

# At Your Service

Orange County Employees Retirement System

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 MAGAZINE FOR ALL MEMBERS JANUARY 2005

Keep an eye on your nest egg



Member Information Center now online

2.7% at 55 workshops coming

# At Your Service



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At Your Service is published for members and retirees of the Orange County Employees Retirement System.

Comments and suggestions should be directed to: Robert Kinsler, Public Relations Analyst

## OCERS

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At Your Service is written and designed by Robert Kinsler, Jayne Ritchey and Cuong Nguyen.

## Board of Retirement Meetings:

All regular business meetings are held in OCERS Board Room at 8:30 a.m.

January 18, 2005	February 22, 2005
March 28, 2005	April 18, 2005
May 16, 2005	June 20, 2005
July 18, 2005	August 29, 2005
October 24, 2005	November 21, 2005
	December 19, 2005



The Orange County Employees Retirement System's Board of Retirement honored Retiree board member Keith Concannon on November 15, 2004 at their regular board meeting. Concannon served for more than 39 years of dedicated service on the Board of Retirement. He left the board at the end of his term of office on Dec 31, 2004. Pictured (from left) are Frank Eley, Richard White, Lisa Silbar, Chairman Reed Royalty, Keith Concannon, Vice Chairwoman Sharon Neebe, George Jeffries and John Moorlach.

## Board election results announced



Robert Griffith was elected by Retired Members as eighth member on the Board of Retirement to serve a three-year term from Jan. 1, 2005 to Dec. 31, 2007.



Frank Eley was re-elected by active General Members as third member on the Board of Retirement. He will serve another three-year term from Jan. 1, 2005 through Dec. 31, 2007.

# Honesty is best policy in wake of new legislation

Following the completion of the 2004 legislative session, several Assembly and Senate bills went into effect on Jan. 1, 2005 and are of importance to many OCERS members:

AB 3094: The purpose of this legislation is to refine financial reporting standards and to ensure that OCERS and other public retirement systems can obtain information from financial institutions upon the death of a member who is receiving retirement funds via EFT ("direct deposit"), and to mandate that any funds paid after death will be refunded to the retirement system.

SB 1206: This bill adds a provision to the '37 Act, authorizing the Retirement Board to modify a member's retirement allowance if the member fraudulently overstated his or her final average salary at the time OCERS (or any other '37 Act system) was calculating a member's retirement. Once the Board of Retirement makes the determination that the member's final average salary was overstated due to the member's fraud, the Board can correct the error both prospectively and retroactively. On the retroactive correction, the Board of Retirement has the option of either offsetting future payments or allowing the member to make payments to the system.

## **[www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org); your first stop on the Information Highway**

Going online? Then log on to [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) to learn more about retirement, disability, death and survivor benefits offered by OCERS to members. OCERS' official Web site provides a wealth of information and services for anyone with access to the World Wide Web. One of the most popular features at OCERS' site is the Benefits Calculator, which allows any member to get a fast estimate of their projected retirement allowance based on their current salary, age and years of service. No registration is required and it only takes a few seconds to complete the easy-to-use form.

In addition, members can now register to take any of a variety of free seminars offered by OCERS through the Web site. Other features at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) include the monthly online newsletter OCERS Extra, a printable version of OCERS' official Power of Attorney form for those who want to designate someone to look after their retirement account if they become unable to look after their own needs, as well as a Beneficiary Change form.

Members can also enroll at the Member Information Center and view their retirement account online. More details about this new online tool are profiled in a story on page 8 of this issue.



# Financial Strategy Seminars help prepare for future

If you are planning to retire within the next 3 to 30 years, you should plan to attend one of the following Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminars held at:

**OCERS (Training Room)  
2223 E. Wellington Avenue  
Santa Ana, CA 92701**

The Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminar consists of a three-session workshop. Each meeting will cover important topics for successful planning; individuals and couples are welcome to attend. The third meeting concentrates on information from an OCERS Retirement Program Specialist.

The seminar is free and there is plenty of free on-site parking for those attending. Various topics of interest and importance will be covered over the course of the three-session workshop.

