

THE NEWSLETTER

Issued by PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREES, INC.

Fourth Quarter 2002

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We welcome your
input and questions.
Contact us at:

614-891-6868
800-247-7374
www.operi.org

Legislative Report

GILCHRIST, SHERMAN RECAP FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION



John Gilchrist

John Gilchrist, PERI's Legislative Counsel and Tom Sherman, PERI'S Government Relations Representative, made a joint presentation at the Annual Meeting on recent and pending legislative issues facing our retirees.



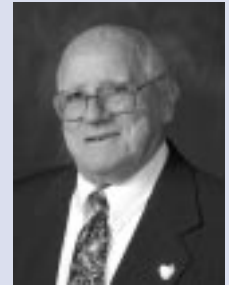
Tom Sherman

Both men's remarks touched on legislation that was in the Ohio General Assembly during the past year that had, or will have, potential impact on PERS and PERI members alike.

In the Ohio General Assembly, House Bill 157 was enacted on February 1, 2002. This legislation changed the COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) to a fixed rate of 3%. "This bill was sitting in the Senate Ways & Means Committee during last year's PERI annual meeting, but we successfully brought it to life and followed through until it passed in the General Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Taft. The passage of this law was a big win for our members," Sherman explained.

Another piece of legislation, HB 173 – The Venture Capital Bill – is something that PERI is not in favor of. Today it is bottled up in the House Finance Committee. The Bill proposes the establishment of a venture capital fund, consisting of \$60 million a year to be invested in high tech companies, in order to bring new businesses to Ohio.

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A Message From Your President

I thank all of you for your support through the years.

As I have moved up through the ranks from Chapter President, District Representative, 3rd, 2nd, 1st Vice Presidencies, I have learned a lot of the heart and soul of PERI.

We have a solid background (54 years) of working with the PERS Administrators and the Ohio General Assembly in order to protect our pension funds. We have knowledgeable and experienced volunteer Officers and District Representatives. We have 93 Chapters in Ohio with dedicated Chapter Officers. And we have over 51,100 concerned and involved retiree members.

Even though there are many financial and legislative challenges to our Pension System at the present time, I look forward to the coming year. Why? Because PERI has always been there, to

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A Message From Your President

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protect each retiree's interest. Informed and united retirees are their own best defense.

The stock market decline has put tremendous pressure on our pension fund, and healthcare benefits. There are several pending pieces of legislation that would divert funds away from the control of our PERS Board of Trustees, and put them in the hands of others. Another pending Bill would allow some non-governmental societies to become a part of PERS. There is a compelling need for solutions on how to handle upward spiraling healthcare and prescription cost, which will require retiree input.

As we have been in the past, we will be there to provide knowledgeable input and solutions to these and any other problems that arise.

I encourage you to read the articles in this newsletter from the leadership of PERS and our Legislative Counsel. The information will bring you up to date on the current status of our retirement system, and the pending legislation that I have mentioned.

Even though there is a lot happening, you can rest in the knowledge that PERI, Ohio's publicly-employed retiree's association, is on the alert, and on the job.

We need your membership support, and if physically able, your leadership talents to help carry us into our 55th year of successfully protecting our Pension Funds and Healthcare benefits.

Legislative Report

(continued from page 1)

These annual monies would come from forced investments from PERS, SERS and the Bureau of Workers Compensation. "We think this is the wrong approach," explained Gilchrist and Sherman. "We believe that PERS funds should continue to be invested by the professionals on PERS's investment staff. Their goal is to make sound investments, with a sufficient rate return, to secure and increase benefits for retirees."

Another bill PERI and PERS does not favor is Senate Bill 289 or the Ohio-based broker's bill. This, if passed, would mandate that 60% of the equity trades made by the PERS investment think-tank must be through Ohio-based brokers. This would not allow the PERS financial staff to potentially maximize its investment options and possibly ensure a larger rate of return for its members.

