



## Board News

We are pleased to welcome our newest Trustees to the Board.

**Marion Ross Fedrick**, a Board of Regents appointed board member for a three year term, is successful human resources executive with over twenty years of HR management and strategic business expertise

in the private, public and higher education sectors. Mrs. Fedrick currently serves in the role of Vice Chancellor for Human Resources for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Previously, Mrs. Fedrick has served as Assistant Commissioner of Total Rewards for the State of Georgia at State Personnel Administration. She has also held various HR leadership positions including at Bellsouth Corporation, Emory University Hospital and Clark Atlanta University. Additionally, she worked eight years for the Athens-Clarke County Government in various functions. She has also served on the board of directors for Communities in Schools of Atlanta, is a previous board member for Girls Inc., and is a committee member for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Atlanta.

Mrs. Fedrick earned both her Bachelor and Master Degrees from the University of Georgia and is a graduate of Leadership Athens, Leadership Georgia and Leadership Atlanta.

**Christopher M. Swanson** was appointed to the board for a term of three years by Governor Deal. He is in his second decade of teaching and teaches both economics and AP economics. Mr. Swanson's career began in sales, but he took a turn towards education when he was offered an opportunity to teach economics. While he has worked in education, he has chaired the Social Studies Department and coached within Meriwether County.

Mr. Swanson earned his Bachelor degree in History from Brigham Young University and has continued to further his education, earning a Master of Educational Leadership from Columbus State and a Master of Science in Finance from Georgia State.

Mr. Swanson and his wife Sarah reside near Newnan and jointly own an art gallery in Hogansville. ☘

## Online TRS Account

An online TRS account provides you with access to a variety of important resources, including the ability to retire online. Some of the other things you can do online include: register for events, update your beneficiaries and addresses, and download your annual membership statement.

One of the most important reasons to have an online account is to ensure all of your information is correct and up-to-date. This is especially important regarding your beneficiaries. Georgia law requires that the settlement of your account be made according to the beneficiary designation on file with TRS at the time of your death. This supercedes any other beneficiary designations you have in your will or on file with your employer.

To register for an account, please visit [www.TRSGA.com](http://www.TRSGA.com) and click *Account Login*, choose *Active Member* and on the left-hand side, select *Register for Account Access*. ☘

## Fiscal Year 2015 in Review

### A NUMBERS RECAP

- **7,447**  
Members & Retirees Individually Counseled
- **24,367**  
New Members Signed Up for Online Account Access
- **42,635**  
Member Statements Downloaded
- **27th Consecutive Year**  
Received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting



Fiscal Year 2015 came to close on June 30, 2015, and was another successful year at TRS. During FY 2015, TRS offered new ways to make processes more efficient, for both members and employers.

During the year, TRS improved some of our online processes, including the online retirement application, to make applying for retirement easier for the member and finalizing paperwork easier for employers. Also, members now can submit their information online to request a return of contributions.

Our member education programs have also continued to grow. FY 2015 was the first full fiscal year the new and improved New Member workshop was available and our counselors presented the show 28 times, reaching 735 members. Counseling our members is also very important for us, both in the Atlanta office and around the state. During FY 2015, our trained counselors were able to individually counsel 7,447 members.

