

## The LASERS Vision

Confidence in our service,  
assuring financial security  
for your future

### Board of Trustees:

**Janice Lansing**  
*2017 Board Chair*  
225.342.4698

**Lori Pierce**  
*2017 Board Vice Chair*  
225.342.7012

**Thomas Bickham**  
225.342.6630

**Virginia Burton**  
225.753.5527

**Commissioner Jay Dardenne**  
225.342.7101

**State Treasurer Ron Henson**  
225.342.0010

**Beverly Hodges**  
225.342.8844

**Judge William Kleinpeter**  
225.346.4702

**Senator Barrow Peacock**  
318.741.7180

**Representative Kevin Pearson**  
985.646.6487

**Kathy Singleton**  
504.896.2379

**Shannon Templet**  
225.342.2455

**Lorry Trotter**  
225.953.3867



## 2017 LASERS Board of Trustees Election

2017 is an election year for the LASERS Board of Trustees with four seats on the Board up for a vote. LASERS members are asked to cast their ballots for candidates every two years for the thirteen-member Board. Nominations open March 1 and close July 11. Voting occurs in September and October. Election results are certified by the Board and published in November.

Three open seats must be filled by active members. Retirees will cast their vote for one position. If you are interested in running for the Board, you may obtain a nominating petition from your agency's human resources office, the LASERS website, [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), or by calling LASERS.

Trustees serve four-year terms unless they are filling an un-expired portion of a term. No Trustee may serve more than three consecutive terms.

The LASERS 2017 Board of Trustees Election will be conducted by a third party vendor experienced in handling balloting for public pension plans. LASERS members will receive election ballot packets by mail, and will be able to vote by mail, telephone, or the Internet. We look forward to your participation in this important and exciting process. Go to our website, [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), to learn more about the board composition.

## Schedule of Election Events

<b>March 1, 2017</b>	Nominations Open.
<b>July 11, 2017</b>	All nominating petitions, platforms, and photos due to LASERS by 4:30 p.m. (Central Time).
<b>July 17, 2017</b>	Drawing to determine candidate positions on ballot.
<b>September 22, 2017</b>	Final day that information on candidates/ballots mailed to members.
<b>October 27, 2017</b>	Votes must be received by 4:30 p.m. (Central Time).
<b>November 1, 2017</b>	Votes tallied and verified by this date.
<b>November 17, 2017</b>	Board certifies and authorizes publication of ballot count.
<b>January 2018</b>	Newly elected Trustees receive orientation and are sworn in.

*Election continued on page 2*

# 2017 LASERS Board of Trustees Election

*Election continued from page 1*

## Active Candidate Qualifications:

- An active member candidate must have at least 10 years of credited service with LASERS (excluding any military service credit) by the closing date for nominations, **July 11, 2017**.
- Each active candidate must submit a nominating petition bearing the names and signatures of at least 25 active LASERS members. Each signature must be accompanied by the last four digits of the signatory's Social Security number.
- Each petition should be accompanied by the candidate's photo, qualifications, and platform.

## Retired Candidate Qualifications:

- A retired member candidate for a position as a Trustee must be retired by the closing date for nominations, **July 11, 2017**. The term "retired member" shall not include any person still employed by the state, including retired status under the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). A LASERS retiree who is re-employed by the state pursuant to La. R.S. 11:416 (1) and (3) is still considered a "retired member."
- Each retired candidate must submit a nominating petition bearing the names and signatures of at least 25 retired members of LASERS. Each signature must be accompanied by the last four digits of the signatory's Social Security number.
- Each petition should be accompanied by the candidate's photo, qualifications, and platform.

## Responsibilities of the Trustee:

- A Trustee should have knowledge of, background in, or the ability to understand and utilize investment principles and terminology for a retirement system whose current assets exceed \$10 billion.
- A Trustee should become familiar with all applicable retirement laws in order to adequately rule on appeals submitted by members of the retirement system.
- Trustees are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Board; assigned committee meetings; and workshops.
- Trustees must act in the sole and exclusive interest of LASERS members and retirees. Breach of fiduciary duty can result in personal liability.
- Trustees must file annual personal financial disclosure reports with the Board of Ethics detailing, among other requirements, income received from the state, political subdivisions, and gaming interests.