Two pieces of pending Federal legislation being monitored address the issues of Social Security mandatory coverage and government pension offset/windfall elimination provision.

Gilchrist closed his presentation by explaining to the audience that PERI has two major concerns in its legislative agenda: the security of the PERS pension fund, and securing equitable enhancements to our retirement benefits.



425 PERI RETIREES AND SPOUSES ATTEND ANNUAL MEETING

Largest crowd in recent memory

A crowd of 425 PERI members along with their spouses and guests came to Columbus on September 24 and met other retirees from around the state at the

organization's Annual Meeting at the Villa Milano. Prior to the business meeting and remarks from PERI leadership and executives of the Public Employees Retirement System, the attendees enjoyed coffee and sweet rolls and met with representatives of various healthcare and insurance providers. PERI celebrated its 54th year of serving the state's retired public employees.





LAURIE HACKING SAYS PERS PENSION PLANS TOUCH ONE IN EVERY 20 OHIOANS

Laurie Fiori Hacking has a tough, if not overwhelming, job to do as the executive director of the Public Employees Retirement System of Ohio during this time of economic downturn.

It is a major responsibility, but like anyone who takes on such a task, she has surrounded herself with a savvy staff of well-educated and experienced professionals to protect those funds and to be diligent in investing wisely for the benefit of Ohio's state workers and retirees.

In her keynote remarks to the PERI Annual Meeting crowd, she said that today, PERS is the 10th largest pension system in the nation and the 24th largest in the world. It has \$48.2 billion in assets as it serves 411,000 active employees and 135,000 benefit recipients. PERS achieved fully funded status in 1998-99.

Challenges Ahead

"We may think that we have seen tough times since September 11, but our challenge is just beginning," Hacking explained.

Market declines are putting pressure on

the contribution rates that are necessary to cover rising healthcare costs. Retiree healthcare costs are rising at a rate of 14% per year. The cost for PERS to provide healthcare to members under age 65 is \$636 per member per month. Medicare eligible members cost PERS \$282 a month and with drug costs rising 15% per year the cost to PERS is \$150 per retiree.

"With the aging of the Baby Boomer population, the number of PERS retirees will double in the next 20 years," Hacking said.

The current economic woes and rising healthcare costs will not impact current retirees. However, future members of PERS – those new hires after January 1, 2003 – will experience a revised plan that will pay a varying premium based on years of service. With 10 years of service 25% of premium will be paid. From there it will grow to 100% premium when an employee reaches 30 years of service.

Future Strategy

To address the funding challenges that lie ahead, PERS has joined such groups as the National Coalition on Healthcare and are supporting legislation that would bring generics to market faster and to ban costly name-brand advertising and to support coverage of the uninsured.

"We have major issues facing us," Hacking said. "However, we think we have positioned ourselves to tackle our problems so we can continue to provide the services to our members that we have always provided."



OHIO RETIREMENT STUDY COUNCIL SAYS LEGISLATURE IS CONSISTENT IN ADOPTING QUALITY PENSION PLANS

Aristotle Hutras, Director of the Ohio Retirement Study Council, in remarks to the PERI Annual Meeting audience, said that the Ohio General Assembly has been consistent in dealing with all its constituents about making good public policy when it comes to health plans for the state's retired public employees.

"Ohio is a state that doesn't overreact and has a reputation for adopting quality pension and healthcare plans," Hutras explained. "We are one of the nation's leaders in this area." The Ohio Retirement Study Council oversees \$140 billion in the state's various public pension funds.

The impact of terrorist acts against our nation on September 11 and the resulting fallout of Ohio's overall economy has had a negative effect on pension and healthcare planning issues.

"All healthcare systems are safe based on today's economic climate," Hutras said. "But there is no free lunch and everyone is working hard to try and keep it that way. Costs will surely rise - that is anticipated - but healthcare programs will always be there for the retiree. The challenge will be to find a way to keep rising costs at a minimum for Ohio's future retirees."

