

P.S.

POST SCRIPT

NEWS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

JUNE 2007 VOL.18 NO. 2

Election for LACERA Board Members Set for July

An election to fill the Fourth Member seat on LACERA's Board of Investments and the Seventh and Alternate Members on the Board of Retirement will be held July 31, 2007. Each position carries a three-year term which commences January 1, 2008 and expires December 31, 2010.

The open positions are Safety Member seats; thus, candidates for the positions are voted on by LACERA safety members.

All Safety Members of LACERA as of March 1, 2006 are eligible to vote in the upcoming election. The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk will mail the official ballot to eligible members by the end of June.

On June 15, 2007, the candidates' statements of qualifications will be available for viewing online at: bos.co.la.ca.us/lacera_election.htm.



For all our "green" people

Would you be interested in receiving this newsletter electronically instead of on paper?

lacera.com,
E-Zine survey - Soundoff!

Plan E Members May Purchase ARC, Beginning July 1

Additional Retirement Credit, commonly known as *ARC*, is a way to purchase extra retirement credit without working for it... and now it's available to Plan E members! ARC is credit you may purchase to increase your service credit total; it is not based on actual employment.

Beginning July 1, Plan E members with at least five years of actual County service may purchase ARC.

Plan E ARC – The Basics:

- Will increase your monthly retirement allowance when you retire by increasing your total service credit

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Alternative formats available upon request.

Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association

Members of the Board of Retirement

LES ROBBINS

Chair
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

SIMON S. RUSSIN

Vice Chair
Elected by General Members

WILLIAM DE LA GARZA

Secretary
Elected by Retired Members

MARK J. SALADINO

County Treasurer & Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

SADONYA ANTEBI

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

YVES CHERY

Elected by General Members

SI FRUMKIN

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

ARMANDO MACIAS

Alternate Member
Elected by Safety Members

EDWARD "ED" C. MORRIS

Alternate Member
Elected by Retired Members

WILLIAM R. PRYOR

Elected by Safety Members

WALTA M. SMITH

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Members of the Board of Investments

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

Chair
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

WILLIAM R. PRYOR

Vice Chair
Elected by Safety Members

SIMON RUSSIN

Secretary
Elected by General Members

MARK J. SALADINO

County Treasurer & Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

PAUL C. HUDSON

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

DIANE A. SANDOVAL

Elected by Retired Members

HERMAN SANTOS

Elected by General Members

ROBERT L. SPARE

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

ESTEVAN VALENZUELA

Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Chief Executive Officer

GREGG RADEMACHER

Assistant Executive Officer

ROBERT HILL

Assistant Executive Officer

JANICE GOLDEN

From the EXECUTIVE DESK

Gregg Rademacher—CEO, LACERA



Trust & Service

When I think of LACERA, two words come immediately to mind: *trust* and *service*. Everything LACERA is and does is related to one or both of those words.

Let's start with *trust*. By definition, the retirement fund of the employees of Los Angeles County is a pension trust fund. By that I mean the assets of the fund are held in trust to finance the retirement benefits of County employees and it is LACERA's duty to nurture and protect it. As we state in our annual report, "we have the duty and authority to administer defined retirement plan benefits for the employees of Los Angeles County and participating agencies."

LACERA exists to safeguard the trust, both literally and figuratively. Management of the fund is controlled by our Board of Investments, which authorizes all fund transactions. The expertise, recommendations, and diligence of LACERA's investment professionals aid the Board in its operations and play a key role in the success of the fund. As of March 31, 2007, the fund was valued at \$38.2 billion and returned 13.4 percent for the fiscal year-to-date through March. This represents an approximately \$3 billion increase in the value of the fund since the end of fiscal 2006. By safeguarding its assets, and thus the retirement benefits of County retirees, LACERA upholds the trust fund and your trust in it.

So what does that mean to you? It means you can trust your retirement fund is healthy and strong. It means you can trust that when you retire, LACERA will pay you the promised benefits... every month for the rest of your life. Plus, it means you can enjoy the additional peace of mind that comes from knowing LACERA will pay benefits to your eligible survivors and beneficiaries.

