

# Retired State Employees Association

# NEWS

Serving Texas ERS Retirees Since 1977

August 2018

Volume XLI- Number 2

## Notice of Annual Meeting

**Thursday, October 4, 2018**  
**Wingate Williamson Conference Center**  
**1209 North Interstate 35**  
**Round Rock, Texas 78664**  
(on east frontage road just north of Hwy 79)

The conference center is located immediately behind the Wingate Hotel. Accessible entrance and parking for meeting rooms are located behind the hotel. This area is adjacent to the front entrance of the conference center.

This spacious meeting facility is all on ground level, with easy accessibility and plenty of parking. **Registration will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.** and includes coffee and Round Rock Donuts and time to visit our vendors.

The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will end at approximately 2:00 p.m. Lunch will be served at noon, to be followed by additional outstanding speakers and drawings for great door prizes! Several new exhibitors will be on hand.

Our featured speaker is Keith Brainard, research director for the National Association of State Retirement Administrators. He co-authored *The Governmental Plans Answer Book, Third Edition*. Keith has discussed public pension issues before Congress, state legislative committees, public pension boards of trustees, and on broadcast television radio.

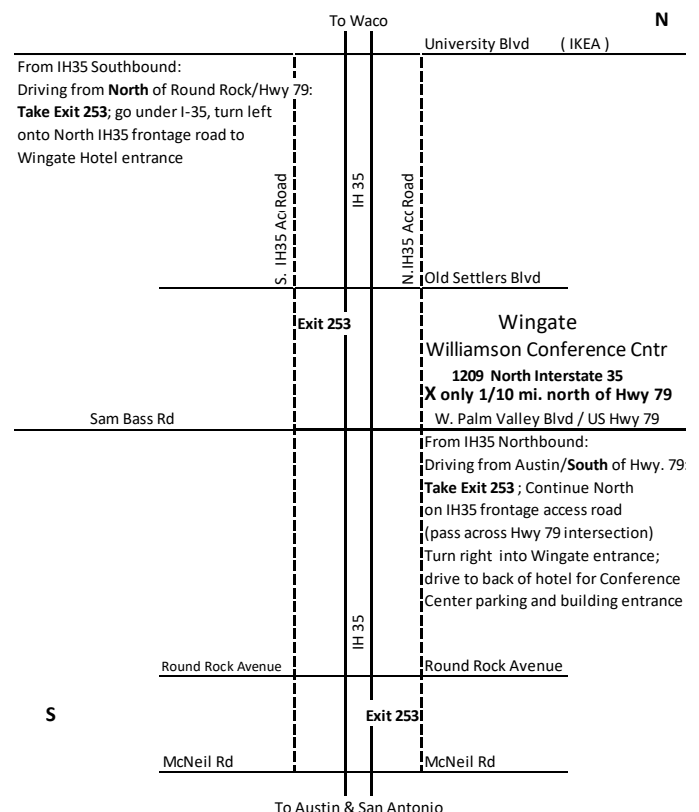
Will Armstrong, marketing director with Texas Health and Human Services Office of Aging Services will introduce Texas Talks. The media series, coming this fall, encourages all of us to talk about aging and age-related needs with family members and friends.

Porter Wilson, Executive Director of the Employees Retirement System, will provide an update on relevant matters at ERS. ■

Visit the RSEA website at [www.rseaoftx.org](http://www.rseaoftx.org) for updates!

## RSVP for Annual Meeting

Barbeque lunch is complimentary for members and one guest. **If you plan to attend, please make a reservation with the RSEA office** by telephone (512-451-0087); e-mail (Office@RSEAofTX.org); or US mail (314 E. Highland Mall Blvd., Suite 507, Austin TX 78752) **by Thursday, September 27th.** We hope to see you there!



## President's Message – August 2018

As I write this message, we're in the last days of August 2018, summer is still a string of hot days, schools and colleges are opening, and, yes, another legislative session is about five months away on January 15, 2019. To the proverbial question of *how full or empty is the glass of water*, we at RSEA have got a lot done this year and we also have more to do.

Let me recap a few highlights.

You'll remember that we've designated 2018, RSEA's 41<sup>st</sup> year, as our "Year of Renewal" with goals to:

- increase our ability to recruit and retain members of our association;
- enhance our capacity to educate our members about the benefits of state retirement, and the need to protect them, as well as the benefits of membership in RSEA; and,
- develop best-practice methods for how to communicate with RSEA members as well as potential new members.

I can report from interim progress. First, to "renew" we'll need new members, and our recent membership drive has brought to us more than *400 new RSEA members!* To those wonderful new members receiving your first newsletter, we not only welcome and thank you for your service to Texas – we also welcome the opportunity to serve you. Second, we are working to engage a third-party to help us modernize our business enterprise, including our website and communications infrastructure. I hope to have more news about this soon.

