

**The LASERS Vision:**

Confidence in our service,  
assuring financial security  
for your future

**LASERS Board of Trustees:**

**Thomas Bickham**  
2015 Board Chair  
225.342.6739

**Janice Lansing**  
2015 Board Vice Chair  
225.342.4698

**Connie Carlton**  
225.928.4265

**Senator Elbert Guillory**  
225.342.2040

**Beverly Hodges**  
225.342.8844

**Hon. John Kennedy,**  
State Treasurer  
225.342.0010

**Judge William Kleinpeter**  
225.346.4702

**Barbara McManus**  
337.433.8910

**Commissioner Kristy Nichols**  
225.342.7086

**Rep. Kevin Pearson**  
985.646.6487

**Lori Pierce**  
225.342.7012

**Kathy Singleton**  
504.896.2379

**Shannon Templet**  
225.342.8273

**Candidates Set for 2015 Board Election**



**Cast Your Votes!**  
**Sept. 25 - Oct. 23**

Eight candidates are running in the 2015 LASERS Board of Trustees Election. Three open seats must be filled by active members and two by LASERS retirees.

The candidate names are listed on page 2 in ballot order. To review their qualifications and platforms, please visit the LASERS website, [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), and click on the Board of Trustees 2015 Election banner on the right side of the page.

No Trustee may serve more than three consecutive terms. Six of the 13 trustees are elected by the LASERS active membership. Three are chosen by our retirees. Four serve as ex-officio members. Those

seats are reserved for the State Treasurer, the chair of the House Committee on Retirement, the chair of the Senate Committee on Retirement, and the Commissioner of Administration.

LASERS members will cast their votes for candidates between September 25, 2015 and October 23, 2015 via the Internet, telephone, or by mail.

Election packets, including information about the voting process and candidates, will be mailed to LASERS members in September. For additional election information, visit the LASERS website.

**Schedule of Election Events**

September 25, 2015	Ballot packets mailed to members. Voting begins.
October 23, 2015	Votes must be received by 4:30 p.m. (Central Time).
October 28, 2015	Votes tallied and verified.
November 20, 2015	Board certifies and authorizes publication of ballot count.
January 2016	Newly elected Trustees receive orientation and are sworn in.

*Election continued on page 2*

# 2015 LASERS Board of Trustees NOMINEES

*Election continued from page 1*

The 2015 LASERS Board of Trustees election is being conducted by a third party vendor, VR Election Services of Carrollton, Texas. The company won the LASERS contract in a nationwide bidding process and previously managed several of LASERS elections.

For full details on the election and all candidates, go to: [www.lasersonline.org/nominees](http://www.lasersonline.org/nominees).

## RETIREED CANDIDATES

- Listed in Ballot Order • Two Trustees to be elected • Four-Year Terms



**Lorry Simmons Trotter**  
*Louisiana State University  
(Retired)*



**Charles F. Castille**  
*Department of Health and Hospitals  
(Retired)*



**Virginia Burton**  
*Department of Revenue  
(Retired)*

## ACTIVE CANDIDATES

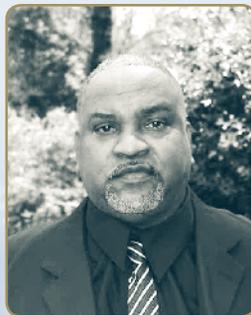
- Listed in Ballot Order • Three Trustees to be elected • Four-Year Terms



**Judge William T. Kleinpeter**  
*City Court of Port Allen*



**Shannon S. Templet**  
*State Department of Civil Service*



**Tannie James Isaac**  
*Southeastern Louisiana University*



**Michael K. Dees**  
*Port of Lake Charles*



**Thomas Bickham**  
*Department of Public Safety and Corrections*

## Attend the Next LASERS Retiree Workshop

Thursday, November 5, 2015, 9:00 a.m. – Noon  
Louisiana State Exhibit Museum (*West Wing Gallery*)  
3015 Greenwood Road, Shreveport, LA 71109

Seating is limited. Register early on LASERS website at [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org) under, Seminars.