That brings me to the issue of service. As the administrator of your retirement plan benefits, we are dedicated to providing to you with the highest possible level of service. Our multi-faceted approach to customer service includes education and communication programs, along with reliable payment of the promised benefits.

Our educational services begin with the clear and concise materials we provide new members to assist them in selecting the retirement plan best suited to their individual needs. They continue through the informative mid-career and

“...you can trust your retirement fund is healthy and strong.”

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2007 Legislative Updates

The legislative session is in full swing with several bills amending the '37 Act moving through the Assembly and Senate. There may be more to follow in 2008 after the Governor's Pension Commission has concluded its work.

Several bills from this session take a conservative approach. AB 775 would close a loophole that allows double, or possibly triple dipping. AB 36 would tighten the definition of fraud against retirement systems. AB 1255 would make more conservative adjustments to the Fresno County benefit formulas, and AB 246 would require additional ethics safeguards on board member activities.

Two bills from this session would extend benefits. AB 596 would enhance benefits by providing safety status to physicians in county hospitals or mental health facilities. AB 753 would authorize compensation to members of the Board of Retirement for the review of disability cases.

This session includes legislative items that are repeat attempts from previous years. Mandatory retirement has resurfaced since last year's mandatory retirement bill was found to be too burdensome for all parties to implement. SB 134 would put a simple end to mandatory retirement for designated personnel in the Sheriffs Department. Another reincarnation is AJR 5, a resolution to request the Feds end the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset.

To keep our members informed on items of interest, we will continue to closely observe legislative developments. A sample of the bills we are currently tracking follows:

AB 36 - FRAUD - Would make it a crime for any person to make false statements or representations in order to seek or obtain benefits from PERS, STRS, or a '37 Act System for themselves or others. "Statement" would include any oral or written statement relating to family relationship, injury reports, and medical records. The bill would also make it a crime for someone to accept payment from the system with the knowledge he or she is not eligible for the benefit. This is a two-year bill and will not be revisited until January of 2008.

Author: Niello

Introduced: December 4, 2006

Sponsor: CalPERS

Status: In the Assembly

LACERA Position:

Board of Retirement – Support

AB 246 - BOARD MEMBER

ACTIVITIES - Would amend the County Employees Retirement Law to restrict members of both boards from specified marketing activities. The bill would prohibit a member or employee of either board, whether directly or indirectly, by himself or herself, or as an agent or partner or employee of others, from selling or providing any investment product that would be considered an asset of the fund, to any public retirement system in the state.

Author: Torrico

Introduced: February 1, 2007

Sponsor: Torrico

Status: In the Senate

LACERA Position:

Board of Retirement – Support

Board of Investments – Support

SACRS Legislative Committee Position:

Oppose unless amended

AB 552 – PLACEHOLDER FOR GOVERNOR'S PENSION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Originally contained language that would have amended the County Employees Retirement Law by mandating that '37 Act Counties make available health care coverage to qualified retired members at a rate that does not exceed 102 percent of the active employee rate.

LACERA has been advised by the consultant to the Assembly PE, R & SS Committee that these provisions will not be moved this year. This bill is a placeholder for any items that may come out of the Governor's Public Employees Post-Employment Benefits Commission.

Author: Hernandez

Introduced: February 21, 2007

Sponsor: California Retired County Employees Association

Status: In the Assembly

LACERA Position:

Board of Retirement – Watch

SACRS Legislative Committee Position: Watch

AB 596 – SAFETY MEMBERSHIP FOR COUNTY JAIL AND MENTAL HEALTH PHYSICIANS

- Would require, as of January 1, 2008, physicians working in a county jail or county mental health facility in Alameda County or Los Angeles County to be classified as safety members, without a board of supervisors resolution. Additionally, the bill would allow those members to elect not to become safety members.