## LASERS Board Elects Chair and Vice Chair

The LASERS Board of Trustees unanimously elected Janice Lansing and Lori Pierce as the 2017 Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, at its January meeting.

Lansing, Chief Financial Officer of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, will lead the LASERS Board as new Chair. She has served as an active member Trustee since 2010. Lansing was Vice Chair of the LASERS Board for the past two years and previously chaired the Investment and Audit Committees.

Pierce, State Treasury Investment Officer with the Department of the Treasury, is the new Vice Chair. She has served as an active member Trustee since 2010. Pierce previously chaired the Management Committee of the LASERS Board.



*Janice Lansing, 2017 Board Chair*



*Lori Pierce, 2017 Board Vice Chair*

"Janice Lansing and Lori Pierce both have a wealth of knowledge," said LASERS Executive Director Cindy Rougeou, "and their leadership will be a tremendous resource to the Board in 2017."

## Statewide RSEA Tour Kicks Off March 7



Working Today for Your Tomorrow

RSEA will begin their annual statewide chapter tour on March 7. Cindy Rougeou is planning to speak at each of the nine meetings. Active and retired members are encouraged to attend their respective chapter meetings for up-to-date information on current issues affecting state employees and retirees.

Please review the schedule below to find out where to attend your chapter's meeting:

**Shreveport:** Tuesday, March 7 at 10:00 a.m.

NWLA Technical College

**Alexandria:** Wednesday, March 8 at 9:30 a.m.

Kees Park Community Center

**Monroe:** Thursday, March 9 at 9:00 a.m.

West Monroe Convention Center

**Lake Charles:** Tuesday, March 14 at 9:30 a.m.

Sowela Technical Community College

**Lafayette:** Wednesday, March 15 at 9:30 a.m.

The Scott Events Center

**Baton Rouge:** Thursday, March 16 at 9:30 a.m.

BREC Womack Building

**Coastal:** Tuesday, March 28 at 9:30 a.m.

Quality Hotel

**New Orleans:** Wednesday, March 29 at 9:30 a.m.

Landmark Hotel

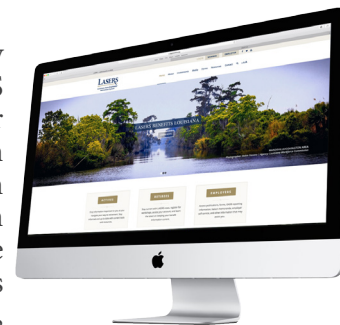
**North Shore:** Thursday, March 30 at 9:30 a.m.

Greater Covington Center, Bogue Falaya Hall

## New Improvements to Member Resources

2017 brings improvements to three of LASERS essential member resources. A newly designed website launched in early January to provide a better user-friendly experience for LASERS members, employer agencies, and the general public. The new site, [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), features a modern design, better-organized content, more functionality, and an improved search engine.

LASERS Executive Director Cindy Rougeou said, "The LASERS website continues to be one of our most important communication tools with more than 1.3 million hits per month. It has been seven years since the last website launched. New advancements in web design and technology, coupled with the increasing needs of members and site visitors, culminated in the decision for a new website."



Improvements also include an updated [Member Self-Service](#), the password-protected secure portal for members only. Self-Service now has easier login access on the home page and features a streamlined design. Usernames and passwords did not change with the update. Check out Member Self-Service on the LASERS website.

The [Member's Guide to Retirement](#), formerly known as the *Membership Handbook*, has undergone an extensive redesign. The new look and layout can be viewed on the LASERS website.

These improvements are all part of LASERS ongoing commitment to provide excellent customer service to our members. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions. [Rate the new website](#) by clicking the survey banner on the homepage or email your comments to [Ask LASERS](#).



## Deferred Compensation: a Supplemental Benefit to Consider

**Laney Sanders**

Assistant Chief Investment Officer,  
Deferred Compensation Board Member

Despite our best planning, we can always use more money in retirement. An often-overlooked source of retirement income is from the Louisiana Deferred Compensation Plan. Deferred Compensation is a voluntary plan that allows employees to save and invest through pre-tax salary contributions. Employees may choose the amount they want to save each pay period, with as little as \$10 a paycheck. The contribution can be changed or cancelled at any time. Contributions and earnings on contributions are tax-deferred until withdrawn.

