

Summer 2021

Active & Retired Missouri State Employees

www.armse.org

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• What's Ahead for ARMSE?

Thank you, thank you, thank you to those who answered our appeal last summer -- helping us through another year with your financial support! We are still hanging on by a thread, and we hope that we'll find enough support again to make it through yet another Legislative Session this coming January. We need ARMSE members to continue our benefit-protection fight. We are still treading water, and again, without additional dues paying members, we will no longer be able to continue existing services.

Ultimately, ARMSE needs a few thousand members to be able to afford lobbying services, our database, mailings, printings, bank assistance, accountant services and minor other expenses to reach people all across the state. We have tried numerous tools throughout the past few years to reach both active employees and retirees. The hurdles and the legal complications of trying to gather personal information to contact individuals are not working.

While the future can seem dim, we must pull together and hang in there! Fifty years ago, when ARMSE was formed, the organization was instrumental in helping us obtain better retirement benefits and better medical insurance. Today, while there seems like there is less interest in joining groups – a sign of the times – the need to protect what we have earned is still essential. ARMSE members don't have to attend meetings; we just need the financial membership support in order to do our work for all of us.

The group of volunteers that meets in Jefferson City is willing to keep doing this work, but financial support is the key to making this happen. There are two ways to sign up new members: 1) through the ARMSE website at www.armse.org, or 2) sending an email to ARMSE -- office@armse.org.

There's always someone or something challenging what we've rightfully earned and made sacrifices to enjoy. We don't want to lose the option to protect our benefits. Please help us sign up new members – both active and retired state employees. A positive future depends on it – so please, help us help YOU!

Sincerely,
Roger Schwartze, Board President

• Virtual Annual Meeting on Tap

On September 27 at 10 a.m., the board will meet for the annual meeting through a Zoom call. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARATICPATE in the meeting, send an email message to office@armse.org Final decisions and results from the discussion will be shared on the website at www.armse.org.

• 2020 Legislative Session is a Victory for ARMSE

- ***Nothing passed during the 2020 legislative session that hurts pension and medical insurance benefits Missouri state employees and retirees are earning or have earned!***
- This is an outcome we love to celebrate! It is just as important that ARMSE holds off any damages to benefits, as it is that ARMSE helps pass legislation that secures these same benefits. We're grateful for your support in achieving this outcome! It's also important to know that ARMSE works with fellow public pension organizations. Other pension systems -- teachers, firefighters, police officers, and city and county employees -- work with ARMSE to safeguard all public pensions. We find there's more influence when we join forces, and what's good for public employees is across the board regardless of your profession.
- The state budget was passed by the constitutional deadline. ARMSE tracked these proceedings to ensure MPERS, MOSERS and MCHCP received appropriate funds to continue serving members as promised. And they did!

- A couple of legislative highlights included a 2% pay increase for state employees beginning January 2022. The state fuel tax will be increased over several years beginning in August. This provides increased funding for the state's roads and bridges.
- There were 680 Senate bills and 1,445 House bills introduced this past session. Forty-nine of these measures were pension-related bills. None of these efforts passed. One particular Senate bill had prohibited retirees from receiving a retirement benefit from more than one Missouri public defined benefit plan, but it did not pass.
- **ARMSE must keep watch on legislative efforts each year to protect what we've earned. Thank you for your help in seeing that this effort has continued!**

- **We Need HELP From Active & Retired State Employees**

We want active state employees to understand how ARMSE is working to protect what they have to look forward to in the years ahead. We want them to understand how it's in their best interest to help us now, so they have the pension and health benefits later when they are ready to enjoy them and will need to rely on them. We want retirees to understand that we can't fall asleep at the wheel – the threats out there are real, and we must protect what we worked so hard to earn. Tell others! The membership form can be found on the website: www.armse.org.

Most importantly, ARMSE will not be able to continue without new members. Please go to the website: www.armse.org or email office@armse.org to sign up new members.

- **FYI**

-- Join the ARMSE Face Book page – it's a great way to keep up with information and share with other retirees and active state employees. Chapters meet throughout the state. If you're interested in ARMSE chapter participation, information is on the website to help you make the contact: www.armse.org. It's not required for membership. If you're not one for meetings, no problem! And – remember – ARMSE is volunteers! Thank you for what you are doing to help others!

-- If you're interested in tracking all retirement bills and those closely relating to retirement issues, a tremendous source of information can be found through the Missouri General Assembly's Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement or JCPER. The website is: www.jcper.org.

-- Speaking of websites! If you're a MOSERS retiree, don't forget: www.mosers.org. And, if you're a MPERS retiree: www.mpers.org. There is wonderful information at both locations that can answer so many questions, address rumors, explain issues and help with problems. If for some reason, your issue cannot be addressed, contact information is available for reaching the appropriate staff person.

- **Medical Insurance**

ARMSE passed legislation that provided both employee and retiree representation on the MCHCP board. The MCHCP Board reports there will be no premium increase for active and dependent members for 2022. Retirees' premiums will decrease slightly. The plan design will remain unchanged. MoDOT and Patrol medical insurance reports there will be no benefit changes or increase in premiums for 2022. This is the fifth year in a row that costs have remained unchanged for members.