TOTH SEES AN ECONOMY ON THE REBOUND

PERI members attending the Annual Meeting received a first-hand, in-depth review of the expansive PERS investment program from Neil V. Toth, PERS's Investment Director.



Toth began his presentation mentioning the names of several major U.S. corporations that of late have made American's blood run cold because of corporate and financial wrongdoing: Enron, Adelphia, Tyco, WorldCom and Global Crossing.

"The effect of the growing corporate scandals was too much for the market to handle, resulting in a gradual, then accelerated decline, culminating in the July collapse," Toth recalled. "At the low point, reached in July, the S&P was down over 30% for the year!"

Where does this leave us on the market outlook?

One might think that it would be negative, but actually PERS feels that the worst has passed and that the stock market offers an investor reasonable value at these levels.

"We took a look at bear markets going back to the Thirties," Toth explained. "The data suggest that the decline is nearing extreme levels. Certainly, a 30% decline in 2002, coming on the heels of a 12% decline in 2001, and a 9% decline in 2000 would seem to suggest that the bear market is rather mature."

Other Economic Indicators

PERS studies reveal that, even though the overall economy has been soft, it continues to grow. "Our economic advisor expects the gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at a healthy rate of 3.5% in 2003," Toth told the crowd, "Inflation, always a potential threat to the investment climate, is non-existent."

In addition, low interest rates are providing a stimulus to the economy and support equity valuations.

So what is the PERS investment strategy in light of the current economy? Actively managing our way through these investment cycles is a long-term orientation, driven by policy and process.

Another way PERS manages for the long term is to maintain discipline in its investment programs. "We have found that being passively invested (investing in stocks that are on the indexes, the ones that are used to gage the economy) in the U.S. equity market, will provide us with a greater return over

time than if we used active management – that is actively attempting to outperform the U.S. markets by concentrating our portfolios in stocks that we believe will do better than the overall market," Toth said. "This process helps us avoid the mistake of getting caught up in the market and being pessimistic along with the herd. In order to make money in the market, it's essential to be disciplined, and at times that means going against the general mood and acting apart from the crowd."

Finally, critical to the portfolio's long-term success is diversification. PERS remains true to that strategy by investing in numerous types of assets including stocks, bonds, real estate, and private investments. What's important to PERS in managing through these investment cycles is a long-term orientation, driven by policy and process.

Mr. Toth went on to explain that they are bringing highly qualified investment staff on board in order to save a net (after they pay for the new staff) 10 to 20 million dollars per year in outside management fees.

Mr. Toth concluded his presentation with the assurance, that as serious as the millions lost with the collapse of Enron, Adelphia, Tyco, WorldCom and Global Crossing were, the PERS investment policies were fundamentally sound. (PERS, like other long-term investors, follow the leading indexes. When company officers and accountants misrepresented the facts, everyone lost.)

"I am pleased to report that even with struggling financial markets and financial losses arising from fraudulent companies, PERS remains well positioned:

- We continue to be a premier public pension plan characterized by a strong funding level. While the recent downturn will cause our funded status to decline below 100%, this is to be expected after three down years in the financial markets and poses no threat to the health of the retirement system.
- We continue to offer leading pension and health benefits. In fact, our health care program, while not a guaranteed benefit, is second to none among state plans. Like the financial markets, the health care environment is particularly challenging at present, with health care costs rising at worrisome levels. PERS has responded by making changes to the health plan for future retirees which has improved the funding of the program.
- Finally, while the investment environment is challenging, we believe the worst has passed. The current bear market has about run its course and valuations, and while not compelling, are fair. During this period, we have positioned the investment program for the long term by adopting strategies and practices that will help us perform competitively with our peer group."

Why Everyone Receiving A Check From PERS Should Be A Member of PERI

PERI is not a union, nor does it endorse or support any political parties or candidates.

Special points of interest:

- Every single retiree can make a difference.
- Every retiree is welcome to be a part of a group with the same interests in mind.
- Each person has the right to voice their opinion in a forum that gets involved with results.
- All of us, together, can help keep our retirement and benefits safe for us and for future generations.

