

APERS Spective

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A Newsletter for Retired Members of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System

The ID Theft Passport Card

Unfortunately, retirees and seniors are often targets and victims of identity theft scams. If you have recently confirmed you're a victim, the Arkansas Identity Theft Victim Passport Card is a tool that may help you to restore your financial credit damaged by the thief.

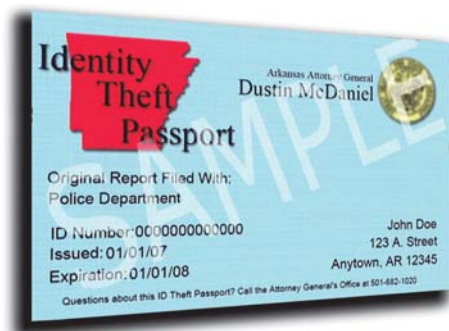
The passport is a card issued by the Arkansas Attorney General's office, similar in appearance to a driver's license, that can help victims in reestablishing their good financial name.

In 2005, the Arkansas General Assembly approved an act authorizing the Attorney General's office to issue these Identity Theft passports to state residents who learn or reasonably suspect they are victims. Stephen Svetz of the Arkansas Attorney General's office noted the card is only for use by state residents who are actual victims of identity theft. It isn't for use to help persons avoid identity theft.

The passport may help an ID theft victim validate their identity with businesses. It also may help prevent the victim's arrest for crimes committed by the identity thief.

Before applying for the passport, victims must first file a police report that confirms he or she was an ID theft victim. Then applicants need to fill out the **Identity Theft Passport Request Victim Information Sheet**. The form can be downloaded from the Attorney General's office's website (www.ag.state.ar.us), or the form can be mailed to victims who call the Attorney General office at one of the following numbers - (501) 682-2007, or 1-800-448-3014.

In order for the AG's office to approve and issue the card, an applicant must include



with the application the following required documents: the official police incident report; your most current photograph for use on the passport card; a copy of your Arkansas driver's license; and a brief description of the ID theft. The Attorney General's office may request additional documentation, or you can submit other information that helps verify the crime.

Svetz said the application process time depends on when the office receives all the required documents. But once approved, the card can be issued in about two days. The AG's website offers information about preventing identity theft, including a booklet titled "Take Charge: Fighting Back Against Identity Theft." The booklet can be downloaded or call the AG office to have it mailed to you.

Changes To The APERS Board of Trustees

At the Board of Trustees meeting in May, the APERS Board of Trustees elected Don Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Arkansas Municipal League, as the new chair, and Artee Williams, Director of the Department of Workforce Services, as Vice Chair. Each will serve for two years. In addition, the trustees welcomed new trustee Mr. Bill Gaddy, a retired state employee who was appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to replace Mr. Jon Sweeney.

The Director's Corner

The APERS investment program recently concluded yet another successful fiscal year, returning 18.01% on its portfolio, landing it in the top quartile of all public funds. Particularly strong returns from both domestic and international stocks helped fuel the high returns.

Since June, the market has appeared to crumble in the face of the subprime mortgage market meltdown. Surprisingly, the APERS portfolio is down less than 1 1/2% -- 1.47% -- since the end of the fiscal year, due to our minimal exposure to the most vulnerable areas of the capital markets. Furthermore, market action in September puts us in line for another "up" month.

The good market returns mean much more than simply strong investing prowess. In conjunction with the improved cash flow resulting from the re-establishment of employee contributions, they mean that the pre-funding health of the retirement system has improved dramatically as well, shooting up from a low of 82% in 2005 to 89%. While we still have much ground to recover from the devastating market capitulation of 2001-2002, this is definitely a firm step in the right direction. As a result, the employer contribution rate will move away from the current 12.54% to something in the range of 11.0% to 11.25% commencing July 1, 2008.

Recently there has been much discussion and debate surrounding the topic of divestment from holdings of companies that conduct business with the government of Sudan in Africa. Many state legislatures around the country have enacted laws barring their state retirement systems from investing

Continued on page 2

The Director's Corner

Continued from page 1

in such companies. Depending on how comprehensive the language of these bills, retirement systems might be barred from investing in Coca-Cola, Toyota, Mitsubishi Motors, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, Royal Dutch Shell Oil, Volvo, Volkswagen, Sony Corp. and so on. Interestingly, if we follow this line of thinking, APERS could be prevented from investing in Schlumberger – a major player in the Fayetteville Shale natural gas field development. Fortunately, the sponsor of Arkansas Senate Resolution 20, Sen. Sue Madison of Fayetteville, recognized the fiduciary quandary that such prohibitions could lead to, and therefore made her resolution non-binding. The APERS Board of Trustees is approaching the topic cautiously, soliciting input from its money managers. It is hoped that the managers can identify suitable, non-offending substitutes for some, if not most, of the companies typically cited. That being said, it is important to note that APERS does not now, nor did it ever have any investment in companies with businesses on the ground in the country of Sudan.

The Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System trustees and staff are constantly striving to maintain and improve the high quality of the investment program that funds our retirement benefits. As well, we are constantly looking to improve the delivery of our counseling services to the membership. As a reminder, now that the Baby Boomers are steadily marching into retirement, our counseling schedules are full far into the future. If you are contemplating retirement within the next year, make an appointment with a counselor NOW. Don't wait till the last minute to make decisions that will affect the entire second half of your life!

APERS Direct Deposit Dates

November 1, 2007	December 3, 2007
January 2, 2008	February 1, 2008
March 3, 2008	April 1, 2008
May 1, 2008	June 2, 2008

Deposits are made on the first workday of each month that doesn't fall on a holiday.