The bill provides that a qualified member enters safety status and begins

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Pre-Retirement Workshop Guide

Your personal roadmap to retirement

Applying for and ultimately being granted a service retirement doesn't happen overnight; it's a process. Informed choices and careful planning can favorably impact the journey, as well as the destination.



- Maximize your retirement
- Be in the know
- Attend a workshop
- Get the Pre-Retirement Guide
- Have a great retirement!



See workshop schedule on lacera.com. We suggest you attend a workshop five years prior to retirement.

Attention County HR Professionals: Mark Your Calendars for the 2007 Resource Conference

The dates are set for the Third Annual LACERA Resource Conference. The half-day conference for County Human Resources Professionals will be held at LACERA's Pasadena office on four different dates:

- Thursday, June 28
- Thursday, July 26
- Tuesday, September 18
- Tuesday, September 25



Topics to be explored at this year's conference include New Sworn Statement, Top Ten Disability Q&As, issues surrounding Termination Dates, and New Web Resources for HR Professionals.

HR Professionals may obtain a registration form or additional information by emailing Julia Ray at: jray@lacera.com.

If You Could, Would You E-Zine?

Would you be interested in receiving your LACERA PostScript in an electronic format (E-Zine)?

Visit www.lacera.com and click on the E-Zine Survey and weigh in with your opinion.

LACERA remains committed to providing superior customer service and expanding service options for our members. We continue to incorporate advances in technology to improve the services we offer. If we can enhance service in a "green" sort of way, all the better. An E-Zine, published in an electronic "paperless" format, would be more ecologically-friendly than a traditional paper newsletter. So let us know if you're interested in receiving the *PostScript* electronically.

We value your feedback.



2007 Legislative Updates**cont'd from pg. 3**

paying retirement contributions at the safety member rate on the date the bill becomes operative. However, in describing the method for calculating the member's retirement allowance, the bill provides that qualifying service worked prior to enactment shall be calculated under the safety member benefit formula. AB 596 is a two-year bill and will not be revisited until January of 2008.

Author: Dymally**Introduced:** February 21, 2007**Sponsor:** Union of American Physicians and Dentists**Co-Sponsor:** AFSCME**Status:** In the Assembly**LACERA Position:**

Board of Retirement – Oppose

SACRS Legislative Committee Position:

Watch

AB 753 – BOARD MEMBER

COMPENSATION - Would authorize compensation to members of a Board of Retirement for their review of disability cases.

Author: Assembly Committee on Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security**Introduced:** February 22, 2007**Status:** In the Senate**LACERA Position:**

Board of Retirement – Support

SACRS Legislative Committee Position:

Watch

AB 775 – UNEMPLOYMENT

INSURANCE - Would close a loophole that allows retired employees to collect unemployment insurance when their

period of reemployment is terminated. AB 775 requires a retired member who accepts an appointment after receiving unemployment insurance compensation to terminate that employment on the last day of the current pay period; furthermore, it prohibits reappointment for a period of 12 months.

Author: Niello**Introduced:** February 22, 2007**Sponsor:** Sacramento County**Status:** In the Senate**LACERA Position:**

Board of Retirement – Support

SACRS Legislative Committee Position:

Support

AB 1124 – POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TRUST ACCOUNT, TECHNICAL CLARIFICATIONS -

During the 2006 legislative session, the State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS) sponsored legislation to authorize the Board of Supervisors to make contributions to a Post-Employment Benefits Trust Account and to enter into an agreement with the retirement association to invest those funds. Such a Trust Account could be used to pre-fund various welfare benefits plans, including retiree health care plans.

AB 1124 is being sponsored by SACRS during the current legislative session to make technical clarifications and corrections to the prior legislation. The bill was amended on April 23, 2007 to allow the Board of Supervisors to also use a Post-Employment Benefits Trust Account for the purpose of pre-funding supplemental benefits plans.

Author: Karnette**Introduced:** February 23, 2007**Sponsor:** SACRS**Status:** In the Senate**LACERA Position:**

Board of Retirement – Support

AB 1255 – FRESNO COUNTY

BENEFIT TIER - Would permit the Board of Supervisors of Fresno County to adopt a new benefit tier applicable to members first employed by the county on and after the date these provisions become operative in the county.