Public Employee Retiree, Inc.
659-F Park Meadow Road
Westerville, Ohio 43081
1-800-247-7374

P.E.R.S. & P.E.R.I.

What is the difference?

P.E.R.S. is the abbreviation for Ohio's Public Employees Retirement System.

PERS is the state agency that administers our pension funds and healthcare benefits.

PERS sends us our checks.

P.E.R.I. is the abbreviation for the Public Employee Retirees, Incorporated.

PERI is the Retiree Political Action Association for all those who receive PERS checks.

PERI keeps on top of all political activity that affects our pension and healthcare benefits.

How Does P.E.R.I. Protect Your Pension and Benefits?

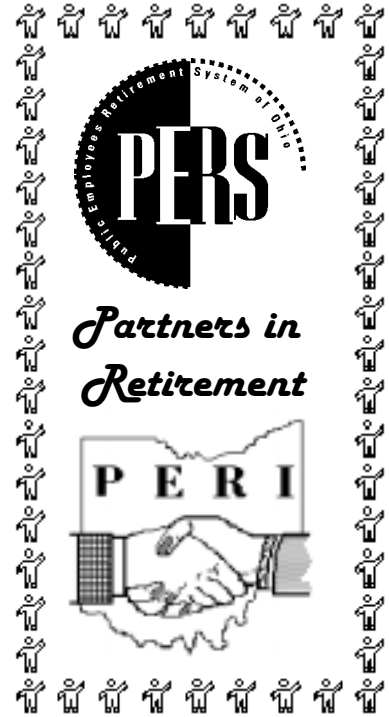
1. The Officers of PERI work with the Administrators of PERS as one of their sounding boards for the opinions of retirees. Many times, our members call upon us to help them with problems they are having with PERS services or healthcare providers.

2. The rules and regulations for the operation of PERS are set by the Ohio General Assembly.

3. Our Legislative Counsel constantly monitors every proposed or actual piece of Ohio legislation.

4. Our counsel keeps our Board of Directors informed on all legislation that pertains to the rules or regulations that would affect our pension system, pension fund investments, or healthcare benefits.

(Continued: next column)



5. Through feedback from our quarterly Newsletter, comments from our local Chapters, or individuals by phone, our Board of Directors is able to determine how our members feel about these changes.

(Continued on Page 8: Protect your Benefits)

All of PERI's Officers and District Representatives are retired Ohio workers who volunteer their time for the good of all PERS retirees.

PERI is not a union nor does it support any candidates or political parties.

PERI does not sell or endorse any products or services.

Benefits of Membership

- **Information from our Legislative Counsel**, who monitors legislative activities.
- **Insight to pending legislation** without political or news media interpretation.
- **Representation on PERS retiree issues** before the Ohio Legislature and its committees.
- **Quarterly Newsletters** to keep you informed about legal and political issues.
- **Insight on PERS** and the motivating factors behind their actions.
- **800 Service** to answer your questions about legislative issues.

(Continued on page 8: Benefits of Membership)

Why Your Involvement Is So Vital

The Importance Of

All Retirees

Being Members of PERI

As in all political endeavors, the more people you represent, the greater your influence with the members of The Ohio General Assembly.

When we stand together, and properly present our position, we have the best opportunity to prevail.

Retirees Living Outside Of The State Of Ohio

There have been times in the past when only those who live outside of Ohio could help.

Case in point: Several years ago, the U.S. Congress was discussing imposing Social Security on all workers. This action would dry up new money coming into Ohio's PERS. All of Ohio's U.S. Senators and Representatives were against this policy.

We needed Senators and Representatives from other states to understand our opposition. So our PERI members who live outside of Ohio were asked to write and call their Senators and Representatives.

To make a long story short, our out of state PERI members were successful in convincing several key U.S. Senators to change their vote, and mandatory Social Security was put on the shelf.