# 2015 Legislative Session Outcome

In the 2015 session, retirement legislation took a back seat as lawmakers focused on the \$1.6 billion budget deficit.

The retirement bill of most significance was **HB 42**, known as the COLA bill, which was supported by the LASERS Board of Trustees. Sponsored by Representative Sam Jones, **HB 42** passed both the House and Senate and had 75 co-authors, but was vetoed by the Governor. The veto message cited concerns that granting a COLA two years in a row, contrary to 2014 reforms, would negatively impact the State's bond rating. This bill would have authorized a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of up to 1.5 percent for eligible LASERS retirees and their beneficiaries. Senate amendments made changes that would have positively impacted the long-term funded status of the System.

Three bills passed during the session and signed by the governor will impact LASERS and its members:

- **Act 368 (HB 33)**, sponsored by Representative Berthelot, increases littering fines and distributes 50 percent of the fines to the retirement system of the law enforcement agency issuing the litter citation. The funds will be used to decrease debt. The LASERS Board supported the bill, insofar as it reduced debt.
- **Act 44 (HB 46)** by Representative Reynolds provides for survivor benefits for minor children of wildlife enforcement agents, allowing benefits for unmarried full-time students to the age of 23. The LASERS Board was neutral on this bill.
- **Act 56 (HB 800)** by Representative Fannin, appropriates about \$2.7 million in nonrecurring funds to LASERS to be applied to the initial unfunded accrued liability of the system, as required by the Constitution.

In addition to **HB 42**, the following retirement legislation did not make it through the process:

- **HB 45** (Pearson) would have provided that membership is optional for persons age 62 or older at the time of employment, consistent with the age 62 retirement eligibility for new hires after July 1, 2015.
- **HB 55** (Ritchie) and **SB 15** (Nevers) would have proposed a Constitutional Amendment to levy a tax on the use of hydrocarbon processing facilities and dedicate a portion of the tax proceeds to payment of the initial unfunded accrued liability of LASERS.
- **HB 762** (Talbot) would have eliminated the Department of Public Safety Peace Officers Fund which provides funds for payment of the actuarial liability associated with the increased accrual rate for certain Peace Officers.
- **SB 14** (Guillory) would have included non-investment related administrative expenses in calculating the required employer contribution rate.
- **SB 16** (Guillory) would have clarified provisions created in Act 399 of 2014 regarding excess investment earnings, employer contributions, and COLAs.
- **HCR 57** (Montoucet), **HCR 71** (Fannin), and **SCR 2** (Adley) would have each suspended individual income tax credits, deductions, exclusions, and exemptions, including the exemption of LASERS retirement benefits from Louisiana state taxes.
- **HCR 159** (Pearson) would have established the Task Force on State Retirement System Sustainability to study the funding and benefits of Louisiana's state public retirement systems and to make recommendations to the legislature regarding the sustainability of such systems for current and future employees.

## LASERS Takes the Lead in Training

LASERS Chief Financial Officer Artie Fillastre and LASERS Actuary Shelley Johnson recently presented GASB 68 employer training to over 100 participants. More than 350 LASERS agencies are required to implement GASB 68 as part of a change in financial reporting standards for pension plans. LASERS Fiscal staff, actuary, and auditors worked closely to develop the information needed by employers for implementation.

The training class, presented live and via webinar, provided employers with valuable tools and resources to assist with the changes. The audience consisted of accountants, auditors, and HR professionals.

A recording of the meeting and resource materials are available on the [GASB section of our website](#).



*Shelley Johnson, LASERS Actuary and Artie Fillastre, Chief Financial Officer*

# The Board MEMO

Thomas Bickham, 2015 Board Chair



Trustees on the LASERS Board continue to work on four significant issues for the System and many of the decisions we make relate to them. Listed below are the identified issues with current updates on each if applicable:

**1. Identification and implementation of a legislatively enacted mechanism for the funding and granting of an annual cost-of-living adjustment for eligible System retirees in a reliable and dependable manner.**

A 1.5 percent COLA was granted to eligible LASERS retirees July 1, 2014. Prior to that, a COLA had not been given since 2008. Act 399 of 2014 changed the way future COLAs are to be granted. For more information on how COLAs are calculated, review the chart found on the [Retired Member FAQs page](#) of the LASERS website. In the 2015 legislative session, HB 42 would have allowed up to a 1.5 percent COLA for eligible retirees, but it was vetoed by the Governor. For more specific information, refer to the legislative article on page 3.

