

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

Employee Newsletter

What's Inside

Are You Saving Enough?
Online Tools

page 2

PSR Fund Change
Online Refunds

page 3

Staying Safe Online
Diabetes Awareness

page 4

Unclaimed Property Search
WRAP Schedule
ERSGA's Document Center

page 5

Member Benefit Statements

Coming Soon

On December 2, 2013, benefit statements will be available for **Active ERS Members** who contributed to ERS through September 2013. The statement will show your account balance, service, accrued and projected retirement benefits, death benefits under the retirement plan, and designated beneficiary information. The statements will be available online at www.ers.ga.gov. Use *Account Access* to log in to your account; your statement will be available under *Personal Correspondence*. ERS Statements will not be printed and mailed, so please access your statement online!

In April 2013, statements were prepared for **Active PSERS Members** who contributed to PSERS through March 2013. If you are a PSERS member, you can access your statement in the same manner described above.

Members of JRS and LRS received their Member statements in 2012 and can expect an updated statement in 2014.



Don't miss out on
FREE MONEY!

GSEPS Members: Are You Saving Enough for Retirement?

The Georgia State Employees' Pension and Savings Plan (GSEPS) encourages you to take full advantage of your retirement planning and our online tools.

Did You Know You Could Be Missing Out on Free Money?

If you are not saving at least 5% of your salary, you are missing out on matching employer funds in your Peach State Reserves (PSR) 401(k) account.

As a reminder, the State of Georgia's employer match for GSEPS members is as follows:

- You are matched 100% on your first 1% of contributions
- For every percent you contribute between 2% and 5%, you are matched at a rate of 50%
- You receive the full employer match of 3% if you contribute 5% or more to your 401(k) plan

How much do you need save to have adequate retirement income?*

As a GSEPS member, it's important to understand that a comfortable retirement depends on both your pension and your 401(k) savings. According to experts, you will need 70% to 100% of your pre-retirement income to live comfortably during

retirement. After 35 years of service, your GSEPS Pension plus Social Security will only provide about 55% to 65% of your pre-retirement income:

- GSEPS Pension will provide about 32% to 36% replacement of pre-retirement income
- Social Security will provide between an estimated 25% to 30% replacement

As you can see, maximizing your 401(k) savings is crucial for a successful retirement. For example, leaving your contribution rate at 1% over a 35 year career will only provide about 3% of additional replacement income.

A GSEPS employee should ideally contribute 12% to 15% to the 401(k) to be on track for a comfortable retirement. At a minimum, make sure you're saving at least 5% so you don't miss out on free money!

To increase your PSR 401(k) contribution rate, go to [GaBreeze](#) and log in to your account. Select *Contribution Details* on the Peach State Reserves tab, and select *Change*.

*Assuming a \$30k starting salary with a 5% annual increase and 3% inflation, 6.5% pre-retirement rate of return, 3.33% starting withdrawal at age 60, and 4% post-retirement rate of return.



Online Tools

Are you taking advantage of ERSGA's Online Tools?

Visit www.ers.ga.gov and click on the *Account Access* button to register or log in to your account.

As a registered member you can:

- Review, add, or update your beneficiary information
- Check your pension contributions and interest
- Access benefit statements
- **Generate an estimate of your future pension benefit**
- Access member newsletters
- Receive important ERSGA communications in your email inbox

Visit us today!

Important Information

Peach State Reserves Fund Change

Effective November 12, 2013, the actively-managed real estate securities fund in Peach State Reserves was replaced with a real estate securities index fund. All funds invested in the Active Real Estate Securities Fund at market close on November 12th were moved into the new Real Estate Securities Index Fund that evening.

New fund

The Real Estate Securities Index Fund is managed by Vanguard. The goal of the fund is to provide a high level of income and moderate long-term growth by tracking the performance of the MSCI US REIT Index, a benchmark index of publicly-traded equity real estate investment trusts (REITs).

Actively Managed vs. Index

Both the outgoing Active Real Estate Securities Fund and the new Real Estate Securities Index Fund invest in stocks issued by equity REITs, so what is the difference between an actively-managed REIT and a REIT index fund?

Actively-managed funds are run by investment managers who continually buy and sell individual securities, hoping to outperform the overall market.

Index funds are managed *passively*. They seek to track a particular market index that's designed to measure the performance of investments in a certain segment of the market.

Primary benefit of index investing

Unlike managers of active funds, index fund managers don't continually buy and sell stocks in an attempt to outperform the market. Less trading can translate into **lower fees and expenses** than those incurred by active funds.

For More Information

If you need additional information, access www.GaBreeze.ga.gov or call the GaBreeze Benefits Center toll-free at 1-877-3GBreez (1-877-342-7339). Representatives are available between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Refunds Now Available Online

Are you thinking about leaving state employment prior to retirement eligibility? Do you know someone who has recently left employment of the state? If so, you can now apply for refunds of your contributions and applicable interest online.

Note: If you are an ERS or PSERS member, taking a refund will forfeit the service you have earned in the Retirement System, so make sure you know all your options before you request a refund.

