



An affiliate of
the Arizona
Education
Association and
the National
Education
Association

Calendar of Events



January 14 Governing
Board Meeting

January 18 No School
Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Day

January 26 Represen-
tative Council

January 28 Governing
Board Meeting

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The Voice

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Increase in ASRS Contribution Rates

From the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) website:

At its November 23, 2009 meeting, the ASRS Board of Trustees approved new contribution rates for the Defined Benefit Plan for fiscal year 2011, which take effect July 1, 2010. The contribution rates are as follows:

Combined Pension Plan and Health Insurance Benefit:

Current Contribution Rate: 9.0%
Rate for July 1, 2010: 9.6%

Long-Term Disability (LTD):

Current Contribution Rate: 0.40%
Rate for July 1, 2010: 0.25%

Total Contribution Rate (Pension plus Health Insurance plus LTD):

Current Contribution Rate: 9.40%
Rate for July 1, 2010: 9.85% (increase of nearly 1/2 a percent)

Also at the Board meeting, it was presented that there are no funds available for an additional Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI) for retired members. All current PBIs will continue to be included in benefit checks.

The **increase in the Defined Benefit Plan contribution rate is due primarily to the downturn in the overall economy** leading to decreased investment performance for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2009, the date of the actuarial valuation used to determine the contribution rate. The rate of return to the overall ASRS fund for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009 was -18.1 percent. Since June 30, however, investment performance has improved, as has the overall status of the ASRS fund.

The **overall contribution rate increase is somewhat mitigated by a decrease in the LTD portion.** That decrease, from 0.40% to 0.25%, was made possible due to continued improvements to the overall funding of the LTD program.

Given the market performance of the last fiscal year, and the 10-year period the ASRS employs to recognize gains and losses over time, **members and employers can expect to see similar increase in the overall contribution rate – about a half-percent – each of the next several years.**

Similarly, it is not expected that that the PBI fund will be built up again to allow for benefit increase for the next several years.

For more information, please visit the Arizona State Retirement System website:
www.asrs.gov

Representative of the Month

Meet December Representative of the Month Penny Lee!

Penny Lee has worked quietly as the WDEA Representative at Sweetwater School for many years, representing her members each month at the Representative Council meeting. She is the Art Teacher at Sweetwater. Penny has attended many AEA Delegate Assemblies over the years and AEA Leadership Trainings in the summer. Penny signed up several new WDEA members this fall and was very involved in getting volunteers to help walk on several Saturdays to help pass the K-3 Override. Penny's hard work and dedication has led to stronger Association and better district to work and learn in. Thanks for everything you do for our employees and our students Penny!

Submitted by Nancy Putman, Area Delegate and Membership Chair

**Want to know more about your benefits? Surf on over to these websites:

WDEA Member Assistance: wdea.net, learn about your Area Delegates and Advocacy Members

AEA Members Only: arizonaaea.org, click on the green membership card for coupons and discounts.

NEA Member Benefits: neamb.com, make sure to register on the site in order to save money.

**We will be hosting a Member Benefits Fair later in the year. Be on the lookout for your "invite only" tickets!

Special Action Petition

From the AEA website:

On November 23, 2009 the Arizona Education Association filed a special action petition with the Arizona Supreme Court against Governor Jan Brewer and the 49th State Legislature targeting policy changes made in the 3rd special session of the Arizona State Legislature aimed at teachers and other school employees. The policy changes allow arbitrary reductions in salary, prohibit seniority as a criterion for reduction in force, eliminate deadlines for issuing contracts, and limit employee rights to engage in professional association activities.

John Wright, president of the Arizona Education Association, said, "These policies represent a complete abandonment of legislative leadership. The special session was called to address Arizona's budget deficit; instead, the legislature mysteriously determined that removing contract security and allowing salary reductions for career educators was a more appropriate focus. The interests of Arizona's families, students, and economy were completely ignored."

To read the entire article and for more information, visit the AEA website: www.arizonaaea.org

Member Benefit Spotlight

In these difficult financial times, use your NEA benefits to make things a little bit easier!

NEA Home Financing Program - An ideal combination of competitive rates, substantial savings, and superior service all through a special toll-free number. The program also features a free mortgage counseling service.

NEA Line of Credit - You can secure a credit line between \$500 and \$25,000, if you qualify for the NEA Line of Credit. It costs nothing until you use it and can be accessed by simply writing one of the checks provided. You then pay a low preferred Annual Percentage Rate (APR).

NEA Personal Loan - Allows you to apply for an unsecured loan of \$3,000 to \$25,000 at low, preferred, fixed rates. Use the money for any purpose - bill consolidation, tuition, or unforeseen expenses.

You can find more information on these and other benefits by using the links on the left hand side of this page.