. Romero III

Owner

cell 505.225.0002

iam📧yourfriendarmando.com

Computers .: Networks .: Surveillance

THE GOOD

New Mexico State Senate

Greg Baca (R)
William Burt (R)
Pete Campos (D)
Gregg Fulfer (R)
Ron Griggs (R)
Daniel Ivey-Soto (D)
Linda Lopez (D)
Mark Moores (R)
Michael Padilla (D)
Mary Kay Papen (D)
Shannon Pinto (D)
Cliff Pirtle (R)
Gabe Ramos (D)
Clemente Sanchez (D)
John Sapien (D)
Antoinette Sedillo-Lopez (D)
Liz Stefanics (D)
Pat Woods (R)

New Mexico House of Representatives

Anthony Allison (D)
Gail Armstrong (R)
Alonzo Baldonado (R)
Rachel Black (R)
Cathrynn Brown (R)
Jack Chatfield (R)
Zachary Cook (R)
Randal Crowder (R)
Rebecca Dow (R)
Candy Spence Ezzell (R)
Kelly Fajardo (R)
David Gallegos (R)
Harry Garcia (D)
Derrick Lente (D)
Tim Lewis (R)
Georgene Louis (D)
Willie Madrid (D)
Antonio Maestas (D)
Marian Matthews (D)
Rod Montoya (R)
Greg Nibert (R)
Bill Rehm (R)
Andres Romero (D)
Patricio Ruiloba (D)
Gregg Schmedes (R)
Larry Scott (R)
James Strickler (R)
Candie Sweetser (D)
James Townsend (R)
Martin Zamora (R)

Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico Board of Trustees

Tim Eichenberg
Paula Fisher
Patricia French
Loretta Naranjo Lopez

THE BAD

New Mexico State Senate

Craig Brandt (R)
Joseph Cervantes (D)
Bobby Gonzales (D)
Candace Gould (R)
Gay Kernan (R)
Richard Martinez (D)
Steven Neville (R)
Bill O'Neill (D)
Bill Payne (R)
Nancy Rodriguez (D)
Sander Rue (R)
Bill Sharer (R)
Benny Shendo (D)
Bill Soules (D)
Jeff Steinborn (D)
Mimi Stewart (D)
Bill Tallman (D)
James White (R)

New Mexico House of Representatives

Abbas Akhil (D)
Eliseo Alcon (D)
Deborah Armstrong (D)
Paul Bandy (R)
Dan Barrone (D)
Karen Bash (D)
Micaela Cadena (D)
Christine Chandler (D)
Gail Chasey (D)
Daymon Ely (D)
Joanne Ferrary (D)
Doreen Gallegos (D)
Joy Garratt (D)
Jason Harper (R)
Susan Herrera (D)
Day Hochman-Vigil (D)
Wanda Johnson (D)
Raymundo Lara (D)
Patricia Lundstrom (D)
Javier Martinez (D)
Rudy Martinez (D)
Matthew McQueen (D)
Jane Powdrell-Culbert (R)
Andrea Romero (D)
Angelica Rubio (D)
Tomas Salazar (D)
Joseph Sanchez (D)
Debra Sarinana (D)
Nathan Small (D)
Sheryl Williams Stapleton (D)
Elizabeth Thomson (D)
Christine Trujillo (D)
Jim Trujillo (D)
Linda Trujillo (D)

Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico Board of Trustees

Claudia Armijo

THE UGLY

Governor

Michelle Lujan Grisham (D)

New Mexico State Senate

Jacob Candelaria (D)
Stuart Ingle (R)
George Munoz (D)
Gerald Ortiz y Pino (D)
John Smith (D)
Peter Wirth (D)

New Mexico House of Representatives

Phelps Anderson (R)
Brian Egolf (D)
Natalie Figueroa (D)
Miguel Garcia (D)
Patricia Roybal Caballero (D)
Melanie Stansbury (D)

Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico Board of Trustees

John Melia
Lawrence Davis
Daniel Mayfield
Maggie Toulouse Oliver
Stephen Neel
David Roybal
Shirley Regin

Legal Update

There are two very brief legal updates. First, we have some news regarding our current lawsuit against the PERA Board, PERA Executive Director Wayne Probst and PERA Chief of Staff/General Counsel Susan Pittard. This lawsuit was filed in federal court to remedy a situation many of our members believed to be highly unethical and illegal. This involves the extraordinary and unprecedented pay raises at PERA for an elite group of employees over several years during the exact same time senior PERA staff are demanding cuts to retirees' modest COLA benefits. We believe this unconscionable behavior needed a strong response and RPENM filed this lawsuit last year.

Unfortunately, we drew a bad hand with the assignment of the judge in this action and we recently received even worse news when this judge issued an unprecedented, overreaching and almost unbelievable opinion. The judge granted the defendants' motion for a summary judgment, dismissing our federal lawsuit. As we strongly believe in our case, the RPENM Board of Directors has decided to appeal this decision to the United States Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. This is a long and arduous process that will require significant financial resources, but our Board believes this is the right thing to do and we will always look out for our members' best interests and never back down. Even when the odds are against us, just like Clint Eastwood did in his most memorable roles, we will fight for you!