In approximately 2001, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors adopted a 3.25 percent @ 60 benefit level for employees of the County. It has been determined the contribution rates supporting this benefit level are too costly. Through contract negotiations between the county and the local SEIU bargaining unit, it was agreed new employees to the county would enter at a 2 percent @ 55 benefit tier. This bill adds Fresno County to the Government Code section authorizing that benefit.

Author: Parra**Introduced:** February 23, 2007**Sponsor:** SACRS**Status:** In the Senate**LACERA Position:**

Board of Retirement – Watch

SACRS Legislative Committee Position:

Watch

AB 1626 – PLAN E SERVICE CREDIT/PENSION PROTECTION ACT CONFORMANCE

- Would authorize the County Board of Supervisors to specify the types of service credit that may be purchased by non-contributory members in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties.

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Plan E Members May Purchase ARC, Beginning July 1 cont'd from pg. 1

- Minimum purchase is one year; maximum purchase is five years (total of five years under any plan or combination of plans)
- Annual April 1 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) percentage will apply to Plan E ARC service credit and any Plan E credit earned after June 4, 2002
- Cannot be converted to Plan D ARC
- Regardless of ARC, the allowance of a Plan E member cannot exceed 80 percent of final compensation

Plan E ARC Does Not Apply Toward:

- Retiree health care benefits
- Cancellation of contributions for members who attain 30 years of service credit
- Minimum eligibility requirements for a service or disability retirement
- Transfer to Plan D; Plan E ARC will remain as Plan E service credit; you will have double accounts

Plan E ARC Cost and Payment Info:

- For cost estimates, use the online ARC Calculator* in the Benefits section of www.lacera.com
- To receive an exact cost, request an official LACERA Cost Notification Letter
- ARC contracts may be structured from one to 120 months
- Under the Pension Protection Act of 2006, ARC may be purchased with any of these types of funds:
 - Payroll deductions (using before or after-tax dollars)
 - Qualified Plans: 401(k)/401(a)/KEOGH
 - 457 Plans In-Service
 - 457 Plans After Termination
 - IRAs: Non-Roth/Non-After Tax
 - 403(b)
 - After-Tax Dollars
- LACERA will not accept termination pay for the purchase of Plan E ARC

Plan E ARC Additional Info:

- If you terminate employment or retire before your contract is paid in full, you may complete payment within 120 days after your termination or retirement date
- If you die before your contract is paid in full, your eligible surviving spouse or domestic partner (or minor child) may complete payment within 120 days after the date of your death
- If your contract is not paid off, the retirement allowance or survivor allowance will be prorated to include ARC for whole months already paid
- If you terminate County service prior to becoming vested (10 years of service credit), the amount you paid on your ARC contract will be refunded

For More Information

Updates pertaining to Plan E ARC will be posted online as they become available. Check www.lacera.com for the latest information.

*The Plan E ARC calculator will be available on www.lacera.com in July.

Also in this month's
PostScript:

- **E ARC Calculator**, page 9
- **Process to Purchase E ARC**, page 10

Thirty Sons and Daughters "Work" at LACERA for a Day

On Thursday, April 26, thirty LACERA children ages 8-12 joined the LACERA workforce in observance of Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day.

The children rotated through several LACERA divisions and participated in a variety of business activities. By the end

of the day, the children had dabbled in the investment market, heightened their awareness of geopolitics, authored and illustrated a book, and matched wits with attorneys in an exercise entitled, *Are You Smarter than an Attorney?*

The children left clutching "goody" bags, enthused, and eager to return to "work" at LACERA next year. *(In case you're wondering, they also left smarter than the attorneys!)*



2007 Legislative Updates**cont'd from pg. 5**

This bill would additionally prohibit a non-contributory member who purchases Additional Retirement Credit (ARC) from counting that credit toward meeting the minimum qualifications for a disability retirement.