Retirees Living Within The State Of Ohio

Because there is such a high concentration of retirees who live within the state of Ohio, there are 93 local Chapters that PERI members may join.

Many PERI members like to belong to a local Chapter, because the Chapters provide a forum for a more complete discussion of the legislative and benefit issues at hand. In addition, Chapter members have a great time learning and fellowshiping with one another.

PERI has divided Ohio into 11 Districts. Each District elects its own Representative to sit on the PERI Board of Directors. The Representatives carry the views of their members to the Board, and take the most current information back to the Chapters.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR DISTRICTS

FOR LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-247-7374 OR VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.OPERI.ORG

District 1:

Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams, Wood.

The Chapters in District 1 are very active. In addition to our discussions on pending legislation, we invite our local Ohio Representatives to meet with us when they can. We have guest speakers from PERS, Aetna, Medical Mutual, and other benefit suppliers. Even though each of our Chapters is geared toward the particular interests of its members, we have a variety of activities and a great time of fellowship.

District 2:

Allen, Auglaize, Hardin, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Shelby, Van Wert.

Our District is mostly rural in nature, but we have a real interest in the legislative activities that affect our pension and benefits. We have a good time in our meetings, being serious on legislative matters, community minded on local concerns, and fun loving with social activities. I believe we have accomplished a good mix of legislative, PERS related, community, and entertaining speakers for our meetings.

District 3:

Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble.

District 3 has been one of the backbone areas for PERI. In addition to our District Representatives, several state Officers have come from our ranks. Our membership has been faithful and supportive of their local Chapters, and have provided a great deal of input to the PERI Board of Directors on legislative and pension fund investment policies. We have a good time while keeping informed on the issues.

OHIO CHAPTERS

Our members, who can participate in Local Chapters, are very important to PERI's ability to effectively communicate our concerns to members of the Ohio General Assembly. Chapter members have the opportunity to discuss issues and personally meet with their local Ohio Representatives. Healthcare providers also visit our Chapters where our members can get their questions answered without having to spend hours on the phone.

District 4

Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont,
Clinton, Hamilton, Highland, Warren.

A little bit country and a little bit big city best describes our district. We tend to concentrate on the legislative issues and securing speakers from PERS and our Healthcare Benefit Providers. We get to know our Ohio Representatives and Senators personally and take the time to have meaningful discussions with them. Our Chapter members enjoy being together and we have a great time while learning.

District 5

Crawford, Hancock, Knox, Marion,
Morrow, Richland, Seneca, Wyandot.

Many of our Chapter members were involved in grass roots politics during their working years. Their experience has been very beneficial in helping PERI organize its state wide legislative committee network. We enjoy being with each other while we learn the hows and whys behind pending legislation. When called on, we have a great time writing Ohio's Senators and Representatives to express our views.

District 6

Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin,
Licking, Madison, Pickaway, Union.

In the District where PERI established its roots, our Chapters have built a strong membership base of knowledgeable people who enjoy being together. Over the years, learning the details of pending legislation and supplying input to the state office has been our strong point. A large number of PERS retirees reside in our counties and we always get excited as the more recent retirees get involved.

District 7

Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence,
Meigs, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton.

There aren't a lot of PERS retirees in our counties, but those who are, are active and involved. Our members have a real concern when anyone wants to play with our pension funds. We know that the best way to stay on top of any legislation that affects the way the pensions funds are handled is to go to our Chapter meetings. We have a great time being together, meeting our local legislators, and learning what is important.

P.E.R.I. OHIO
DISTRICTS



District 8

Athens, Hocking, Monroe, Morgan,
Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Washington.

Many of the original Ohio Settlers began in our counties. We have strong feelings about Ohio and how our pension funds are handled. Over the past 4 years our District and Chapters have had the greatest growth in membership in the state. We are very active in meeting our Ohio Legislators and expressing our viewpoint on issues that are before the Ohio General Assembly.

District 9

Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey,
Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Tuscarawas.

