

The LASERS Vision

Confidence in our service,
assuring financial security
for your future

Board of Trustees:

Shannon Templet

2019 Board Chair
225.342.2455

Thomas Bickham

2019 Board Vice Chair
225.342.6630

Virginia Burton

225.753.5527

Commissioner Jay Dardenne

225.342.7101

Beverly Hodges

225.342.8844

Judge William Kleinpeter

225.346.4702

Janice Lansing

225.342.4698

Barbara McManus

337.433.8910

Senator Barrow Peacock

318.741.7180

Representative Kevin Pearson

985.646.6487

Lori Pierce

225.342.7012

Honorable John Schroder

225.342.0055

Lorry Trotter

225.953.3867

2019 Election Year for LASERS Board of Trustees

Five seats on the LASERS Board are up for a vote in the 2019 Board of Trustees election. LASERS members have the opportunity to cast their ballots for candidates every two years for the thirteen-member Board. **Nominations open March 1 and close July 9.** Voting occurs in September and October. The Board certifies election results and an announcement of newly elected Trustees occurs in November.

In 2019, three seats are open for active members and two for retired members. If you are interested in being a candidate in the Board election, you may obtain a nominating petition from your agency's human resources office, the LASERS website, www.lasersonline.org, or by calling LASERS.

Trustees serve four-year terms unless they are filling an unexpired portion of a term.

No Trustee may serve more than three consecutive terms.

LASERS active members elect six of the 13 Trustees and LASERS retirees elect three. Four positions are ex-officio, held by the State Treasurer, Commissioner of Administration, Chair of the Louisiana Senate Committee on Retirement, and member of the Louisiana House Committee on Retirement appointed by the Speaker of the House, or their designees.

A third party vendor experienced in handling balloting for public pension plans conducts the LASERS Board of Trustees Election. LASERS members receive election ballot packets by mail, and have the option to vote by mail, telephone, or online. We look forward to your participation in this important and exciting process.

Schedule of Election Events

March 1, 2019	Nominations Open.
July 9, 2019	All nominating petitions, platforms, and photos due to LASERS by 4:30 p.m. (Central Time).
July 15, 2019	Drawing to determine candidate positions on ballot.
September 27, 2019	Final day that information on candidates/ballots mailed to members.
October 25, 2019	Votes must be received by 4:30 p.m. (Central Time).
October 30, 2019	Votes tallied and verified by this date.
November 21 or 22, 2019	Board certifies and authorizes publication of ballot count.
January 2020	Newly elected Trustees receive orientation and are sworn in.

Election continued on page 2

The qualifications for candidates seeking a seat on the Board are:

Election continued from page 1

Active Candidate 2019 LASERS Board of Trustees Election

- 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 9, 2019**.
- Each active candidate must submit a nominating petition bearing the names and signatures of at least 25 active LASERS members. Each signature must include the last four digits of the signatory's Social Security number.
- Each petition must include the candidate's photo, qualifications, and platform.

Retired Candidate 2019 LASERS Board of Trustees Election

- A retired member candidate for a position as a trustee must be retired by the closing date for nominations, **July 9, 2019**. 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 include the last four digits of the signatory's Social Security number.
- Each petition must include 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 \$12 billion.
- Trustees 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.
- Persons who have been found in violation of the Code of Governmental Ethics for misuse of public funds are not eligible to serve as a Trustee.
- Persons who have been convicted of a felony offense are not eligible to serve as a Trustee for a period of five years after the conviction or after the end of imprisonment, whichever is later.



LASERS: Get the Numbers

Investment performance summaries are updated monthly on our website. To view our performance, go to www.lasersonline.org, and click on the *Investments* tab, then *Performance*. View our target asset allocation and actual asset allocation by clicking on the *Asset Allocation* tab.

Member Services Stats for 2018

- Counseled over 6,200 members at LASERS.
- Held 30 individual counseling sessions around the state.
- Participated in 37 workshops, reaching almost 2,600 members and retirees.
- Provided 47 seminars, including PREP and PREP-to-Go sessions, reaching nearly 1,000 members.
- Handled almost 75,000 phone calls.



Shannon Templet
2019 Chair



Thomas Bickham
2019 Vice Chair

LASERS Board Elects Chair and Vice Chair

The LASERS Board of Trustees unanimously elected Shannon Templet and Thomas Bickham as the 2019 Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, at its January meeting.

Templet, Director of Human Resources of the House of Representatives, will lead the LASERS Board as new Chair. She has served as an active member Trustee since 2012. Templet most recently chaired the Management Committee of the Board and served as Chair of the Trustees in 2014.