Then, I always like to remind people that RSEA was created in 1977 as the Texas organization whose **singular commitment is to retired state employees**, their pensions and their health benefits. Our last newsletter focused on pensions and this brief newsletter includes a focus on health benefits, so I encourage everyone to take a look at page 3 of this newsletter and respond to our survey of RSEA retirees who are on Blue Cross-Blue Shield. Information we receive will help in educating policy-makers, including the legislature and the recently-formed Benefits Advisory Committee at ERS, about retiree health insurance issues and needs.

We'll report back to you on the results. *Reminder:* The survey is for retirees on BCBSTX, not for retirees covered by Medicare.

Next, you can see from our cover page that plans are underway for our annual membership meeting October 4. One of our regular highlights will be an update from ERS Executive Director Porter Wilson on retiree benefits programs and ERS' biennial budget request.

Also, as we are in a pre-legislative mode this year, I am particularly excited to have as our key-note speaker Keith Brainard, a nationally-known and respected analyst of trends across-the-nation in the pension arena, especially defined benefit programs. We're looking forward to relevant information and ideas on how we can keep moving forward to address past years of chronic underfunding in Texas, primarily from the Legislature.

I never want to miss an opportunity to say that RSEA and your Board of Directors are dedicated to both recognize and promote the value of public service everywhere and in all forms. We are heartened by our long-standing members, and are both encouraged and excited by our new members. This is an especially good time to join us at RSEA – either as a member of our association or even as a Board member -- in this cause, especially as we must provide more education in response to efforts to de-value the important, in fact *essential*, role of public service in our society, our nation, our world.

As I close this letter, let me end on a note of personal privilege. We've all seen the sad news this weekend about the passing of Senator McCain. I know of no one who more exemplified a model of public service and civility in our public discourse. I remember like yesterday watching him get off that plane after his release from years of captivity. Let our continuing thoughts be with his family in the coming days.

Sincerely,  
Bill Hamilton, RSEA President

P.S. I know I owe you an update on Comptroller Hegar's "Texas Legacy Fund" idea. I'll save this for our next newsletter or, better yet, for our annual meeting on October 4. Hope to see you in Round Rock.

## Election of RSEA Directors and Officers

RSEA is always interested in potential board members who want to continue their public service. Nominees for several open director positions will be presented for election at the business meeting on October 4.

The following skillsets would enhance the RSEA Board:

- Benefits/Human Resources
- Program Administration/Administrative Services
- Legislative/Legislative/Process/Government Relations
- Financial Management/LAR
- Communications/Press
- Customer Service/Public Relations/Marketing
- Legal/Legislative Analysis

If your state employment background includes any of the experience above or comparable, we would like to hear from you. Please contact Don Raschke by email at [Office@rseaoftx.org](mailto:Office@rseaoftx.org) or leave a voice message at 512-451-0087. ■

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**Note:** If you wish to complete the following survey, please cut and mail it to the address included in the proxy form on the back page. Your input is important!

This survey is for retirees on BCBSTX HealthSelect, it is not applicable for Medicare-retirees.

### Insurance Participant Survey

Are you a current participant in the HealthSelect of Texas<sup>SM</sup> plan administered by BlueCross and BlueShield of Texas? If "yes," we want your feedback.

Your answers will be shared with the Insurance Advisory Committee to the ERS.

1. How satisfied have you been with the BCBSTX HealthSelect plan overall?

☐ Very Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat Satisfied  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

2. How satisfied are you with the BCBSTX network for HealthSelect?

☐ Very Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat Satisfied  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

## Membership Call

We cannot over emphasize the importance of being a member of RSEA. Our voices have to be heard by the Legislature to safeguard our pensions and health insurance and to promote, defend and advance our rights.

As an association, we recruit by attending ERS fairs, staffing booths at organizations, one-on-one contacts and mailings. We also rely on our members to spread the word among friends and past co-workers.

Please help us out by doing your part and referring your retired or soon-to-be-retired friends and neighbors to RSEA. (Contact us and we will be happy to mail brochures to you or directly to them.) Thank you!

A one-year membership in RSEA makes a unique and meaningful gift for you to present to a new retiree. ■

### Don't forget to RSVP for the October 4 Annual Meeting!

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3. How satisfied are you with the customer service provided by BCBSTX HealthSelect?

☐ Very Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat Satisfied  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

4. How satisfied are you with the coverage provided by the BCBSTX HealthSelect Plan?

☐ Very Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat Satisfied  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

5. What, if any, changes would you like to see made to BCBSTX HealthSelect with regard to the network, coverage, customer service or other aspects of the plan?

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If you need more space, please attach a separate sheet.



Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_