All of our Chapters, whether large or small, are greatly interested in the workings of our retirement system. We meet with our Ohio Senators and Representatives, and share our views on important pieces of legislation. We also have representatives of our healthcare providers visit our Chapters so our members have a chance to get their questions answered without spending hours on the phone.

District 10

Ashland, Cuyahoga, Erie, Huron, Lorain,
Medina, Summit, Wayne.

Our Chapters are very active with strong leadership and a good mixture of legislative and PERS healthcare-provider speakers. A few of our Chapters go above and beyond in outside activities for their members such as trips and tours. We are also very active in communicating with our state Legislators and learning about legislation and our pension benefits.

District 11

Ashtabula, Columbiana, Geauga, Lake,
Mahoning, Portage, Stark, Trumbull.

We have strong, long-standing Chapters in all but two of our counties: Ashtabula and Geauga. We are looking for retirees who are willing to coordinate Chapters in those counties. In our other Chapters, we maintain our knowledge of pending legislation and healthcare issues from our Legislators and healthcare providers. Our Chapter members enjoy the fellowship as we learn together.

Check Us Out

Since 1948, Ohio's retired public employees have been organized to protect the funds in our pension system from legislative robbery. Starting in the same year, we have worked with the Administrators of PERS and the Ohio General Assembly to receive, and then improve, all of our side benefits such as: Cost of Living adjustments, Healthcare, Prescription Drugs, Ad Hoc pension base adjustments, and Medicare Part B reimbursements. A complete history of our activities and accomplishments can be found on our website.

www.OPERI.ORG

*Keeping Ohio's Retired
Public Employees
Informed*



We're on the Web!
www.OPERI.ORG

(Protect Your Benefits: Continued from Page 5)

6. When we know what our membership wants, PERI gives testimony to legislative committees and works with individual legislators to accomplish the results we desire.

7. In addition, we have a highly-developed Legislative Committee that keeps in constant communication with our District and Chapter legislative Chairpersons so our Chapter members will have the proper information to write or call their local Ohio Representatives and Senators.

With all of these resources in place, PERI is able to react quickly to ensure that the viewpoints of PERS Retirees are effectively communicated to the proper people at the proper time.

Who May Belong To And Who Governs The P.E.R.I. Association?

Only Ohio age and service, disability, and survivor beneficiaries receiving checks from PERS may join PERI. Only PERI members can become PERI Directors.

PERI membership and directorships are limited to PERS Retirees, because we know that no matter what other groups may claim, no one or no organization is more concerned about, or more committed to, protecting and improving PERS pensions and benefits than those who receive them.

(Benefits Of Membership: Continued from Page 5)

- **800 Service:** To help guide you through any problems with PERS Departments or Healthcare Service Providers.
- **Membership Card:** With major Retiree and Healthcare phone numbers on the back.
- **Peace of Mind:** Your fellow retirees are on the job monitoring legislative and political activity that may affect your retirement and benefit package.
- **Peace of Mind:** Your fellow retirees will alert you when there is a need for your personal involvement.
- **Peace of Mind:** Your fellow retirees will let you know who to contact, when to contact them, and the best way to present your viewpoint.

As a member, you can completely enjoy your retirement years knowing that PERI is on the job watching over your pension fund.



**PERI INSTALLS OFFICERS
FOR 2002-2003**



William Covert, Immediate Past President, installed the following Officers and District Representative for the coming year:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| President: Bill Kuhner | District 3: Ellsworth Szkudlarek |
| 1 st VP: Don Moyer | District 4: Ramon Mick |
| 2 nd VP: Bill Cook | District 5: Floyd Smith |
| 3 rd VP: Jack Wymer | District 6: Joan Grube |
| Secretary/Treasurer: Evelyn George
[Term begins 1/103] | District 7: Frank Vaughan |
| District 1: vacant with the election
of Jack Wymer | District 8: Beverly Calvert |
| District 2: Evelyn George
[through 12/31/02] | District 9: Beverly Sycks |
| | District 10: Leland Coddling |
| | District 11: Elizabeth Somerville |

KUHNER IS NEW PERI PRESIDENT

William J. Kuhner, Jr. was installed as the new president of the Public Employee Retirees, Inc. at the group's Annual Meeting. He succeeds Lucille Critchfield who worked diligently during her term to foster relationships with PERI Chapters across the state. During her tenure as president she attended over 200 meetings and traveled over 12,000 road miles meeting with retirees in every corner of the Buckeye state promoting the PERI agenda.