The bill was amended on April 9, adding provisions that would allow the Board of Retirement to set "normal retirement age" and to certify certain LACERA members as falling within the definition of a "Public Safety Officer." The purpose of these provisions is to aid implementation of the Pension Protection Act of 2006.

Author: Galgiani
Introduced: February 23, 2007
Sponsor: SACRS
Status: In the Assembly
LACERA Position:
 Board of Retirement – Support

SB 14 - MILITARY SERVICE - Existing law authorizes a board of supervisors to allow a member to receive credit for time while absent from service and serving in the armed forces if, among other things, the military service is not the basis for present or future military retirement pay. This bill would amend

the government code to authorize the board to allow a member to receive service credit whether or not his or her military service is the basis for present or future military retirement pay.

Author: McLeod
Introduced: December 4, 2006
Sponsor: National Guard Association of California
Status: In the Senate
LACERA Position:
 Board of Retirement – Watch

SB 134 - MANDATORY RETIREMENT

- Would amend the County Employees Retirement Law to exempt safety members of the Sheriffs Department from the requirement to retire by a specific age. The bill further requires that a physician employed by the County certify the member is capable of performing his or her assigned duties, pursuant to standards set forth by the County. This bill applies to Los Angeles County only and is at the option of the Board of Supervisors.

Author: Cedillo
Introduced: January 25, 2007
Sponsor: Los Angeles County and Los Angeles County Sheriffs

Status: In the Assembly
LACERA Position:
 Board of Retirement – Watch
SACRS Legislative Committee Position:
 Watch

AJR 5 - SOCIAL SECURITY - Requests the President and the Congress of the United States to enact the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision from the Social Security Act

Author: Hernandez
Introduced: February 1, 2007
Status: In the Senate
LACERA Position:
 Board of Retirement – Support



Don't Include Your Social Security Number on Email

It's never a good policy to include your social security number on any email. When you email LACERA, there's no need to include your social security number; we have your number and other personal information on file. Although we remain dedicated to the security of our online network and

submit it to security audits, there's always some risk attached to transmitting confidential information via the internet.

LACERA welcomes your email for questions regarding retirement benefits and requests for related information.

(Including your employee number in your email is a good idea.)

Email your inquiries to
welcome@lacera.com.

Remember: To safeguard your privacy, it's best to leave your Social Security Number off all email correspondence.

Waiting Period Established for Retirees Returning to County Service

After retiring, some members return to work for L.A. County on a temporary basis. The County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) allows the County to hire a LACERA retiree who the employer believes possesses special skills or knowledge. Examples of this may include hiring the retiree to train a successor or having a retiree assist in times of staffing shortages.

120-Day Rule

According to Government Code Section 31680.6, an eligible retiree may return to work for the County for a period of up to 120 days (960 hours in any 12-month period) and continue to receive his/her retirement allowance. During this post-retirement employment, however, the member will not accrue any additional LACERA pension benefits, nor will the member or the employer pay contributions for this service.

Certain Conditions Apply

IRS regulations require the retiree to have a “bona fide” separation from service (truly retire) before being rehired. For example, an active member who retires on Friday and is rehired on Monday is viewed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as never having left employment.

To protect LACERA’s tax qualified status, in August 2006, the Board of

Retirement (BOR) enacted Resolution 06-001 which establishes a 90-day waiting period following retirement for retirees under Normal Retirement Age who are returning to work. The declaration also defines Normal Retirement Age and sets forth eligibility guidelines:

Normal Retirement Age for members of LACERA shall be:

- Age 57 for general contributory members
- Age 65 for general non-contributory members
- Age 55 for safety members

A member who retires before reaching Normal Retirement Age cannot have a prearranged agreement to return to work for the employer.

- Includes written and oral agreements
- Applies regardless of the length of the member’s break in service after retirement
- Applies to employers whose employees participate in LACERA

A member who retires before reaching Normal Retirement Age must have at least a 90-day continuous break in service before returning to service as a retiree.