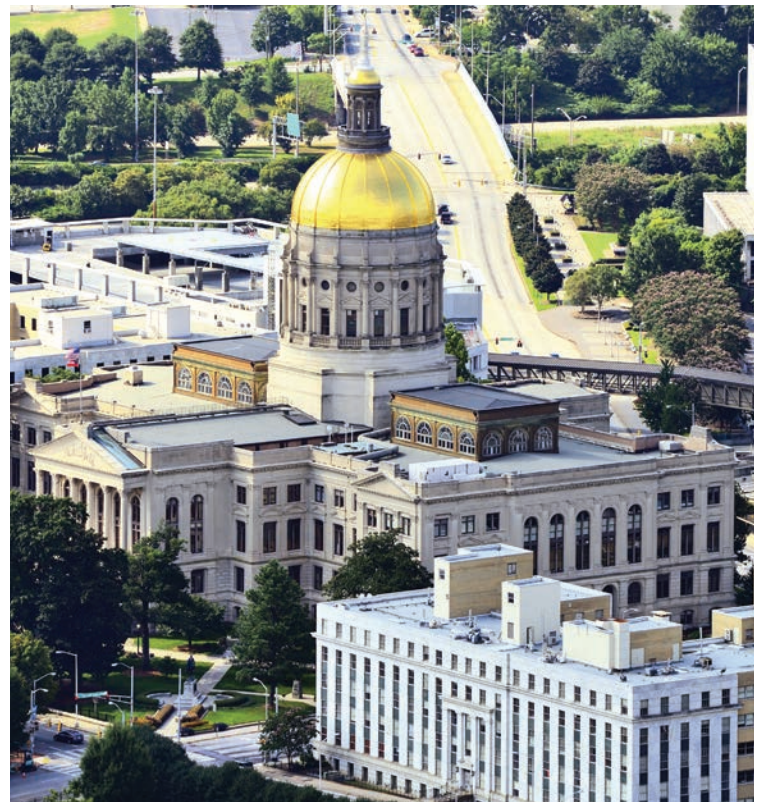
We are constantly encouraging members to make sure they have access to their online account, which gives them many items, including their annual member statement and ability to make changes to their information. We had

24,367 active members and 3,639 retirees sign up for account access, which led to 53,721 beneficiary changes; 42,635 member statements downloaded; and 11,020 event registrations, just to name a few services our members and retirees took advantage of online.

Also, our Information Technology staff has used all the necessary tools to keep all of our members' and retirees' information safe. TRS has worked both internally and externally to ensure our system's integrity. Our dedicated IT specialists have been able to block hacker probes, keeping our system secure.

Internally, TRS hired 12 new employees and offered numerous opportunities for employee training. TRS also completed the FY 2014 audit within the deadline and we successfully closed FY 2015 under the approved budget. TRS received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 27th consecutive year.

We thank each and every one of you for your continued support and partnership with TRS. We strive to provide the best comprehensive customer service possible. We look forward to continuing to improve throughout the new fiscal year to better serve everyone. ☘





## FY 2016 & FY 2017 Employee & Employer Contribution Rates

In its annual meeting held May 28, 2014, the Board of Trustees adopted the employee and employer contribution rates for FY 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). Effective July 1, 2015, the contribution rates are:

- Employee Rate: 6.00%
- Employer Rate: 14.27%

In its annual meeting held May 27, 2015, the Board of Trustees adopted the employee and employer contribution rates for FY 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). Effective July 1, 2016, the contribution rates will be:

- Employee Rate: 6.00%
- Employer Rate: 14.27%

## Member Statements Available Now

Please login to your online account and review your member statement, which contains your account balance, demographic information, and various benefit estimate projections. It is available for you to view and/or print.

Please review your statement. If you find anything incorrect or if you have any questions, please contact TRS immediately.



## Countdown to Retirement

Is your retirement date looming in the not-so-distant future? Make sure as the date approaches, you are prepared and your to-do list is marked off. Here are a few important things you can do before you retire:

### 24 months before retirement:

- Attend a Half-Day Seminar about important topics such as: Social Security and estate planning. Check the TRS website for dates and locations throughout the State, and to register online.
- Request a benefit estimate by going on your online account and clicking “Generate Benefit Estimate” or by calling TRS.

### 18 months before retirement:

- Research medical insurance for you and your family. Verify your post-retirement eligibility.
- Review your estate plan and make sure your will, trust, and/or power of attorney are up-to-date.

### 12 months before retirement:

- Request an estimate from the Social Security Administration.
- Schedule a one-on-one counseling appointment at our Atlanta office or at a location near you.

### 6 months before retirement:

- You may start your online application process. Make sure you have decided on a retirement plan that works best for you.
- Make sure you understand the criteria for working after retirement. Visit our website to learn more.