Concludes on page 6

Continued from page 5

The Board of Directors has also agreed to explore potential new legal claims that may be viable from issues that arose in the 2020 legislative session. The Board has asked our attorney to review several key issues and provide us with an opinion whether there are legal options regarding the legislation and/or process during and after the 2020 legislative session. We hope to have some information in the coming weeks regarding these matters and the Board will consider all options.

Now, more than ever, we need your help and your continued support of RPENM to keep fighting for retirees and their families. Your annual membership dues are critically important, and we have included a form with this newsletter to renew your membership. You can also renew your membership or join RPENM online via our website, rpenm.org.

Join RPENM

Our strength lies with our members. This form is for you to renew your membership and/or to recruit new members. Please make copies of this form for your friends and neighbors then completely fill out the form and mail to:

RPENM
10501 Montgomery Blvd NE Suite 320
Albuquerque, NM 87154

Membership fees are only \$30.00/year, which is only \$2.50 per month that can be automatically taken out of your pension check once a year, each July.

RPENM Membership Form - Retired Public Employees of New Mexico

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

2020-01

[] \$30.00 Automatic Deduction (once per year)– Please deduct my dues payment from my July retirement distribution beginning July 2019 unless and until I notify PERA in writing to cancel this deduction.

SSN Last 4: |__|__|__|__| Signature: _____

PERA requires your last 4 social security numbers

My signature also authorizes PERA to release name and address changes to RPENM.

In Memoriam

The following Retired Public Employees of New Mexico were reported to us as deceased since our last Newsletter.

Their commitment to protecting New Mexico's public employees, retirees and PERA itself, was demonstrated by their continued support of RPENM. **We offer our sincerest condolences to their families, and we honor them for their public service to the citizens of New Mexico.**

Thank you for your dedication to protecting New Mexico's Retirees!

Albuquerque, NM

Alvin Meadors
Arnold Marquez
Betty Hatfield
Charles Russell
Eugenia Reiking
Frances Blea
Fred Sanchez
Gerald Grimm
Gilbert Sanchez
Henry Alderete
Joe Paiz
Lupe Sanchez
Mary Mora
Mary Ann Wright
Michael Costales
Michael Costales
Orlando Duran
Patricia Stephens
Priscilla Anton
Raymundo Flores
Robert Sanchez
Vonda Chafins

Artesia, NM

Felix Garcia

Aztec, NM

Gary Spickelmier
Myrtle Young

Brighton, NM

Jessie Vanderford

Capitan, NM

Vicki Barnard

Carlsbad, NM

Mariano Terrazas

Cleveland, NM

William Garcia

Clovis, NM

Calvin Neumann
Cecil Sena
Corrales, NM
Lucy Sargent
Thomas Shoats

Cortez, CO

Tim Kline

Dacono, CO

Cynthia Wardwell-Finge

Deming, NM

Janet Pursley
Marilyn Parra
Valentin Bustamante

Dexter, NM

Jerry Urban

Espanola, NM

David Salazar
Rose Salazar

Farmington, NM

Sylvester Beasley
Winford Miller

Gallup, NM

Angela Rodriguez
Hatch, NM
Edwin Ward

Hobbs, NM

Kenneth Batson

Ruth Russell

Wilbur Boone

Las Cruces, NM

Dennis Lovato
Edward Baca
Elias Valdez
Ethel Dimsha
Gloria Thomas
Lonnie Nunley

Las Vegas, NM

Maria Segura
Robert Gallegos

Los Alamos, NM

Roberta Yasuda

Los Lunas, NM

Maxine Stockton

Mosquero, NM

Harry Hopson

Mountainair, NM

William Eschberger

Ojo Caliente, NM

Eva Campos

Pena Blanca, NM

Emelecio Larranaga

Placitas, NM

Jose Martinez

Rapid City, SD

Walter Glazewski

Rio Rancho, NM

Geraldine Garrison
Matthew Gonzales

Roswell, NM

Billy Castillo
James Brown
Jean Hill
Lloyd Otero
Paul Mysza
Peter Heinzman
Ramon Torres
Terry Spear

Santa Fe, NM

David Corriz
Frank Lucero
Gene Byrnes
Ida Ortiz
Jacqueline Calligan
Jerry Gaussoin
Joseph Perea
Julian Grace
Lupe Alarid

T or C, NM

Keva Hayhurst
Maria Hardacker

Tucumcari, NM

D Garnett
Miguel Gallegos



Retired Public Employees of New Mexico

10501 Montgomery Blvd NE
Suite 320
Albuquerque, NM 87154

Phone: 505-280-8459

E-mail: rpenm@rpenm.org

www: www.rpenm.org

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Albuquerque, NM
Permit 798



BENEFITS STILL FIT?

TIME TO EXPAND YOUR COVERAGE.

As your life changes, consider some of these benefits and discounts from **RPENM & AMBA**:

- Dental & Vision Insurance
- Long-Term Care
- Home Health Care
- MASA (Air and Ground Ambulance Plan)
- Cancer, Heart & Stroke Policy
- Medicare Supplement Policy
- Easy Issue Life Policy
- Tax Deferred Annuity
- Hearing Benefits
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

Learn more: 1-877-556-4582

myambabenefits.info/rpenm

RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES OF NEW MEXICO