If your LASERS benefit is your only source of retirement income, consider Deferred Compensation as a supplemental option. A small investment now could turn into meaningful monthly income in retirement. Investment options cover a

full risk/return profile, so you can choose how you would like to invest, or have an asset allocation tailored to your specific circumstances. Like the contributions, investment options may be changed at any time. Depending on your needs at the time of retirement or separation of service, your balance distribution can be in periodic payments, fixed annuity payments, partial lump sum, and lump sum. The Deferred Compensation Plan offers flexibility while allowing saving to be consistent and automatic.

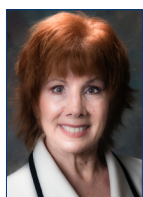
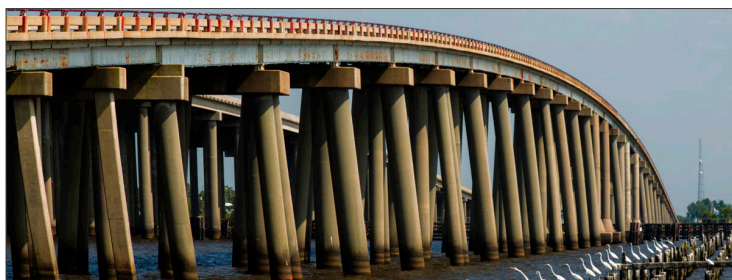
Empower Retirement administers the Deferred Compensation Plan. Empower can assist members with retirement income goals and asset allocation selection. Please visit [www.louisianadcp.com](http://www.louisianadcp.com) to find out more and enroll online.



## Faces of LASERS Member Profiles: Theresa Mullins Low & Robin Stevens

### Photography, a Common Passion

Two photographers, Theresa Mullins Low and Robin Stevens, are standouts in LASERS recent “Navigation” photography competition. They rank as the top two in terms of most photographs selected for our publications. Both LASERS members have a true passion for photography and have worked for the state of Louisiana more than 30 years.

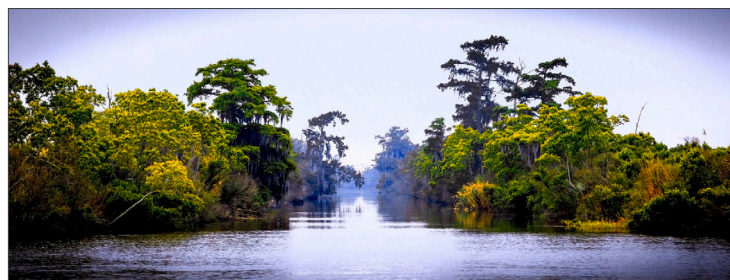


**Theresa Mullins Low** is currently a professional photographer, but she retired from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in 2011 with a total of 36 years with the state. At retirement, she was a program coordinator in the Planning section in the Office of Family Support with DCFS.

“For me, being a state employee was the best career decision I made, after having worked in private sector for a few years. It meant promise, benefits, and a stable career. The opportunities for advancement were endless,” said Low. She was passionate and dedicated to her career in social services because it was making a difference by improving people’s lives.

That same passion is evident in Low’s photography. She began as a photographer 10 years ago by traveling the world and capturing images. Her travel photography expanded to include weddings and families. Low has won numerous awards within several photography organizations and currently writes a published article, *Picture Perfect*, for local magazines. She is also past President of the Louisiana Photographic Society and teaches beginner photographers.

Low said, “I have a portrait style photography which means I focus on the subject that I want the viewer to notice, eliminating distracting objects, and then enhancing in post processing so that the viewer may see the scene as I saw it through my eyes.”



**Robin Stevens** is a 30-year state employee, currently employed as an ORS Technical Specialist with the Louisiana Workforce Commission. She recently enrolled in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). In describing her experience with state employment, Stevens said, “I’m grateful that I chose to work for the state, as I have met some incredible people, who I consider close friends.”

During her travels, she discovered a love for the northeast and has plans to relocate there after completing DROP. Stevens will continue her photography business there by designing and selling landscapes.

Stevens’ interest in photography goes back to middle school. Over the years, she expanded her skills through numerous conventions, personal research, and training workshops throughout the United States. She received the Photographer of the Year award by the Louisiana Photographic Society in color prints.

