

## New APERS Call Center

To better serve our calling customers, APERS recently launched a new call center. The intent is to reduce misdirected or dropped calls and increase our member's overall satisfaction when they call.

The call center connects callers with the APERS staff member or unit that can best help the caller. Initial calls to the agency will still go to a main receptionist first. From there, anyone that does not need to speak directly to Executive Office staff will be transferred to a call center employee.

The call center worker will then ask callers for some basic information such as their name, status (member or retiree), address, telephone, and Social Security number, as well as the purpose of the call. This may be a little more information than callers have been asked to give in previous calls to APERS, but the agency's goal is to use the information to help callers get their

calls resolved as efficiently as possible. The call center will be able to answer many of our member's questions, and if they cannot answer the question, they will make sure that the caller is connected to the right staff member



Aside from assisting the call center in resolving questions efficiently, the information callers provide will help the agency build its database of the most frequently requested issues from active and retired members, employers and the general public. Evaluations of this information will help the agency in

providing the information the public wants and hopefully improve its overall customer service and satisfaction.

Callers in the greater Little Rock area may contact APERS by calling (501) 682-7800, and callers outside Pulaski County may call, toll-free, 1-800-682-7377.

## Director's Corner

APERS finished out the calendar year on a high note. Our investment program returned a handsome 14.9% for the twelve months ending 12/31/06. This double-digit return gave the retirement system better than top quartile ranking among all public funds for the last three years and in the top third of all public funds over the last five years. The dollar amount of assets under management swelled to nearly \$5.25 billion at the same time – no mean feat when the system actually pays out about \$60 million more in benefits than it receives in the form of employee and employer contributions.

As of this writing, the legislative session appears to be in its final days. While there has been much activity, relatively few bills affecting APERS have actually passed into law. A benefit multiplier increase was achieved, bringing the 1.75% multiplier (2.03% for contributory) forward to July 1, 2007. Service accrued after that date will receive the original multiplier of 1.72% (2.00% for contributory). For members retiring on or before June 1, 2007, a 1.0% ad hoc increase will be added to their annuity. Members who have been retired for at least twelve months will get the 1.0%

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## Have You Moved?

Whenever you move, please inform APERS in writing. You can use the agency Change of Address form available at: [www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org). Or you can just send a handwritten letter with



your signature stating your new address. Remember to post your Social Security number on any correspondence you mail APERS.

Persons who wish to request an Address Change form by phone may call (501) 682-7860.

# APERS Forms - What's the quickest way to get them?

Often members call and ask if they can change their address or change their beneficiary over the phone. Unfortunately, APERS cannot change a member's personal information by phone.

A member must send in an official APERS form to change personal information, or a signed, written request (the request must include a signature and the Social Security number of the member).

If you're in a hurry to get a form to change your address, name, or other information, the APERS website might be your quickest option.

Forms section on the [www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org) website. Here you can find the most common forms for both our active and retired members.

What advantages does it offer? Mainly, you don't have to call APERS and wait for the agency to mail you a form, which you have to then fill out and return. If the form gets lost in the mail (a rare occurrence), this could further slow you.

If you have access to a computer and printer, most APERS forms can be printed immediately. To print out a form, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer, as the forms are in a PDF format.

If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Reader, you can download it for free at <http://www.adobe.com>.

Some important points to know:

- At this time, you can't fill out APERS forms on the website. You have to print and then fill them out.
- APERS cannot accept faxed or e-mailed forms for most official transactions. An original form with the member's original signature must be mailed. APERS also needs

the Social Security number of the member or retiree to identify the member in our files.

- If you can't download a form or if you have any questions, call APERS at (501) 682-7800 or 1-800-682-7377, and tell them you need a form.

## Forms for Active Members on the APERS website

- Change of Address
- Change of Name
- Change of Beneficiary
- Designation of Beneficiary
- Retirement Application
- DROP Application Form
- DROP Distribution Form and Tax Notice
- PAW Rollover Distribution Request
- Membership Data Form (MDF)
- Termination of Employment Refund Request
- Return to APERS Covered Employment

## 2007 APERS Upcoming Seminars April through June

Date	City/ Seminar Type	Times*	Location
May 15	Texarkana (Regional)	8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.	Miller County Courthouse-Third Floor
May 24	Forrest City (Local)	8:30 a.m.-noon	Forrest City Civic Ctr./Henley Room, 1335 N. Washington
June 14	Mountain Home (Local)	8:30 a.m.-noon	Arkansas State U.-Mountain Home, 1600 South College
June 28	Little Rock (Women's Seminar)	8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.	LR School Dist. Superintendent's Boardroom, 810 W. Markham