Among the important topics covered in the comprehensive three-session workshop:

- Deferred Compensation investment choices
- Tax-free and low-cost investing for profit
- How to determine retirement goals
- Investment choices to consider in the current stock market

The third meeting of each workshop focuses on information relating to OCERS, including such topics as:

- Eligibility for Retirement
- Benefit formulas such as 2.7% at 55
- Reciprocal Benefits
- Benefit Calculations, and how to apply for your retirement benefits from OCERS
- How to determine your future monthly benefit from OCERS

Don't miss out on this valuable information. It will help you prepare for your future. The seminars are free, but reservations are required. To make your reservation to attend this seminar, please log on at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on "Retirement Seminars."

An important note: anyone registering for the Financial Strategy Seminar should plan on attending all three sessions. For more information on upcoming Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminars, please call Catie Moore at Financial Management Specialists, (714) 245-1954.

## SCHEDULED DATES:

The Financial Strategy Seminar is a three-session workshop, and persons signing up should plan on attending all three sessions of the Workshop.

### Dates are as follows:

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

March 2, 9 and 16, 2005

6-9:30 p.m.

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

April 6, 13 and 20, 2005

6-9:30 p.m.

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

May 4, 11 and 18, 2005

6-9:30 p.m.

# OCERS offers Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars

The arrival of 2005 is likely the perfect time to begin thinking about your long-term financial well-being. Because when it comes to retirement planning, it's never too early – or too late – to get started. So no matter when you plan to retire, it's important to attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar offered by OCERS.

The few hours you spend at the seminar can have beneficial and long-lasting impacts on your quality of life after you retire.

The Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar is held twice a month at OCERS, 2223 Wellington Ave., Santa Ana, and includes a presentation by an OCERS Retirement Program Specialist. The one-session, five-hour seminar is free and there is plenty of free on-site parking for those attending.

Various topics of interest and importance to you will be covered. A representative from "Deferred Compensation" will be addressing options for withdrawing funds from your 457 plan; a Social Security representative will discuss your Social Security and Medicare benefits; a representative from Retiree Medical will discuss medical benefit options; and an OCERS Retirement Specialist will focus on your OCERS retirement plan. Among the topics covered by the OCERS representative:

- When you are eligible for retirement
- How to determine your future monthly benefit from OCERS
- How to determine OCERS-related benefits for your spouse or other eligible beneficiaries
- When should new retirees expect their first retirement check
- Reciprocal benefits for employees who have worked for two or more retirement systems

Don't miss out on this valuable information. It will help you prepare for your future. The seminars are free, but reservations are required. For more information and to make your reservation to attend this seminar, please log on at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on "Retirement Seminars."

## Domestic Partner legislation update

On January 1, 2005, new law went into effect extending domestic partners of OCERS members the same survivor benefits received by the spouses of eligible members who die either before or after retirement. Under the laws governing OCERS, domestic partners may be afforded benefits that include - but are not limited to - a survivor continuance after the death of a member, a lump sum death benefit of \$1,000, and community property rights to a portion of a member's retirement benefit.

To see if you qualify as domestic partners under AB 205, visit [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on the "Domestic Partner Legislation" link provided on the home page of OCERS' official Web site.

### SCHEDULED DATES:

These one-session seminars will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays.

### Dates are as follows:

March 2, 2005

March 16, 2005

April 6, 2005

April 20, 2005

May 4, 2005

May 18, 2005

## **2.7% at 55 Retirement Formula: what you need to know**

In August 2004, the County of Orange reached agreement with a number of General Member bargaining units and certain unrepresented employees to implement a 2.7% at 55 retirement formula. Since that time, OCERS has received a number of calls about the impact and implementation of the 2.7% at 55 benefit, which goes into effect in July 2005.

Here are some of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the enhancements.

### **Q. Can you explain the term “2.7% at 55”?**

A. First, remember that your OCERS retirement benefit is based on four factors: plan type, age, service credit and final compensation (also known as “final average salary”). The 2.7% at 55 formula is applicable to general members. The 2.7% at 55 formula provides a benefit of two percent of final earnings multiplied by years of service and multiplied by an age factor. To get a fast and accurate retirement estimate, visit [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on the Benefits Calculator.