Stevens says of her work, “I love nature and the endless beauty of it. I am always looking for a landscape scene which is calming and inviting, where a person just steps through the photograph to experience each place.”

LASERS has the privilege of publishing the beautiful images of both photographers. You may view their work throughout LASERS current and future publications.

Visit the Face of LASERS section of the website, [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), to read more about your fellow state employees and to nominate a deserving person for recognition.

## LASERS: Get the Numbers ♦ 2016 Member Services Stats

- Counseled over 6,300 members onsite.
- Held 31 individual counseling sessions around the state.
- Participated in 26 workshops, reaching over 1,500 members and retirees.
- Provided 43 seminars, including PREP, PREP-to-Go, and Retiree Workshops, reaching over 1,200 members.

Investment performance summaries are updated monthly. Find out how we are doing on our website.

- ▶ View our investments actual asset allocation and target allocation by clicking the *Investments* tab, then *Asset Allocation*.
- ▶ View our investments performance by clicking on the *Investments* tab, then *Performance*.

# The Board MEMO

Judge William Kleinpeter  
2016 Board Chair



## Board of Trustees Update

The LASERS Board welcomes State Treasurer Ron J. Henson as the new ex officio Trustee. He previously served as deputy treasurer under John Kennedy, who resigned upon his election to the U.S. Senate. Treasurer Henson is very familiar with the LASERS Board, having served as a designee for the Treasurer's office for the past several years.

Trustees recently attended an intensive workshop to earn required educational hours for the Board. Presentations included actuarial science; the laws, rules and regulations that govern the System; fiduciary duty; and many investment education sessions. The Board received tremendously important information at this workshop and the knowledge we gained can have a real impact on our decision-making as a Board. We appreciate the diligence of the LASERS staff and our investment partners in providing this training.

For your information, **Constitutional Amendment #5** passed during the November election relative to the Revenue Stabilization Trust Fund created through **Act 629** from the 2016 Regular Legislative Session. Certain mineral revenue, corporate franchise, and income taxes will provide revenues for the fund. It may result in annual appropriations to pay the initial UALs of LASERS and the Teachers' Retirement System, with funds allocated proportionately based on each system's initial UAL balance. The LASERS Board supported this legislation insofar as it would reduce debt.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the LASERS Board over the past year. My knowledge of the System has deepened, my respect for the LASERS staff and my fellow Trustees has grown, and my confidence in the stability and future of YOUR benefits has never been stronger. Our new Chair, Janice Lansing, is well prepared to lead the Board in 2017.

## Get to Know Us: Public Information Division

The Public Information Division (PID) is responsible for the written and visual identity of all LASERS communications via digital and printed materials. Led by PID Director Tonja Normand, our small but mighty division also consists of two Public Information Officers, Mark Diaz and Mallory Sharp, and one graphic designer, Grace Knox. The fundamental role of PID is to accurately and creatively disseminate information to LASERS members, our staff, Board of Trustees, the news media, and the general public.

As a LASERS member, you have seen PID's work through the LASERS website, the Member Connection email service, educational videos, publications and reports, social media, the MINT campaign, *The Beam* (this newsletter), and more. PID is also responsible for internal communications and the distribution of information to employer agencies.

The division's most recent project completion is the new LASERS website, which debuted on January 4, 2017. PID worked in collaboration with the IT Division and an outside web designer, 423 Creative, to create the site. Their primary goal was to design a site that provides a better user-friendly experience for both active and retired members, while also addressing the needs of employer agencies. If you have not done so already, please check out the LASERS website at [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org). You may also share your feedback by clicking the 'Rate our Website' banner.

PID also recently redesigned the [Member's Guide to Retirement](#) (formerly the *Membership Handbook*) and produced new educational and informational videos, [Purchases of Service Credit](#) and [LASERS Benefits Louisiana](#), respectively. Throughout 2017, PID will stay



L TO R: Grace Knox, Mallory Sharp, Mark Diaz, Tonja Normand

busy disseminating legislative session news and updates to members, implementing the Board of Trustees election, hosting an Open Forum for employer agencies, producing educational videos, designing publications, creating [MINT infographics](#) for early-career members, and maintaining the website.

On the challenges and rewards in this line of work, Tonja Normand says, "Using words and images, we have the challenging task of presenting the complicated topic of retirement in an 'easy to understand way.' PID enjoys combining our creative talents with other divisions at LASERS to present information that is relevant and impactful. We have fun on each and every project, and the best part is providing a final product that benefits our members."