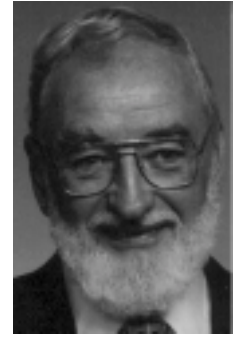
Kuhner has been active in his home Chapter in Ross County serving in many positions including president. In 1992 District 7 elected him to represent them on the PERI Board of Directors.

In 1999 he was elected PERI's 3rd Vice President and in 2001 and 2002 was elected 1st Vice President.

Kuhner is prepared for his new leadership role. His past PERI service includes positions on the Audit, Finance, Program, Legislative, Chapter Education, and Nominating committees.

He earned his bachelor's degree in education from Ohio University in 1947. Upon graduation he worked with the Ohio Department of Transportation before moving on to the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services where he retired in 1988 with 42 years of service credit.

Mick to Lead District 4



The Board of Directors has appointed Ramon F. Mick to fill the position of District 4 Representative. He fills the vacancy that occurred when the former representative, Mary McDowell, was elected to the position of PERI's Secretary / Treasurer.

Mick is a native of Hamilton County and was educated at the University of Cincinnati, City College of New York, and the American Theatre Wing. Mick has worked in the television industry and on Broadway and worked in West Africa with Liberia Iron and Steel Corporation. After returning to the United States, he worked for more than 20 years with the City of Hamilton.

He is also a WWII veteran having served with the 20th Infantry Regiment of the Sixth Division as a rifleman.

Mick and his wife, Barbara, have three grown children.

GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICE EFFICIENCY



PERI continues its growth in membership and has in excess of 51,000 members including 11,308 lifetime members. This was the message from PERI Administrator Bill Winegarner who shared with the Annual Meeting attendees the growth that PERI has experienced. Just 10 years ago in 1993 PERI had but 19,000 members on its rolls.

In the past year the PERI office continued to update its database technology to better serve the membership and to keep costs at a minimum. The result has been a staff of four that is working more efficiently and effectively to serve PERI.

Another priority item during the past year was conducting several quality regional training programs for District Representatives and Chapter Officers to allow for better communication to the membership about the work and direction of PERI activities on both a statewide and local level.

Winegarner also talked about the improvements made to the PERI website (www.operi.org) to assist the membership in its daily dealings with the Columbus office and various issues of importance.

“There is a wealth of information on the website that can assist each and every member of the organization,” explained Winegarner. “We have everything from past newsletters, to directories of Chapter and District leadership, to historical data on PERI’s legislative activities dating back to 1948. The Legislative-News page has information on bills that impact the membership in both the Ohio General Assembly and in Washington, D.C.”



Partners in Retirement



PERS RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE ADDRESSES ANNUAL MEETING

Sharon Downs, the retiree representative on the PERS Board of Trustees, led the presentation of the PERS executive staff present at the Annual Meeting.

Downs displayed pictures of the PERS Board of Trustees on the projection screen and introduced each by giving their name and explaining what group or agency they represented. Sharon also gave an overview of how the Trustees oversee the entire operation of the Retirement System through their committees, outside consultants, and staff.

Addressing concerns over the stock market decline and major investment losses, Sharon reassured the assembly that the Board not only shares their concerns, but has also been aggressively examining every procedure and investment concept to insure its soundness in today’s financial market.