Bickham, Undersecretary for the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, is the new Vice Chair. He has served as an active member Trustee

since 2012. Bickham previously chaired the Audit, Investment, and Management Committees of the LASERS Board. He served as the LASERS Board of Trustees Chair in 2015.

“For more than seven years, Shannon Templet and Thomas Bickham have served on the LASERS Board, demonstrating their deep commitment to the preservation of the System in order to provide current and future benefits to our members,” said LASERS Executive Director Cindy Rougeou. “Their continued leadership will be a tremendous resource to the Board in 2019.”

SAVE THE DATE!

April 2, 2019 for the Retirement Readiness Fair

LASERS will host a Retirement Readiness Fair at the LaSalle Building (Griffon Room) at 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 on Tuesday, April 2. All active LASERS members are invited to visit the Fair during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Can you say with confidence that you are retirement ready? At LASERS, our mission is to provide retirement security for our members, but retirement planning is not only about financial readiness. Two other components, healthy living and happiness/engagement, are critical to provide balance in those years after retirement. Our Retirement Readiness initiative integrates all three pieces of the retirement puzzle to help you prepare.

At the fair, LASERS and our partners that cover multiple aspects of retirement planning will be available to address your retirement questions. (Please note that individual counseling sessions will **not** be provided.)

More details on the event, along with a list of partners, will be available on our website soon. For a full overview on Retirement Readiness and the resources available to you, visit our website at www.lasersonline.org/retirement-readiness.



From the Desk of **Cindy Rougeou**

LASERS Executive Director



LASERS opened its doors in 1947 following World War II and for more than 70 years, the System has provided retirement security for Louisiana's public employees. Along the way, there have been challenges and the need for tough decisions, but we have created a solid foundation for the long-term future of the retirement fund.

How has the LASERS Board strengthened the fund?

The LASERS Board has adopted strong measures to ensure that we can pay the benefits our members have earned after a career in public service. These include:

- Adoption of new strategic asset allocations annually;
- Continued lowering of the discount rate (actuarially expected rate of return) from 8.25% to 7.65% (will reach 7.5% by June 30, 2021);
- Reduction of the inflation rate from 3.00% to 2.50%;
- Improved efficiency;
- Reduction of operational costs.

Read the *Solid Foundation for the Future* report on our website.

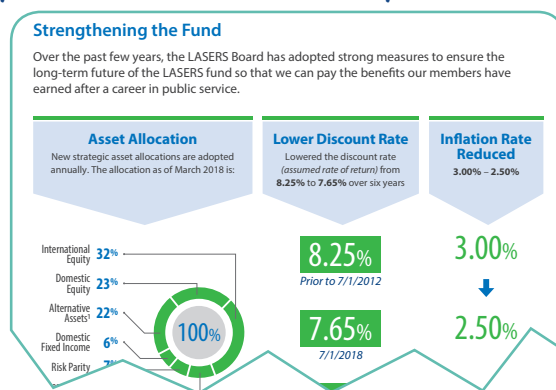
What are the results?

The proof of our success is in the numbers:

- \$1.318 billion paid in annual benefits which helps fuel economic activity across Louisiana;
- Fifth consecutive increase in our funded status;
- Another decrease in our unfunded accrued liability (UAL) or debt owed to the System; (UAL is projected to continue to decline according to the statutory payment schedule);
- Since 2009, LASERS growth in the valuation of assets has grown from \$8.5 to \$12.4 billion.

Our 93,000 members can rely on the sustainability of the LASERS fund as it continues to strengthen for the coming decades.

Be assured, the LASERS Board of Trustees and staff remain committed to providing a solid foundation for your future retirement security.



Marilyn McDonald shares what it is like to work at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF), her favorite things about living and working in Louisiana, and more!



Name: Marilyn McDonald

City: Baton Rouge

Agency: Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF)

Position Title: Property Manager

How long have you worked for the State of Louisiana? 16 years

What does a typical day at work look like for you? Depends on the day. It could be anything from pulling reports and working spreadsheets to field visits verifying inventory (often times to facilities not accessible by vehicle). That's right, we get there by boat and I LOVE it!

If a movie was made about your life, who would play you? Melissa McCarthy

What do you enjoy most about living and/or working in Louisiana? I am one of the fortunate ones that LOVES my

job! I enjoy assisting my co-workers, who have a huge passion for what they do. From law enforcement to field biologists, I love making sure they are taken care of and have what they need to do their job. I am truly blessed and honored to work at LDWF.