## ATTENTION LASERS MEMBERS

### JUST FOR RETIREE MEMBERS

#### Upcoming Benefit Payments

**April and July** benefit payments are scheduled to be paid on the first of the month. Since April 1 and July 1 fall on a weekend, receipt of your funds can be affected by whether you receive a check or direct deposit and your financial institution's rules when the first falls on a weekend or holiday.

**Direct Deposits** are guaranteed to be in your bank or credit union on the first day of the month. When the first falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, funds may not be available until the following business day. In these cases, please contact your financial institution directly for information on when your funds will be made available to you. That decision is made by your financial institution, not LASERS. If you have not received your direct deposit by the first business day of the month, please contact LASERS in Baton Rouge at 225.922.0600 or toll-free at 800.256.3000.

#### DROP Interest Posted in January

Retirees received interest on DROP accounts in January. The rate of interest paid on eligible (non-Self Directed Plan) DROP accounts for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2016 was 4.93 percent. The interest rate is based on a five-year actuarially smoothed return.

The Public Retirement Systems' Actuarial Committee (PRSAC) approved the interest rate at its November 30, 2016 meeting.

Participants in the Self Directed Plan do not receive this interest, but participate in earnings or losses based upon the choices they have made in their investment allocations through Empower Retirement.

#### WHO PAYS FIRST? Office of Group Benefits or Medicare

In most cases if you are retired and age 65 or older, Medicare is primary and OGB (Magnolia Local Plus or Magnolia Open Access) is secondary.

Visit [www.ldi.la.gov/SHIIP](http://www.ldi.la.gov/SHIIP) or call 1.800.259.5300.

### JUST FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

#### New Video: *Purchases of Service*

Ever wondered how to purchase Air Time? What about the number of years to buy? Is it permissible to use Deferred Compensation funds to purchase Air Time? Find the answers to these questions and more in LASERS newest video, *Purchases of Service*.

#### Kick off the New Year with a PREP Workshop!

Whether you are a new LASERS member or approaching retirement, a Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) workshop can provide you with essential information and tools to help you plan for one of the most important days of your life. Go to [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), and click the [Register for a Workshop](#) link on the homepage.

#### 2017 PREP Schedule

*Seminars are held from 8:30 a.m. to noon*

DATES	LOCATION
March 13	Baton Rouge LASERS 8401 United Plaza Blvd., 4th Floor
March 23	Alexandria LSU-Alexandria Student Union, Brumfield Caffey Ballroom 8100 Highway 71 South
April 4	Monroe Louisiana Delta Community College Conference Center 7500 Millhaven Road
April 12	New Orleans University of New Orleans, University Center Atchafalaya Room, #208 2000 Lakeshore Drive
April 27	Baton Rouge Louisiana State Police Training Academy Building A, Classroom 1 7901 Independence Boulevard

## View All MINT Topics on our Website



This is a friendly reminder to check out the MINT section of our website. The page was recently redesigned to include more visuals and resources for early-career members. Topics you will find on the MINT page include:

- LASERS Retirement Plan Basics
- Purchases of Service Credit
- The Deferred Compensation Plan
- The 411 on the 529 Plan
- Benefits of Unused Annual & Sick Leave
- What is My Retirement Plan?

Each of the infographics provides a summary of information with key points to help early-career LASERS members learn more about the retirement system and guide them toward a secure financial future at the time of retirement. Head over to our website, <http://lasersonline.org/actives/millennials-investing>, to see all of our infographics and to sign up for the MINT emails.

## Employee of the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2016: Bobby Wilkins



Since joining LASERS in January 2013, Bobby Wilkins has proven to be an invaluable asset to LASERS as a whole. Drawing on his vast experience, he has worked closely with Member Services in defining and implementing several critical processes. One example of this was his tireless work on the Enrollment Project, which once implemented, made

the process of evaluating enrollment information much simpler. He also worked very closely with Member Services on implementing a more automated version of the Social Security First Eligible letter, which made it easier for Member Services to more quickly provide accurate information to our members and the Social Security Administration.