Free APERS parking

Retirees on APERS business can get free parking (if available) at the agency's parking deck. Drivers traveling on Louisiana St. (a one-way street) will turn left into the parking deck, located on Louisiana between Fourth St. and W. Capitol Ave. Once you finish your appointment, bring the parking ticket to the receptionist's desk on the fourth floor to have the ticket validated.

APERS PROFILE

Employee Profile for: **Ardary Taylor**

As APERS' State Social Security Coordinator for Arkansas, Ardary Taylor is responsible for coordinating the functions of Section 218 of the Federal Social Security Act, which primarily entails social security coverage and compliance issues. These duties, which Ardary describes as both challenging and rewarding, require partnership with the Federal IRS and the Social Security Administration to provide state-wide education and training to governmental entities and political sub-divisions.



Ms. Taylor joined APERS in 1984, working first as an APERS retirement counselor before moving into the position of Assistant HR Manager, which she held until becoming the State Social Security Coordinator in May of 2000. Prior to her APERS career, Ardary worked as an employment interviewer, employment counselor and Placement Supervisor with the Employment Security Division. She holds a BS degree in Sociology and has completed extensive graduate work with Ouachita Baptist College.

When Ardary isn't at work or spending time with her (18 month old) grandson A.J., son Andre and daughter-in law, Ronetha, she can be found on the tennis court since she is an avid tennis player who also loves walking and jogging.

Help for the Grandparent Caregiver

Many APERS retirees - if not most - are probably grandparents. And many of them may also help raise their grandchildren.

In the state of Arkansas 33,618 grandparents report they are responsible for grandchildren who live with them. That's a total of 50,286 children who live with these grandparents, which makes up 7.4% of the children in the state of Arkansas.*

Grandparents who have assumed the role of primary caregivers for grandchildren may think they must face this challenge on their own. However, there are resources out there - public, private and not-for-profit - that offer support for grandparents who are either caregivers, or more "traditional" grandparents who simply serve as loving mentors.

Following is a sample list of some resources. While not a comprehensive list, it can perhaps be helpful as you start your information search.

➤ **AARP Foundation Grandparent Information Center (GIC)** - Because of the AARP's name recognition and resources, this might be a good place to start. The GIC exists to provide information, referrals and outreach

support to grandparents raising grandchildren; grandparents with visitation issues, or grandparents who just want positive involvement with grandchildren. The GIC offers services such as articles, fact sheets and message boards via its website; a free quarterly newsletter; booklets; referrals to other agencies and local support group information. The website also includes a Local Grandparents Support Database; a Benefits search link, and a State Fact Sheet on statistics and services for grandparents. You can reach the GIC by calling 1-888-OUR-AARP, or by going to the agency website at www.aarp.org/grandparents.

➤ **The Department of Human Services.** This state agency administers a variety of services for the elderly and lower-income families, as well as ARKids First, the state health insurance program for children of low and moderate-income families. Julie Munsell, spokesperson for DHS, said grandparents who become caregivers may help the search for appropriate support if they first self-assess what their grandchildren need, if anything, before contacting DHS. This may allow the DHS staff to more quickly refer the grandparents to the right agency for assistance.

Grandparents may contact DHS by calling a state-wide contact number (1-800-482-8988), or by visiting their county's DHS office.

Here are additional resources grandparents might find useful:

Children's Defense Fund
(202) 628-8787
www.childrensdefense.org

Grandfamilies of America
(866) 272-3761
www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com

DID YOU KNOW?

National Grandparents Day was the brainchild of Marian McQuade of West Virginia, who hoped the observance might persuade grandchildren to tap the wisdom and heritage of grandparents.

The first presidential proclamation in 1978 designated the first Sunday after Labor Day as National Grandparents Day.

Following is some data on grandparents compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, using information from the 2005 American Community Survey:

5.7 million - Number of grandparents whose grandchildren younger than 18 live with them.

2.5 million - Number of grandparents responsible for most of the basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, clothing) of one or more grandchildren who live with them.

912,000 - Number of grandparents responsible for caring for their grandchildren for at least the past five years.

496,000 - Number of grandparents whose income is below the poverty level and who are caring for their grandchildren.

\$40,359 - Median income for families with grandparent-caregiver householders.

National Aging Information Center
(202) 619-0724
www.aoa.dhhs.gov

National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights
(866) 624-9900
www.grandparentsforchildren.org

*This data comes from the American Association of Retired Persons' Grandparents Information Resource Center website <http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/>



In this issue...

ID Theft Passport Card

Death in Service Benefit Info

Help for Grandparents

Employee Profile, The Directors Corner and more!

Death-In-Service benefits information for survivors

In the member's handbook, APERS defines Death-In-Service as "the death of an active member who works in a covered position whose survivor(s) qualify for an annuity or the death of a deferred vested member who dies before receiving a monthly annuity." At this time, most Death-In-Service benefit recipients are survivors of members who were Non-Contributory.

In the Non-Contributory member handbook it states that unmarried dependent children receiving such a benefit will have the benefit terminated when they reach age 18. However, benefit payments can continue until age 23 if the dependent(s) continues uninterrupted as full-time students at an accredited secondary school, college or university.

The dependent child or a surviving parent must provide APERS proof of enrollment each fall and spring semester by completing and sending in a Parental Form, and an APERS Verification of Attendance in Secondary School or College or University.

During the summer months (July and August), the APERS Benefits Unit sends out these forms to survivors, and the completed forms must be returned before payments continue. When dependent children aren't attending college or a secondary school through the summer, benefit payments are held pending receipt of verifying documents of fall school enrollment.

Anyone having other questions about Death-In-Service benefits should contact the Benefits Unit by calling (501) 682-7830, or 1-800-682-7377.

APERSpective is a publication of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System and is distributed for the information of APERS annuitants, beneficiaries and survivors.

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