### 3 months before retirement:

- Make sure the service credit you are eligible to purchase is paid in full. You cannot purchase service credit once you retire.
- Submit your retirement application if you haven't already done so. The application should be in no later than 2 months prior to your anticipated retirement date. ☹

# APPLYING FOR RETIREMENT



In an effort to provide you with the most expedient method of applying for retirement, members are required to apply for retirement online.

*Please remember that TRS no longer accepts paper applications. Our online process is quick, easy, and more efficient.*

To apply, simply login to your account and click “Apply for Retirement.” You will then be prompted to provide information specific to your retirement. When the process is complete, a summary sheet is provided for your records. There are links to other forms not covered in the online process, as well as “Tips” to help make the process as easy and user-friendly as possible. So you are prepared, please note the following items are needed to complete the retirement application process.

- **Your Information:** name, address, daytime phone number, SSN, date of birth, copy of official ID (driver’s license, passport, birth certificate, immigration papers, or a state issued ID).
- **Your Primary and Secondary Beneficiary’s Information:** name, address, SSN, date of birth, copy of official ID (see list above).
- **Direct Deposit Information:** checking or savings account and routing numbers.

- **Benefit Estimate:** you may use this as a reference to help you choose your monthly retirement benefit option and your PLOP payment (if applicable).
- **PLOP Rollover** (if applicable): name, address, and phone number for rollover institution, type of rollover plan, and your rollover account number.
- **Tax Withholding Amounts:** federal and state for monthly benefit payment, and PLOP if taking a lump-sum cash distribution.
- **Your Alien Number Issued by the Department of Homeland Security or Other Federal Immigration Agency** (if applicable)

If you are unable to complete and submit your application, you may log back into your account and continue at a later date. Please note that your online application will only remain active for 45 days. After 45 days, your application is void and you must begin the process again. Once the application is completed, the member must print and sign a summary sheet and send it to TRS. ☹

## NOTICE: New Online Forms

To make things faster and more convenient for everyone, we are making more forms available online. Now when applying for retirement online, your **Retirement Certification (TRS-8)** and **Sick Leave Certification** forms will be sent directly to your employer. Once you apply for retirement, your employers will be notified and will submit the completed forms to TRS.

The **Application for Refund of Contributions** is also available online. As with the forms mentioned above, once you complete your portion of the form it is automatically sent to your last employer for them to complete.



## Keeping Your Information Safe

With the growing reliance on technology, security is of utmost the importance. Everyone must be aware of the information they are providing via computers and smart phones 24/7. Hackers are working faster and becoming more creative when it comes to getting the information they want. In 2014, many high-profile cyber crimes took place, including many corporate hacks, showing the increasing importance of companies constantly working to keep hackers out. Approximately 317 million pieces of malware (computer viruses, malicious software) were created in 2014. According to Verizon's 2015 Data Breach Report, cyber attacks are happening quickly, with spam emails duping their first victims within 82 seconds of the email being sent out.

Security is an especially important issue at TRS. Our Information Technology division takes every step necessary to protect all of our members and employers. They are is constantly working to keep our system secure so your information is safe with us.

## Legislative Update

The 2015 legislative session concluded on April 2, 2015, and was the first year of the two-year (2015-16) biennium session. Retirement legislation that has a fiscal impact must be forwarded for an actuarial study in order to remain a valid bill for the 2016 session.

The House and Senate Retirement Committees met in a joint meeting on May 7, 2015, to decide which fiscal bills would be forwarded for an actuarial study. TRS had 4 fiscal bills (HB 459, HB 698, SB 152, and SB 246) introduced in 2015. These bills were not forwarded for actuarial studies and have "died in committee." Therefore, these bills are not valid during the 2016 legislative session. All non-fiscal bills will continue the legislative process through the 2016 session.

For detailed information on pending non-fiscal bills and how retirement legislation becomes law, please visit [www.trsga.com/legislation](http://www.trsga.com/legislation).