Most recently, Bobby has taken on the task of updating the Annual Statement process. This change will allow us to make a multitude of formatting, verbiage, and content enhancements, which would not have been possible in the previous format. Statements are expected to go to one-

page front and back, versus four pages. This will lead to a cost savings in mailing annual statements.

When he is not working closely with other divisions, Bobby can often be seen mentoring his fellow developers and working hard to modernize the inner workings of LASERS computer systems, so that we may better serve our members.

*“Bobby can often be seen mentoring his fellow developers.”*

Bobby is also quite the cook, often preparing meals for family and friends. He generously volunteered to cook several batches of gumbo, jambalaya and cookies to feed LASERS staff members following the August flood. He has donated of his time and talent to cook food for LASERS fundraisers and events. His delicious cookies are well known here at LASERS.

Bobby has a great sense of humor and is easy to work with on projects. He is an all-around great guy and we are lucky he is a part of the LASERS team.



## BEAM ME UP LASERS Answers Your Questions



### Question: What kind of plan is LASERS?

**Answer:** LASERS is a 401(a) Defined Benefit (DB) retirement plan. A DB plan guarantees a lifetime monthly benefit to retirees. The benefit calculation is based on a formula that considers the employee's years of service, the compensation received by the employee, and an accrual rate. Assets in a DB plan are managed by professionals using a long-term investment horizon. Funding for the plan is provided through employee contributions, employer contributions, and investment earnings. Investment earnings fund the vast majority of benefit payments.

### Question: Can I borrow or withdraw from my retirement plan?

**Answer:** A LASERS member cannot borrow or withdraw against their employee contributions unless they have separated from state service. If you leave state service and remain out of state service for at least 30 days, you may be eligible to refund your employee contributions. Most refunds are paid within 60 days. Please note that refunds of contributions automatically cancel all service credit in LASERS. In other words, a refund cancels your membership in the retirement system, and renders you ineligible for benefits. The refund will only include your contributions, not your employer's contributions, and will not include interest.

## Sign Up for PAPERLESS Annual Statements!

Active members have the option to receive paperless Annual Statements through Self-Service. Members who choose to receive their Annual Statement via Self-Service only will no longer be mailed a paper copy. When statements are ready in March, an email will be sent notifying you that statements are available online.

### Follow these quick instructions to sign up for Paperless Annual Statements:

1. Go to [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org).
2. Log on to [Member Self-Service](#).
3. Click **Documents** tab.
4. Select **Manage Paperless Settings**.
5. Choose **Online Only**.
6. Click **Update Paperless Settings**.



## From the Desk of **Cindy Rougeou**

LASERS Executive Director

As we look to the year ahead, one of LASERS primary focuses is educational outreach to members. Though our outreach efforts are extensive, our staff has continued to develop new offerings and tweak current programs to better appeal to members across the spectrum. In this day of fast-paced lifestyles, new technology, and information overload, LASERS must provide a wide variety of easily accessible learning opportunities. So what kind of tools are in place as a resource for you?

- A newly designed [LASERS website](#), [Member's Guide to Retirement](#), and [Self-Service](#) (see page 3 for details).
- LASERS classes on [LEO](#). Be sure to register for [LASERS: Your Retirement System](#), a 15-minute course that can benefit members at all career points.
- A variety of educational sessions and [PREP workshops](#) offered around the state:
  - **NEW** Early-Career for LASERS members hired on or after January 1, 2011. This shortened workshop is designed specifically for newer members.
  - **REVAMPED** Pre-Retirement Education Presentation (PREP) geared toward those approaching retirement. These include additional presentations on Social Security and Empower Retirement. PREP is condensed to a half-day.

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*“Knowledge can better prepare you for retirement and enhance your future.”*

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- Mini PREP is the same as regular PREP, but without additional presenters.
- Other specialty plan and tailored presentations are available through your agency. Your HR department can contact LASERS directly for assistance.
- **NEW** LASERS videos, such as [Purchases of Service](#) and [LASERS Benefits Louisiana](#). Visit the Video Library on the website for a complete listing.

Plans are underway to roll out a new video and companion materials on Louisiana's Deferred Compensation program this spring, so look for future announcements.

We are excited to present these new learning opportunities and resources. I encourage you to take advantage of what is available. Knowledge can better prepare you for retirement and enhance your future.

The Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS) distributed this document digitally. No publication costs were incurred.

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