*\*Check-in and registration for all seminars takes place from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Persons who want to print out a registration form, and get more details about the seminars, may do so at [www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org). Click the seminars link at the bottom of the APERS home page.*

## APERS PROFILE

Employee Profile for: **Craig Blackard**

In 2006 Craig Blackard rejoined the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System as the agency's Internal Auditor. His duties require him to perform annual audits in all areas of APERS to ensure agency compliance with established policy, procedures and retirement legislation.

Craig returned to APERS after he left the agency in 2005 to work with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration. Altogether, Craig has worked 11 years with APERS. He first worked in the APERS Investments Section, later served members and retirees as a Retirement Counselor, and then moved to supervise the agency's Benefits Unit before he left to work at the DF&A.

Craig has lived in Lonoke, AR, for 31 years, and recently earned from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock his bachelor of science degree in accounting. He is planning to take the CPA examination in the future.

He and his wife of 18 years, Pam, have two sons, Taylor, 15 and Peyton, 8. Craig's interests are sports and hunting, but he mostly likes to hunt for a good golf game on the links when he has the time!

## State workers can access state library online

Arkansas State Library officials remind state employees that they can access web specific electronic information databases stored at the library, any time from home or the office. For a complete list of databases with remote access, contact the reference desk at the State Library.

Persons interested in this service may visit the library at its web address: [www.asl.lib.ar.us](http://www.asl.lib.ar.us). Users must complete an online application (located at the top of the page) to receive their access code.

Arkansas State Library  
One Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-682-2053  
[aslref@asl.lib.ar.us](mailto:aslref@asl.lib.ar.us)

At the request of any state agency, trained reference librarians from the library will come to the agency to demonstrate available electronic databases and resources. Agencies interested in this service may contact Mary Leckie at (501) 682-2864, or by e-mailing [mleckie@asl.lib.ar.us](mailto:mleckie@asl.lib.ar.us) to schedule dates for visits.

## Director's Corner

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increase as well as the annual 3.0% cost of living adjustment.

Of special note was a part of the Governor's budget package for state employees. Effective July 1, 2007 career recognition payments will now count toward retirement as will the lump sums received by employees who are at the top end of their grade's pay range.

Senate bill 39 (Miller, D-Melbourne), which died in committee, would have extended the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) from seven to ten years. An interim study on all systems' DROP programs was proposed instead. As it happens, recent IRS guidance on the provisions of the new federal Pension Protection Act of 2006, suggests that there are to be age-based limitations placed on the amount of money an individual can take as a lump sum benefit so as to comply with the IRS Section 415 limitations. We will pass this information on to the membership as we learn more.

APERS would like to thank legislative retirement committee co-chairs Sen. Jimmy Jeffress (D-Crossett) and Rep. Eric Harris (R-Lowell), as well as Sen. Steve Faris (D-Malvern) for their generous help in passing retirement legislation benefiting the members and retirees of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System.

We would also like to thank Governor Beebe and his staff for "watching our backs" throughout the entire legislative process.

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**REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT FILING DATES**

***DROP Filing Dates***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Earliest Filing Date</b>	<b>Latest Filing Date</b>
June 2007	February 28, 2007	April 30, 2007
July 2007	March 30, 2007	May 31, 2007
August 2007	April 30, 2007	June 29, 2007
September 2007	May 31, 2007	July 31, 2007
October 2007	June 29, 2007	August 31, 2007
November 2007	July 31, 2007	September 28, 2007
December 2007	August 31, 2007	October 31, 2007

*\*The Filing Deadline for DROP applications is always the last working day of the 2nd month before enrollment, not the last calendar day of the month!*

***Retirement Filing Dates***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Earliest Filing Date</b>	<b>Latest Filing Date</b>
June 2007	March 3, 2007	May 2, 2007
July 2007	April 2, 2007*	June 1, 2007
August 2007	May 3, 2007	July 2, 2007
September 2007	June 4, 2007*	August 2, 2007
October 2007	July 3, 2007	September 4, 2007*
November 2007	August 3, 2007	October 2, 2007
December 2007	September 4, 2007*	November 1, 2007

*\*If a Filing Date falls during a weekend or on a holiday, the filing deadline becomes the next working day.*