

APERS *perspective*

RETIRED MEMBERS

SUMMER 2017

The Director's Corner

APERS has achieved several important milestones in recent months that I'd like to share with you. First, the investment portfolio finished the fiscal year with a 12.20% return and record high assets of \$8.1 billion! After two years of rather so-so returns, this strong finish helps our bottom line significantly. No surprise, our domestic and international stock portfolios led the charge to the finish line. With the U.S. presidential election behind us and international markets shaking off fears of the British exit from the European Union, stocks were primed for a particularly strong performance.

The second and perhaps more important milestone has been the cutover to the new APERS pension administration system, COMPASS (**COM**plete **P**ension **A**dministration **S**ystem **S**olution). COMPASS has an Employer Self Service module that now permits electronic reporting and remitting, allowing member employers to safely and securely transmit employee wage and service credit as well as make required contributions more quickly with less expense. Within ninety days of "go-live" virtually all 700 of our member employers were registered and reporting information via COMPASS. Thank you employers!

COMPASS also has a Member Self Service (MSS) portal where members can enroll and communicate with APERS electronically. Once registered, members can look at their personal history, purchase military or other service, file retirement applications and so on. APERS will undertake a focused rollout of MSS later this year.

The development and timely delivery of COMPASS took over three years and would not have been possible without the incredible persistence and dedication of the APERS development team. I would particularly like to thank Allison Woods, Director of Benefits, Phillip Norton, Director of IT, Jennifer Taylor, Manager of Benefit Services, Shelly George, Supervisor of Employer Reporting, and Jason Willett, Chief Fiscal Officer. Without



them, we could not have accomplished this enormous effort.

Even with so much going on, there was also a regular legislative session that occurred earlier in the year. Effective January 1, 2018, Act 552 again permits those who participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) to return to public service **once they have fulfilled the separation from service requirements** (six months for regular employees, one year for elected officials).

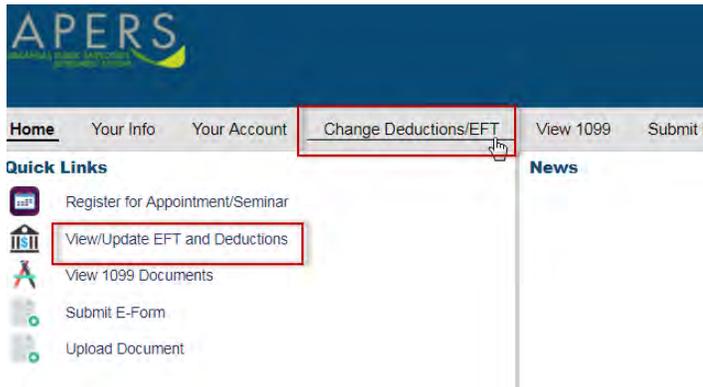
Also, Act 502 shortens the application period for DROP from two months to just one month prior to the effective date.

Finally, we at APERS would like to thank the members of the Joint Retirement Committee for their support throughout the session. Their hard work and commitment is truly appreciated!

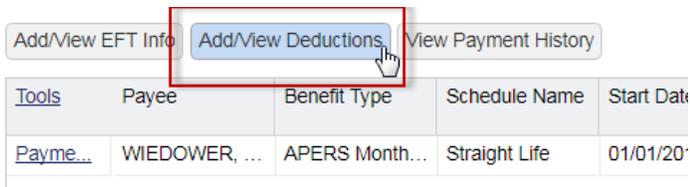


Changing Tax Withholdings in the Members Self Service Portal

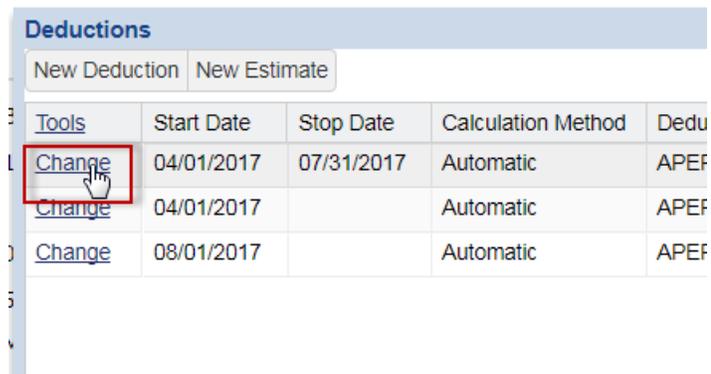
It's easy to adjust your tax withholdings in the Member's Self Service (MSS) portal. From the **Home** screen you can click on the **Change Deductions/EFT** link at the top of the page, or on the **View Update EFT and Deductions** link in the **Quick Links** panel.



