

Montana Teachers' Retirement System

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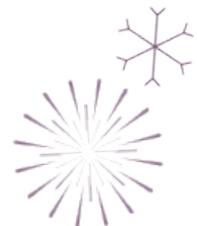
# Horizons

Montana Teachers' Retirement System  
Newsletter

Volume 12 | Issue 2  
Winter 2019-2020

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## NEWS and VIEWS

*It's better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.*

– JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE

### TRS EXECUTIVE STAFF

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The National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) recently commissioned a national public opinion survey to gauge state and local government employees' satisfaction with their job, salary and benefits.

### National Poll: Teachers View Pensions in Favorable Light

Over 1,100 individuals participated in the survey, with teachers (362) comprising the largest subset of respondents. Here are a few of the findings published in the NIRS report:

- Eighty-five percent of teachers reported being “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their retirement benefits. When asked about their salary, 60% said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied.
- Across professions, state and local employees view benefits as a powerful recruitment and retention tool.
- While most state and local employees feel they will be financially secure in retirement, they are concerned about government officials changing or underfunding their pension.

The full report, entitled “State and Local Employee Views on Their Jobs, Pay and Benefits,” is available on the NIRS website: [nirsonline.org/research/](http://nirsonline.org/research/)



### We want to hear **your** views!

TRS has created its own satisfaction survey for active and retired members. To participate, visit our website ([trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov)) and click the “Member Survey” link. The survey will take only a minute or two of your time and your responses are completely anonymous.

### TRS Conducts Informational Sessions at MFPE Fall Events

These MFPE events are a wonderful opportunity for TRS staff to visit with members and answer their questions about the retirement system.

Between August and November 2019, approximately 400 members participated in one of several TRS “Ready, Set, Retire!” sessions around the state. In addition, the “TRS 101: Retirement System Basics” presentation was seen by over 50 members. The box at right shows a few of the comments we received.

### Were you unable to attend?

You can watch videos of the above presentations anytime on our YouTube channel. Go to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for “Montana Teachers’ Retirement System.”



[Preparing for Retirement Workshops, Presentations](#)

Or, visit our website ([trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov)) and look for these links on the right-hand side of the screen.

Each fall, the Montana Federation of Public Employees invites TRS to participate in preretirement workshops held around the state. TRS also conducts several sessions at the annual MFPE Educator Conference.

“I learned a lot. I should have been more concerned about my retirement. I wish I had done this sooner.”

“Very informative and provided future support by telling us about the website and encouraging teachers to call TRS with questions!”

“I’m glad you added a 101 session for educators early in their careers!”

## UPDATES and REMINDERS

### TRS Relocates to Downtown Helena

When the Spring/Summer 2019 TRS Horizons newsletter was published, TRS was just weeks away from moving into the office building located at 100 N. Park Avenue in Helena.

Crews packed several moving trailers and moved TRS over a single weekend, as planned. Normal operations resumed July 29th and staff have enjoyed the larger, brighter workspace.

Members who plan to meet with us in person can find printable directions and parking information on our website. Go to [trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov) and click the “Contact or Visit TRS” button.



Leaving 1500 East Sixth Avenue after nearly 50 years

Moving in at 100 North Park Avenue

If you are a retired member who had received at least 36 monthly benefit payments by the end of 2019, you are eligible for a GABA increase starting in January 2020. TRS issues monthly benefits on the last business day of the month.

### Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA)

The amount of the GABA increase will be 1.50% for Tier 1 and 0.50% for Tier 2 members. If you have questions about your GABA increase, call TRS at (406) 444-3134.

Please note: Adjustments to federal income tax tables also occur each year on January 1. We recommend you ask your tax advisor whether those changes will affect you.

### Review Your Beneficiary Designations Online

All TRS members should review their beneficiary designations periodically in My TRS. To do this, go to [trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov) and click “Member Login.”

If you do not yet have a username and password for My TRS, follow the above instructions and click the “Create” button to establish your user account.

Once you have access to My TRS, click the “My Beneficiaries” button to review your current beneficiary designation. TRS members who *do not* receive monthly benefit payments may both view *and* update their currently designated beneficiaries online using My TRS. Retirees may review their beneficiary/ies in My TRS but may not update them online.

- **Tip:** We encourage TRS retirees to review our Fact Sheet on this topic, entitled *Designation of and Payment to Joint Annuitants and Beneficiaries of Retired Members*. This document describes which amounts may remain payable after a retiree’s death and it explains how – and to whom – TRS must issue those payments. You can find the Fact Sheet on our website (go to [trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov) and click “Fact Sheets” on the right side). Questions? Call us at (406) 444-3134.

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published twice per  
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**UPDATES and REMINDERS**

**How to Update Your Address With TRS**

Do you receive a monthly benefit from TRS? If you do, be sure to notify us **in writing** when you move.

For security reasons, TRS does not allow checks, tax forms or other sensitive mail to be forwarded, *even if* you have a temporary or permanent forwarding request on file with the postal service.

To obtain *Form 116 Change of Mailing Address*, call us at (406) 444-3134 or print a copy from our website (go to [trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov) and look for the "Forms" link on the right side).

- **Tip:** If you *do not* yet receive monthly TRS benefit payments, you can update your mailing address yourself in **My TRS**. Visit [trs.mt.gov](http://trs.mt.gov), then click "Member Login." Or, use *Form 116 Change of Mailing Address*, as described above.

**A reminder from our friends at the Montana Department of Justice • Motor Vehicle Division**



*Don't delay. Schedule an appointment today and be REAL ID ready by October 1, 2020.*

To learn more, go to: [mtrrealid.gov](http://mtrrealid.gov)

Jacie Vonada was welcomed to the TRS family in June 2019 as the Executive Secretary. Jacie, a Helena native, previously worked for the State of Montana's Legislative Services Division.

**Staff Updates**

Rex Merrick, a longtime Information Technology staff member, was recently recognized by the State of Montana for 20 years of dedicated service to TRS. Congratulations, Rex!



Front row, L-R: Shawn Graham, Margaux Lilly, Jacie Vonada, Tammy Rau. Back row, L-R: Jeanie Schmidt, Darla Fitzpatrick, Christian Ward, Denise Pizzini, Rex Merrick, Joyce Love, Natalie Chamberlain, Nolan Brilz, Jessica Stevens, Cathy Leonard, Johnelle Sedlock, Chris Fish, Sherry Smith, Jessie Hill. (Not pictured: John Noble, JoLynn Genzlinger, Shannon Buswell)

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