- Break will be calculated from the date of the member’s retirement to the date preceding the first day of reemployment as a retiree
- Applies to employers whose employees participate in LACERA

IRS penalties may apply to retirees under age 59.5 who have not had a “bona fide” separation from service and are engaged in post-retirement work with the County. For information pertaining to your individual situation, consult with a professional advisor; LACERA does not offer tax or legal advice.

Note: The 120-Day Rule and BOR Resolution 06-001 apply **only** to retired County employees who return to work for the County. These restrictions do **not** apply to County employees who retire and later work in the private sector.

For questions on LACERA’s regulations regarding retirees returning to service, call 1-800-786-6464 to speak with a Retirement Benefits Specialist.

Quote: *“Why do they call it rush hour when nothing moves?”*

~ from *Mork and Mindy*

Editor’s Note:

PostScript is published by the staff of LACERA. Signed articles represent the opinion of the writers and not necessarily the opinion of LACERA Management, Board of Retirement, or Board of Investments. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

Got Retirement-Related Questions? The Answer is Usually a Click Away.

Quick answers to hundreds of commonly asked questions are available on www.lacera.com. Our FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section offers popular questions and answers, sorted by category:

- New Member
- Active Member
- Retired Member
- ARC
- Plan Transfer
- Retiree Health Care
- Beneficiary
- PSO
- General Information

Get Instant Answers to General Questions!

“Ask LACERA” is another great online answer source. **This feature can be accessed from our home page** and provides several ways to find the information you seek:

- Displays top twenty questions by popularity
 - Click on question to reveal answer
- Allows you to type a question or keyword in the Search Box
 - Search yields list of related questions
 - Click on question to reveal answer
- Permits you to submit a general question
 - Answer will be emailed to you



Links to the FAQs and to “Ask LACERA” appear on our home page.

Did You Know?

Defined Benefit (DB) Plans

LACERA invests the funds; **your employer bears the risk** of adverse investment performance.

Defined Contribution (DC) Plans

Employee decides how to invest the funds and **bears the risk** of adverse investment performance.

ATTENTION PLAN E MEMBERS!

NEW **ARC**
CALCULATOR

Get an E ARC purchase estimate online
— **Coming July 2007** —

- 1) lacera.com
- 2) Calculators → ARC
- 3) Input your information
- 4) Results!

Take the first step today and see what it will cost you to buy 5 years of service credit.

LACERA Remembers Richard Tafoya

We honor the memory of former LACERA Board member Richard M. Tafoya, who served on the Board of Retirement from 1992 through 1994 and on the Board of Investments from 1995 through 1997.



In 1997 he held the position of Secretary of the Board of Investments.

Extremely civic and community-minded, Mr. Tafoya was also a former mayor and councilman for the City of Montebello, a former board member for the Crippled Children's Society, and Charter President of the Mexican-American Junior Chamber of

Commerce. He was also active in community assistance programs, having served as Southern Regional Manager for the State of California Office of Economic Opportunity and as Director of the West San Gabriel Valley Consortium.

Mr. Tafoya leaves a rich legacy of service to LACERA and the community.

Q: What do you think...
about receiving this newsletter in an electronic format?

Go to lacera.com and take our survey!

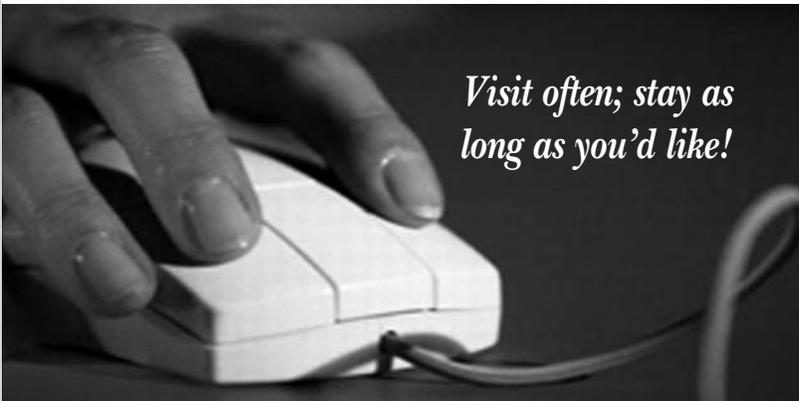


What's on the Web...