From the **Change Deductions/EFT** screen click the **Add New Deductions** button found in the **Add View EFT Info** section.



This will open the **Deductions** window where you can add a new deduction or change (including cancel) an existing one.



Contact APERS if you need assistance with this or any other process on the Member's Self Service portal.

Staggered Retirement: the Sensible Approach to Transitioning into Life Post-Careers

If they're completely honest, most retirees will tell you that retiring from a lifelong career takes some getting used to. Work experiences tend to shape our self-image in many ways, defining who we are, how we think about ourselves, and even how we think others see us. Letting go of that self-image, being needed, filling a vital role, and adjusting to life in retirement is not always easy. Add on top of that the adjustments our spouses have to make, whether they're at home with us or still working at their own careers. Planning for a "staggered retirement" – one spouse leaving the workforce while the other continues working – presents both challenges and opportunities.

Staggered retirement is actually the prevalent situation today: fewer than 20% of couples retire at the same time. Some financial advisors claim this makes sense in most cases for three reasons. When one spouse works longer, the amount of Social Security benefits the couple is entitled to will increase. The continued income from the working spouse gives the couple a few more years to save for retirement. And a spouse who works an extra three to five years will likely have a shorter period over which to draw on his or her retirement assets, allowing for larger withdrawals each year. An extra five years worked by one partner can make a huge difference for couples, especially considering that joint retirement income will drop for most couples to close to 50% of their pre-retirement incomes.

Another factor with a potentially huge impact is health insurance. With one partner continuing to work for several years beyond the other, both can remain on the health coverage provided through the working partner's employer, preventing the retired partner from having to pay for those years of higher health insurance premiums at an individual rate.

The benefits of staggered retirement are more than financial. It can prevent some of the emotional strain of adjusting to undefined roles and different settings. Removing the buffer zones provided by careers can expose friction. As one partner transitions into the retired lifestyle, finding a new pathway for him or herself, the working partner's routine preserves some stability and maintains relational boundaries.

Retirement is an expensive and complex phase of life, but staggering retirement can provide a number of financial and emotional rewards.

Visiting APERS

From time to time, some of you may have reason to pay us a visit here in our Little Rock offices. You may have an appointment with a retirement counselor, you may need to pick up or drop off documents, or you may want to transact some other business with us in person. Whatever the purpose of your visit, we want to make it as convenient as possible for you by providing the following information.

Finding APERS

APERS occupies three floors of the Union Plaza building (formerly Union National Bank) in the heart of downtown Little Rock. The Union Plaza building is located at 124 W. Capitol -- one block west of Main Street at the corner of Louisiana and Capitol. Two of the streets surrounding the building are one-way -- Louisiana (southbound) and 4th Street (eastbound), so if you're not familiar with the area look at your maps and plan your route accordingly.

Free Parking!

As pictured below, the Union Plaza building has a parking deck with valet service. The entrance is on Louisiana (one-way southbound). If you are visiting APERS on business, you can park in the deck for free if space is available. When you leave your car, the valet attendants will give you a ticket, and our receptionist will validate it for you before you leave (remember to ask). If the deck is full or if you prefer street parking there are several metered spaces on the streets surrounding the building.

Go to the Fourth Floor.

Visitors to APERS should always report to the fourth floor. Our receptionist there will be glad to point you where you need to go.

Contact APERS If you need further directions or other information about a visit to APERS at (501) 682-7800 (Pulaski County) or (800) 682-7377 (toll free).



Note that south is at the top of this photo

FINDING APERS

The entrance to the parking deck is located on Louisiana street.