### **Q. When do the 2.7% at 55 benefit enhancements (known as Plan I for Tier 1 members, and Plan J for Tier 2 members) go into effect?**

A. To qualify for the 2.7% at 55 retirement benefit formula, you can't retire any earlier than July 2, 2005.

### **Q. How does the Ventura decision impact 2.7% at 55 benefits?**

A. The Ventura decision determined how “compensation earnable” (pay elements used to compute your final average salary) is calculated. The implementation of the 2.7% at 55 benefit formula is not impacted in anyway by the Ventura decision.

To calculate your benefit estimate under the 2.7% at 55 benefit, simply use the Benefits Calculator at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org).

### **Q. How does reciprocity impact 2.7% at 55 benefits?**

A. Each reciprocal system will pay you a retirement benefit based on their retirement formula and the years of service credited with that system. This issue will be discussed in greater detail at the upcoming 2.7% at 55 workshops.

### **Q. When would I be eligible to receive a retirement benefit equal to 100% of my pay?**

A. Every person's final retirement benefit is unique, based on the age they became a member of OCERS, as well as their years of service and other factors. It generally takes 35-37 years of service

## **2.7% at 55 Retirement Formula: what you need to know**

From Page 6

to receive 100 percent of your final average service.

Use the Benefits Calculator at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) to get an estimate of your retirement. No registration is necessary and it only takes a few seconds to get an estimate.

### **Q. I've already retired. Can I get the benefit?**

A. No. Only those members who retire on or after July 2, 2005 are eligible to receive the 2.7% at 55 benefits. So deferred members and retirees are ineligible to receive the enhanced benefits.

### **Q. Where can I get more information, including talking to a retirement specialist about the 2.7% at 55 benefits?**

A. For more information, you should plan on attending a one-hour 2.7% at 55 workshop. Dates, times and locations are listed below. No registration is required.

### **Schedule of informational seminars**

IWMD, 320 N. Flower, Santa Ana, Room #256; Tuesday, Feb. 1, 10 a.m. and noon

SSA, 23330 Moulton Pkwy, Laguna Hills, Room #B213; Tuesday, Feb. 1, 1:30 p.m.

OCERS, 2223 Wellington, Santa Ana, Board Room; Wednesday, Feb. 2, 1:30 p.m.

JWA, 3160 Airway, Costa Mesa, Commission Room; Thursday, Feb. 3, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.

SSA, 12661 Hoover, Garden Grove, Training Room; Thursday, Feb. 3, 1:30 p.m.

RDMD, 300 N. Flower, Santa Ana, Room #B10; Thursday, Feb. 10, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

SSA, 25292 McIntyre, Laguna Hills, Room #160; Thursday, Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m.

SSA, 320 E. LaPalma, Anaheim, Room #B480/481; Tuesday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m. and noon.

OCERS, 2223 E. Wellington, Board Room; Wednesday, Feb. 16, 1:30 p.m.

HOA, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Room #214/216; Thursday, Feb. 17, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Probation, 1001 S. Grand, Academy Training Room #4; Monday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

HCA, 1241 E. Dyer, Santa Ana, Room #129; Monday, Feb. 28, 1:30 p.m.

HCA, 3115 Redhill, Costa Mesa; Monday, Feb. 28, 3 p.m.

# OCERS' interactive Member Information Center provides account information online

OCERS is offering an exciting new tool for active members and retirees interested in viewing their retirement account information online.

The Member Information Center has been launched allowing participants to gain access to their OCERS account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once a member has enrolled, OCERS will mail out a Personal Identification Number (PIN) within 5 working days.

The Member Information Center is secure and easy to use, allowing members to find tailored information that is relevant to them in just seconds.

Active Members will be able to gain access to details about their beneficiaries, employment history, Plan Type and even use an interactive Benefit Estimator to calculate their retirement.

Retired Members who use the Member Information Center are able to view screens detailing tax withholding, direct deposit and 1099R information. The center also allows retirees to confirm details and history relating to their 12 most recent benefit payments.

"The Member Information Center is a major step in OCERS' continuing commitment to enhance and expand services to our members," said OCERS Chief Executive Officer Keith Bozarth.

"OCERS participants can now log into the Member Information Center to monitor their account balances, review accrued benefit information and get other important plan information when it works into their schedule," Bozarth added.

The best way to learn about all the new features is to log on at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and enroll at the Member Information Center today.



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