Check www.lacera.com for the latest information on all things LACERA. The site contains content regarding retirement plans, including benefit information geared to new members, active members, beneficiaries, and retired members. The site also features downloadable forms and brochures, workshop schedules, Board information, and career opportunities.

Recent postings include:

- Overview of Plan D
- Overview of Plan E
- Overview of Safety Plan B
- Communications Survey
- 2007 County Employees Retirement Law Book



Visit often; stay as long as you'd like!

Plan E ARC: Process to Purchase

- 1** Use the lacera.com Calculator to get a cost estimate to purchase Plan E ARC.*
- 2** To purchase Plan E ARC, call LACERA at 1-800-786-6464.
- 3** LACERA sends you a Cost Notification Letter, a Payment Contract, and a personalized ARC Payment Schedule.
- 4** If you elect to purchase ARC, you must complete the contract and return it by the indicated expiration date.
- 5** Payroll deductions (if elected) will begin on the 15th of month, within 60 days of receipt of your signed Payment Contract.

*E ARC Calculator online July 2007.



“FEEL GOOD” FACTS

Laughter: Good for the Body and Soul

It's often said “Laughter is the best medicine.” While it may not equal penicillin or the latest designer drug, studies reveal laughter actually does provide a host of health benefits, such as reducing stress, boosting the immune system, and helping to protect against the flu, and even cancer.

Results of a study conducted at the University of Maryland Medical Center indicate that laughter appears to cause the tissue that forms the inner lining of blood vessels (endothelium) to expand in order to increase blood

flow. On average, artery diameter increased by 22 percent during laughter and decreased by 35 percent during mental stress.

“It is conceivable that laughing may be important to maintain a healthy endothelium, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease,” says principal investigator Michael Miller, M.D., director of preventive cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center and associate professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “At the very least, laughter offsets the impact of mental stress,

which is harmful to the endothelium.”

Even the anticipation of a laugh has benefits. A study involving people who knew in advance they would be watching a funny movie found the participants had elevated levels of growth hormone which bolsters the immune system and chemicals in the brain known as beta-endorphins that block pain and promote relaxation. In addition, their levels remained elevated for as long as 24 hours after the viewing.

So, live, laugh, and be healthy!

Source: RealAge.com, ScienceDaily.com, WebMD

From the Executive Desk cont'd from pg. 2

pre-retirement workshops we hold at LACERA and at various jobsites throughout the County.

To keep our members updated on the latest LACERA news, we publish quarterly newsletters for active members and retirees. We also provide brochures detailing each of our retirement plans and services. Our web site, www.lacera.com, is a handy online resource for the latest retirement-related news. Our Ask LACERA web feature generates immediate answers to general questions you enter online. Interactive calculators are also available on our web site to assist you in

estimating the amount of your retirement allowance and the cost to transfer retirement plans, and/or purchase Additional Retirement Credit (ARC).

“My LACERA” is another useful online resource available to all members. It allows you to access your personal LACERA account information 24/7; all that's required is a quick, one-time registration.

For one-on-one service, we operate a Call Center and a Public Counter where our knowledgeable Retirement Benefits Specialists are on hand to answer your

personal questions. Our Public Counter serves members on a first come, first served basis Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For answers to personal questions by phone weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., call 1-800-786-6464 to speak with a LACERA expert.

This brings me to where I began — trust and service serve as LACERA's framework. I close with another quote from our annual report: “We are vigilant in our efforts to provide excellent customer service to 147,000 members and over 51,000 benefit recipients.”

June 2007

LACERA *PostScript* Highlights

- Trust and Service are LACERA Hallmarks
- Plan E ARC Available July 1
- What's on the Web
- If You Could, Would You E-Zine? Take our online survey!