APERS' reception area is located on the 4th floor.

If you need help or more information contact APERS at:

(501) 682-7800 (Pulaski County) or (800) 682-7377 (toll free).

Use APERS' Facebook Page to Stay Informed

Like us on Facebook and get the latest news and useful information from your retirement system:

- Reminders about important dates and deadlines (like direct deposit dates)
- Notifications and timely announcements
- Links to forms and publications on our website
- Pointers to interesting articles in our blog and on the Internet
- Contact info, maps, and directions to our offices

While APERS is always eager to serve you, we cannot interact with members on social media. We welcome your comments, but if you have questions about your account, APERS policies, or anything else, please contact us by phone or postal mail. You'll also find a wealth of information on our website at www.apers.org. You can call us at 501-682-7800 in Pulaski County or toll-free at 800-682-7377.

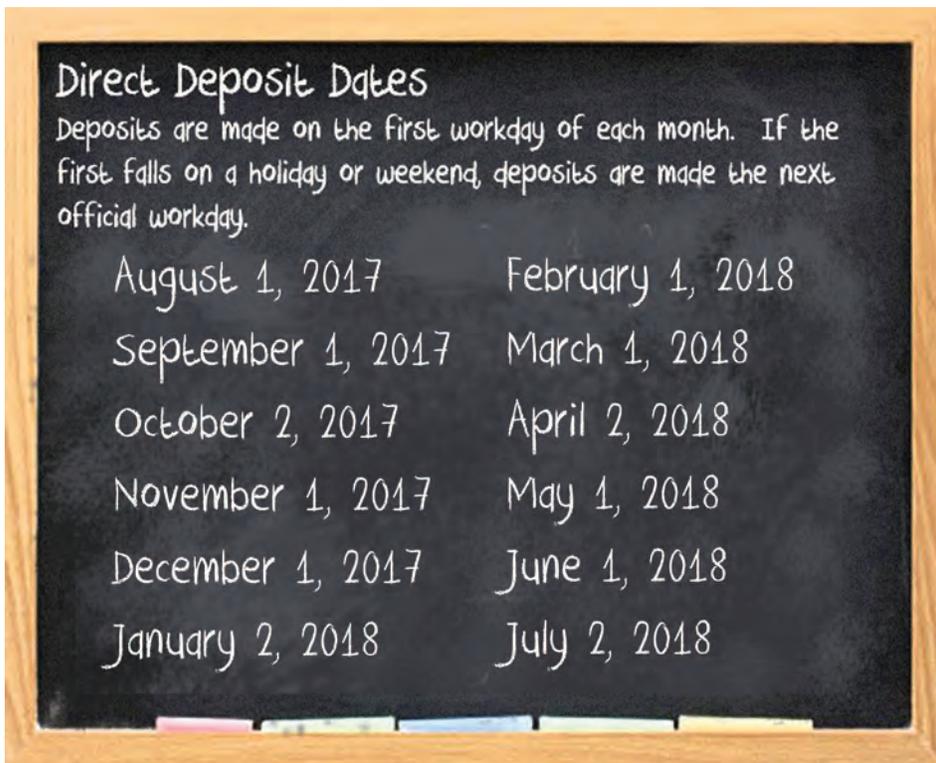
Connect online with APERS today at <https://www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS>



In This Issue

Director's Corner | Change Tax Withholding with MSS
 Staggered Retirement | APERS on Facebook
 Visiting APERS | 2017 DepositDates |

2017 Direct Deposit Dates



ARKANSAS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

APERSpective
RETIREED MEMBERS SUMMER 2017

APERS NEWS Volume 14, Issue 1

APERS NEWS is a publication of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System (APERS), produced and distributed for APERS members.

APERS EXECUTIVE STAFF
 Ms. Gail H. Stone
Executive Director

APERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 Mr. David Morris
Chair

Ms. Carol Bevis
 Ms. Candace Franks
 The Honorable David Hudson
 Mr. Steve Faris*
 Mr. Daryl Bassett
 The Honorable Andrea Lea
 The Honorable Dennis Milligan
 Mr. Larry Walther