Online Refunds are available for terminated, non-retirement benefit eligible members of:

- Employees' Retirement System of Georgia
- Public School Employees Retirement System
- Georgia Defined Contribution Plan

To get started, visit www.ers.ga.gov and click on the *Account Access* button to register or log in to your account.

PSR Contribution Limits for 2014

Peach State Reserves (PSR) contribution limits will not be changing for 2014. You may contribute up to a maximum of 80% of your annual income, as permitted by IRS rules, up to \$17,500 for 2014 (or \$23,000 if you will be at least age 50 in 2014).

Tips

Staying Safe Online

While the internet is a great place to do research, read about current events, or catch up with friends, it also comes with risks. It's important to protect yourself from criminals who try to steal your personal information or identity, or generally cause problems for you. Whether it's browsing the web or checking your email, there are a number of ways to stay safe.

Surviving Web Surfing

When surfing websites in your favorite browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Google Chrome) pay attention to the address bar (the little line at the top of the page with address of the website you're visiting). Make sure you're actually on the site you intended to visit. Often 'bad guys' will set up sites that look like the actual site, but are fake — designed to get you to enter personal information, or click a link that installs malicious software.

Phishing

One of the most common methods criminals use to trick you into providing information is a technique called *phishing*. This is where the criminal creates an email that looks as though it came from your bank or some other well-known website, such as PayPal or Amazon, suggesting there is a problem with your account or a purchase you've made. The email requests you to click a link to log in to correct the problem. Even though you may be anxious to investigate because it involves your banking account or a purchase you didn't make, take your time and review the email carefully. Use the "hover" method to check the link in the email actually goes where it says it does by:

- maneuvering your pointer over the link (DON'T click!), "hovering" over the link
- a small pop-up will appear, showing you the actual location of the link (it's usually not where you expect it to go)

Your best option is to type in the address of your bank or other site and log in manually in a web browser. If there really is an issue with your account, you'll likely be notified once you log in. Again, DO NOT click the link in the email. Also, you can always call your bank if you have questions.

Email Safety

Staying safe with email is pretty simple. Most importantly, DO NOT open attachments from people you don't know. Almost no one will send you a .zip file attachment, especially people you don't know.

Criminals will also play to your curiosity. They may send you messages suggesting you have a UPS or FedEx package, or that you've won something. Another commonly used technique is imply they have a picture of you, with a note like "I can't believe this picture of you".

Never open any attachment from a person you don't know. It's almost 100% guaranteed to be a virus causing you a lot of headaches. Just don't do it!

Like with old food in the fridge "when in doubt, throw it out." If it doesn't seem right, don't open it, don't click the link — but keep in mind that just because you got a suspicious email, doesn't mean you have a virus. If you have deleted the email without opening any attachments, chances are you're fine and can just continue with your work.

Stay safe out there!

November: National Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans, and an estimated 79 million people are at risk for developing the disease. For people living with diabetes or at risk for type 2 diabetes, family support is critical to staying healthy.

In observance of National Diabetes Month 2013, the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) wants people to know that Diabetes is a Family Affair. NDEP and its partners are working with individuals, families, and communities to take action and encourage simple, but important, lifestyle changes to improve their health — particularly if they have diabetes or are at risk for the disease.

This November, the NDEP wants to remind you that diabetes is a family affair and provide you with resources that you can use with individuals, families, and communities to take action in the fight against diabetes. Visit the [National Diabetes Education Program](#) to learn more.



Unclaimed Property Search

Do you have a family member or loved one who worked for the state in the past and isn't sure if they have outstanding funds with us? Please let them know that our website will now allow them to search for these outstanding funds. Past members can search for an uncashed check (at least three months old) or an account from a previous period of state employment for which the member left employment before becoming entitled to a monthly pension.

To search for outstanding funds, go to www.ers.ga.gov and click on the *Unclaimed Property* button.



Plan to retire soon?

Attend a WRAP Seminar to better understand your retirement benefits.

2013

November 26
December 3 & 10

2014

January 14 & 28
February 11 & 25
March 11 & 25
April 8 & 22
May 13 & 20
June 17 & 24

Visit our [website](#) for times and location.

People

ERSGA's Document Center

Each month, between 20,000 and 30,000 pieces of paper come into the ERSGA office. It is the responsibility of the Document Center to scan all of these pages, index them to the appropriate Member or Employer account, and release them for processing by Member Services and Financial Management. By converting the paper documents into electronic format, processing of the documents is expedited and security of personal information is increased.

In addition, the Document Center mails out approximately 25,000 - 30,000 checks, letters, and forms each month. If you've received a Welcome Letter, a confirmation of Beneficiary Designations, or any other paper communication from ERSGA, chances are it went through our Document Center in order to get to you.

Another responsibility of this group is to research when information is not available electronically, or when incoming documents do not have sufficient identifying information. If you are contacting ERSGA either by phone, fax, e-mail, or mail, please help our Customer Care Group and our Document Center by including your full name, date of birth, social security number, and current contact information (phone, address, e-mail).



Pictured: Kris Arechaga, Gloria Bryant, Raqiyah Johnson, and Thaddeus Robinson