

APERSpective

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Fall 2019

Town Halls on Retirement

By Duncan Baird, APERS Executive Director

In September, I began touring the state to meet with APERS members and retirees in a series of town hall meetings to discuss the financial health of our system and ideas for future legislation to help maintain and strengthen our system.

These meetings were organized by the Legislative Joint Retirement Committee and include the directors and staff of each Arkansas retirement system.

There were over 500 members in attendance between the two days in Hope and Hot Springs, which is incredibly encouraging. Thank you to each APERS member who attended these meetings and for your strong support of our retirement system.

At each town hall meeting, I provided details and statistics on the current financial position of APERS, including the following:

- The retirement benefit provided by APERS is important to both our employees and employers.



Turnout at the town hall meetings is off to a good start with strong attendance at both Hope and Hot Springs.



Duncan Baird, Executive Director of APERS, discussing the retirement system.

- APERS has done, and is doing, the right things from a financial standpoint. This is reflected in our funded status, which is higher than the national median.
- As time goes by, APERS is maturing. This is reflected in our growing number of retirees vs. active members and in the increasing amount of benefits paid out by APERS annually.
- It is prudent and responsible to monitor the financial health of our system and discuss possible adjustments to ensure it remains strong and stable.

Clint Rhoden, Director of the Arkansas Teachers Retirement System, spoke on the impact of changes made to ATRS in the last legislative session and the future of their system. Robyn Smith, Executive Secretary of Arkansas State Highway Employee Retirement System, and David Clark, Director of Arkansas Local Police and Fire Retirement System, also provided updates on their systems and the work they have been doing.

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Setting up your access to the Member Self Service Portal (MSS)

APERS' Member Self Service Portal (MSS) is your first and best way to review your retirement related information, do benefit estimates, get copies of your Annual Statement, send secure messages to APERS staff and much, much more. But before you can do any of these things you have to establish a personal secure login.

The process begins on our website at www.apers.org. At the top of the page click on the member link.



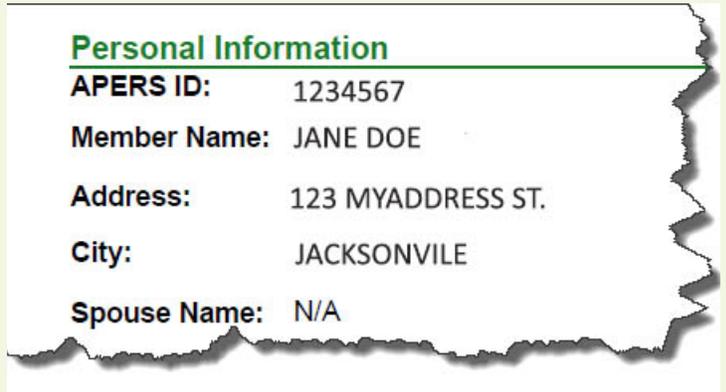
On the login screen, click on [Register](#). This will start the account wizard and you can follow the steps to

- Verify you are a member of the system
- Create a user name and password
- Set up your security questions and answers

Once you've completed the set up, you will get a confirmation email, and you are ready to log in.

A Closer Look

As part of the verification process the system will ask for your APERS ID. "Where can I find my APERS ID?" is a common question our members ask. Your APERS ID can be found on your Annual Statement that went out in September. You can find it on the front page in the personal information box.



If you don't have your APERS ID handy, you can contact APERS and we will be glad to assist you.

For a step by step guide to creating an account on the Members Self Service Portal go to our website at:

www.apers.org/myguides

Withdrawing money from APERS

Members frequently ask if they can withdraw from, add to, or borrow against their retirement accounts. The answer to all of these is "no." The only way you can get money from APERS is to retire or to terminate your covered employment.

With APERS, you have no individual retirement account like a 401(k) to borrow against or draw from, and no one can predict the total value of your benefits until you have finished collecting them.

After you retire, APERS pays you a monthly pension for the rest of your life, whether that's 5 more years or 50. The money does not come from "your account" but from APERS' general funds.

If you terminate your employment, you can get a refund of any money you have directly contributed

to the system. There are two ways you might have contributed:

- (1) if you are a contributory member who has 5% of your paycheck withheld for your retirement, or
- (2) if you have purchased service.

If you leave the system, you can take these funds with you, but you will lose all the service associated with them. This is important to understand. If you were vested (5 or more years of service) you are no longer guaranteed a retirement benefit.

Note that your employer's contributions are never refundable, only money that you have contributed yourself.

Town Hall Meetings on Retirement

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Following the presentations, we took questions from the audience and from members of the Joint Retirement Committee. There were many comments on possible legislative proposals impacting funding or benefits. For example, one member suggested maintaining or even raising the current rate of employer contributions. Also, if given a choice, several members mentioned they would prefer raising the employee contribution rate rather than adjusting benefits. Some audience members also encouraged us to find ways to cut administrative costs and investment fees. Not surprisingly, the annual cost of living increase was also of great interest to members, who urged us to consider the effect that any proposed changes might have on current retirees.

I'm excited about the opportunity to continue this conversation and hear your ideas and suggestions as we visit other cities around the state over the next few months. Below is a list of upcoming dates and locations. We hope to see you there.

- Duncan Baird



State legislators and system administrators meet with retirees and active members to discuss retirement issues.

Stay informed

You can find the most up to date information on APERS participation in the town hall meetings on our website:

<http://www.apers.org/joint-comm>

or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS/



[@ArkansasPERS](https://twitter.com/ArkansasPERS)

Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

When	Where
October 1 (Tuesday) at 1:30 p.m.	Jonesboro - Arkansas State University
October 2 (Wednesday) at 9:30 a.m.	West Memphis - Arkansas State University Mid-South
October 9 (Wednesday) at 1:30 p.m.	Monticello - University of Arkansas at Monticello
October 10 (Thursday) at 9:30 a.m.	Pine Bluff - University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
October 22 (Tuesday) at 1:30 p.m.	Mountain Home - Arkansas State University-Mountain Home
October 23 (Wednesday) at 9:30 a.m.	Batesville - Lyon College
*November 5 (Tuesday) at 5:00 p.m.	Benton Event Center, 17322 I-30 N

* Date and Location change.



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Retirement Town Hall Meetings | Signing on to Member Self Service | Withdrawing money from the fund

Visit us online at www.apers.org

RETIREMENT AND DROP FILING DATES

Retirement Date	Earliest Filing Date	Latest Filing Date
November 1, 2019	August 5, 2019	October 2, 2019
December 1, 2019	September 3, 2019	November 1, 2019
January 1, 2020	October 3, 2019	December 2, 2019
February 1, 2019	November 4, 2019	January 2, 2019
March 1, 2019	December 2, 2019	January 31, 2019
April 1, 2020	January 2, 2019	March 2, 2019
May 1, 2020	February 3, 2019	April 2, 2019

You can register for retirement seminars online! Go to www.apers.org/seminars

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Executive Director

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