One thing my coworkers might be surprised to know about me is: I'm an adrenaline junkie. I have bungee jumped and skydived.

Describe your favorite weekend activity. Fishing or hanging by the pool and barbecuing with friends. Depends on my mood!

What restaurant would you recommend to visitors in your city? Our Moms

If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be? Marilyn Monroe

What is one thing on your bucket list? Cage dive with sharks.

The Board MEMO

Beverly Hodges
2018 Board Chair



Board of Trustees Update

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; and many investment education sessions. Trustees received important information at this workshop and the knowledge we gained will 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.

Detailed information is in this edition of The Beam concerning the upcoming 2019 Board of Trustees election. If you are an active or retired LASERS member and have an interest in serving as a Trustee, you may want to consider becoming a candidate. My participation on the Board is truly rewarding and it has deepened my understanding of the retirement system.

“It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the LASERS Board over the past year. My respect for the LASERS staff and my fellow Trustees has continued to grow, and my confidence in the stability and future of YOUR benefits has never been stronger.”

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the LASERS Board over the past year. My respect for the LASERS staff and my fellow Trustees has continued to grow, and my confidence in the stability and future of YOUR benefits has never been stronger. Our new 2019 Chair, Shannon Templet, will do an outstanding job moving forward.



Employee of the 4th Quarter, 2018: Steve Phipps

Steve Phipps is an employee who completes his work efficiently and effectively. As Supervisor of the Information Technology (IT) Service Desk, Steve

eventually encounters everyone who works at LASERS.

When it comes to computers, most everyone experiences little nagging problems or major hardware or software issues, which eventually leads to contacting the Service Desk for help. Steve is always quick to respond with a smile and a solution. It is hard to imagine a problem that Steve cannot find a solution for in a timely manner. In fact, the IT Service Desk enjoys a healthy Service Level Agreement number

in excess of 98 percent. Additionally, the IT annual Customer Service Satisfaction Survey always gives high marks to Steve and his team.

Steve recently created and managed the request for proposals (RFP) for LASERS copier services. Steve handled the entire RFP process in a timely and professional manner, and brought in new copy machines throughout LASERS. Most impressively, Steve negotiated a new rate, which resulted in a cost savings to LASERS in excess of \$25,000 per year.

Steve Phipps is truly an outstanding member of our LASERS team and deserving of the recognition as our Employee of the Quarter.

“It is hard to imagine a problem that Steve cannot find a solution for in a timely manner.”

JUST FOR RETIREE MEMBERS

DROP Interest Rate Approved



The rate of interest to be paid on eligible (non-Self Directed Plan) DROP accounts for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2018, is **7.02 percent**. The Public Retirement Systems' Actuarial Committee (PRSAC) approved the interest rate at its January 9, 2019 meeting. The interest was posted to accounts and statements were mailed in January.

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. LASERS Self-Directed Plan members received their first quarterly statement of the year from Empower Retirement in January.

New Medicare Card Mailing is Complete

- If you didn't receive your new card, you can sign in to your MyMedicare.gov account to get your new Medicare number and print your official card. Call 1-800-MEDICARE for assistance.
- Don't forget to destroy your old card to protect your personal information.
- Give your healthcare providers your new number in advance to save time at your next visit.

If you have questions or concerns, contact the Louisiana Senior Health Insurance Information Program at 1-800-259-5300 or visit www.ldi.la.gov/SHIIP. Connect with LA SHIIP at Facebook.com/LASHIIP.

JUST FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

Sign Up for a LASERS Workshop Today!

PREP: If you are 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 and click on the *Register for a Workshop* link on the homepage. **Workshops are four hours in length.**

2019 PREP Schedule

Seminars are held from 8:30 a.m. to Noon

DATES	LOCATION
March 27 April 16	Baton Rouge LASERS
April 25	Shreveport Louisiana State Exhibit Museum
May 16	Lake Charles SOWELA Technical Community College

EARLY CAREER: If you are a new LASERS member, an Early Career workshop can provide you with an overview of the System and information to help you plan for your future retirement. It is never too early to start planning! Go to www.lasersonline.org and click on the *Register for a Workshop* link on the homepage. **Workshops are one and a half hours in length.**



New MINT Topics Coming Soon

Our Millennials Investing Now for Tomorrow (MINT) initiative began in 2015 as a way to educate younger LASERS members on the need to understand retirement now and lead them toward a secure financial future. This year, with the same goal in mind, we will send new topics that may be of interest to you through email and post them on our website.