As a result, Downs explained that the Trustees have hired three consulting groups to help: Ennis Knupp, for investment structure; Townsend, for real estate program investments; and PCG, a private equity advisor.

In her concluding remarks, Downs expressed the Board’s appreciation for PERS’s fine staff, its input, and stability.

PERI District Roundup

District 2

PERI District 2 held its annual meeting April 18 at the Eagles Lodge in Lima with Chapter 8 serving as host. Some 85 members and guests attended from the eight counties that make up District 2 – Allen, Auglaize, Hardin, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Shelby and Van Wert. Tom Sherman, PERS Legislative Officer, was the keynote speaker. He discussed the PERS Board of Directors, statistics on membership, retiree participants, and benefit summary. In addition, he spoke on recent benefit improvements for retirees and the status of current state and federal legislation. Four Ohio State Representatives – John Willamowski, Derrick Seaver, Keith Faber, and James Hoop also participated in the legislative discussions. Bill Cook of Galion, 3rd Vice President of PERI also was a guest. District 2 Representative Evelyn George announced the selection of Albinus Miller to serve on the PERI Nominating Committee. Any retirees residing in District 2 with an interest in a leadership role in PERI should contact Evelyn George.

District 3



On August 13 PERI District 3 Chapter 6 held a pig roast at Delco Park for its Montgomery County members in Dayton. Members took advantage of a picturesque lake with fishing pier and gazebo. Bev Afzal

made the catch of the day. The outing was coordinated by social chairman Yvette Adams and her committee. District 3 is planning a wine-tasting dinner and a winery tour for its next social gathering, according to Ellsworth Szkudlarek, District 3 representative.



District 9



PERI District 9 held its annual meeting June 13 at Robson's Restaurant in Coshocton with 27 in attendance. Welcoming members and their guests was Beverly Sycks, District 9 Representative and Bill Cook of Galion, PERI 3rd Vice President.

The meeting's featured speaker was Sharon Downs, PERS Retiree Representative and member of the PERS Board of Directors.

District 10

When Chuck Bukovec takes on an assignment he doesn't fool around. In 1997 he became membership chairman of Chapter 83 in PERI's 10th District. At the time, the chapter had but 60 members and wasn't extremely active. Besides contacting new retirees living within the area about the benefits of PERI membership, he



drives around town with a sign on his car door that promotes the chapter and organization. As the saying goes, "advertising pays." Today – five years after Chuck was given the responsibility of membership – Chapter 83 boasts 402 members. Seems every PERI chapter could use an enthusiastic volunteer like Chuck Bukovec.

District 11

PERI District 11 held its annual meeting May 7 at the Itam's Club in Youngstown. Attending were some 140 members and guests. Special thanks goes out to the Mahoning County Chapter for all their hard work in planning this meeting. The meeting's guest speaker was former Ohio Senator Harry Meshel of Youngstown. "Being an active member in your local PERI Chapter is an excellent way to keep informed on current issues regarding our retirement pensions and benefits," explained Becky Somerville, PERI District 11 Representative. "I encourage all PERI members to join their local Chapter and attend meetings regularly." For more information, contact Becky Somerville at (330) 876-8634, or call the PERI office in Columbus toll free at (800)247-7374. The seven active Chapters in District 11 are doing a good job, but Becky Somerville has not heard from any of the PERI members in Geauga County. Please contact Becky if you are interested in forming or belonging to a local chapter in Geauga County.

Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) ON LINE

Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) are mailed each time a Medicare recipient's healthcare provider submits a claim. Summary notices inform the recipient of a variety of information such as the claims processed during the month, amounts paid, and amounts due.

Palmetto GBA, the company handling Medicare Claims in Ohio, announced that Medicare Summary Notice information will soon be available on the internet. Individuals will be able to view and print a copy of their information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Medicare recipient may register by going to www.PalmettoGBA.com. Each one who joins the service will be issued a password in order to protect the security of their information.

"This is an added service," Palmetto said. "Everyone will still receive their information in the mail."



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