The start of the new year is a good time to sit down and assess your retirement plan and create new goals. Check out all of the information on our website! Infographics and videos include topics such as the Louisiana Deferred Compensation Plan, the benefits of unused leave, early career retirement planning, community property, the 529 plan, and much more.

We also encourage you to sign up for our monthly emails. We promise not to crowd your inbox! Emails include articles that are relevant to the millennial generation such as taxes, savings, credit, home-buying, and budgeting.

Submit your topic ideas and sign up for the monthly emails at: <https://lasersonline.org/actives/millennials-investing/>.

Have You Signed Up for Paperless Statements?

Active members receive their LASERS member account annual statements through the mail in March. However, we encourage you to log in to your Self-Service account and choose the paperless option. You will no longer receive a paper copy if you elect to go paperless. We will notify you by email when statements are available online.

Follow these steps to sign up for paperless statements:

- Go to www.lasersonline.org.
- At the top of the home page, click 'Login: Member.'
- Enter your Self-Service account login information.
- Click on 'Documents' in the top menu.
- Click 'Manage Paperless Settings' from the left side menu.
- Choose 'Online only.'
- Click 'Update Paperless Settings'.



ALL MEMBERS



When did you last check your LASERS member account to make sure your information is up to date? It is critical to keep your contact information current so LASERS can send important documents and information to you in a timely manner.

To update your **phone number and email address**, log in to your Self-Service account, and click on the 'Information' tab. Then, click the 'Update Personal Information' button.

- Retirees may update their **home address** on this page also.
- If you are an active member, you must update your **home address** through your agency's Human Resources office.

Also, if you are an active member, check your **beneficiary** information. If updates are needed, fill out [Form 01-06: Designation of Beneficiary](#) and follow the instructions on the page to properly submit the form to LASERS.

If you have any questions, please contact Member Services.

Statewide RSEA Tour Kicks Off March 12

LASERS officials will speak at each of the nine RSEA chapter meetings beginning March 12. 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:

Meeting locations are subject to change.

Monroe: March 12 at 9:00 a.m. at the West Monroe Convention Center

Shreveport: March 13 at 9:30 a.m. at NWLA Technical College

Alexandria: March 14 at 9:30 a.m. at the Kees Park Community Center

Baton Rouge: March 18 at 9:30 a.m. at the BREC Admin Building

Lake Charles: March 19 at 9:30 a.m. at the Sowela Technical Community College

Lafayette: March 20 at 9:30 a.m. at the ULL Picard Center for Child Development

Houma: March 26 at 9:30 a.m. at the Moses Community Center

New Orleans: March 27 at 9:30 a.m. at the Milne Recreation Center

North Shore: March 28 at 9:30 a.m. at the Greater Covington Center, Bogue Falaya Hall

Do You Know the Acronyms?

RSEA: Formerly known as the Retired State Employees' Association, RSEA is an organization for active and retired state employees whose mission is to advance the quality of life of current and future state retirees. RSEA advocates on issues relating to retirement and healthcare in the Louisiana Legislature and U.S. Congress that affect LASERS, the Group Benefits insurance program, and Social Security. To learn more about RSEA and how to join, visit their website at www.rseala.org.

OGB: The Office of Group Benefits (OGB) is an agency, authorized by state statute to provide health and life insurance benefits to active and retired state employees and their eligible dependents, as well as employees and retirees of other participating groups. If you are an active or retired LASERS member with questions about your insurance coverage, please contact OGB at 800.272.8451. For more information, visit <https://info.groupbenefits.org/>.





Louisiana State Employees'
Retirement System

P.O. Box 44213 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213



Stay Connected
with LASERS



BEAM ME UP LASERS Answers Your Questions



Question: I worked for the state years ago, but took my money out of LASERS. Can I repay that time?

Answer: A member who has refunded past years of service has the option to repay those years of refunded service. In fact, repaying a refund is one of the most affordable ways to increase your service credit. Once a refunded member has returned to state service and contributed to LASERS for 18 months, the member can submit a calculation application, *Form 2-11: Application for Repayment of Refunded Service*, to receive an invoice on the cost to add those years back. A member will be paying the employee contributions refunded, plus applicable interest. There is no application fee for this calculation. You can calculate an estimate of your repayment amount by using our online calculator located under the Active Member Self-Service section of our website.

Question: I have chosen my option and date of retirement. How soon can I complete my paperwork?

Answer: You should check with your Human Resources office to determine if there is a timeline at your agency, but LASERS will accept your retirement application up to six months before your retirement date.

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

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