**2. Preservation of the defined benefit plan for current and future LASERS Members.**

While President of the National Association of State

Retirement Administrators (NASRA), Cindy Rougeou spearheaded the development of an in-depth report that will include all major state public pension plans, the types of plans offered to rank-and-file members, the cost of those plans to the members and the employer, and the reforms adopted for each such system. Once completed, we believe this report will undoubtedly show the cost-effectiveness of Louisiana’s public pension plans.

**3. Preservation of Board autonomy as well as its primary composition of elected active and retired members.**

No legislation was offered to change our current Board make-up.

**4. While continuing to oppose mandatory Social Security participation, seek the reduction or elimination of the federal offsets, the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).**

We are closely following H.R. 711, by Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA), which has been introduced in Congress to replace the WEP with the Public Servant Fairness Formula. The new formula would increase Social Security benefits for those currently subject to the WEP by more accurately calculating the benefits they earned while paying into Social Security.



## MINT Encourages Young Members to Invest in a Better Financial Future

Millennials have the reputation of choosing instant gratification and not being the best at planning for long-term financial situations. If you fall into this stereotype, consider changing! Be aware that you can supplement your LASERS retirement benefit by understanding various options available to you. Take the necessary steps now, so you can reap the benefits at retirement.

Can you imagine being at retirement age, filling out your paperwork, looking back saying *“I wish I had done more to enhance my retirement?”* Trust us, you do not have to be that person. It is never too early to plan for your retirement.

Two MINT topics are live on our site now: [The LASERS Retirement Plan](#) and [The Deferred Compensation Plan](#) (pictured right). The next topic will be on the benefits of preserving your annual and sick leave balances early in your career to enhance your retirement.

Each infographic is a summary of the topic, designed to make you aware of its significant benefits and how you can further educate yourself by using the links provided. We cannot stress this enough: education and planning are key!

Check out the MINT page on our website and subscribe to our email list. Most importantly, invest in your financial future today to secure a better tomorrow!

**THE DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN**  
(The 457 Plan)

As a public employee of the State of Louisiana, you can choose to participate in the Louisiana Public Employees Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP), administered by Empower Retirement.

This plan allows you to supplement your LASERS retirement by saving and investing pretax dollars through a voluntary salary contribution.

**BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING:**

- ▶ Save on taxes
- ▶ Automatic deposits from payroll
- ▶ Change investment allocation any time
- ▶ Participate as long as you like
- ▶ Investment options and assistance
- ▶ Loans are available (contact Empower Retirement for details)

✓ Earn

✓ Save

✓ Invest

## Are You Prepared for Hurricane Season?

Answer these simple questions to find out.



We are currently half-way through the 2015 hurricane season, with November 30 marking the end. As a LASERS member, please answer the questions below to find out if you are prepared:

- **Do you still receive a mailed paper benefit check?** If you answered yes, keep reading.
- **What would happen if post offices were closed in your area because of storm damage?** If you have no idea, keep reading.
- **How would you manage if the post office was unable to deliver your “paper” benefit check for weeks?** If this thought disturbs you, keep reading.

Hurricane season is stressful enough without having to worry about receiving your “paper” check because of post office closures. Get some peace of mind by signing up for direct deposit. Download *Form 04-05: Direct Deposit Authorization* or contact LASERS Member Services to have a form mailed directly to you. Direct Deposit guarantees electronic delivery of funds directly into your bank account. No waiting! No worries!

Once you are signed up, you can answer this question, **Are You Prepared for Hurricane Season?** with a definitive YES!

Additional information for hurricane preparedness is available on the Get A Game Plan website located at [www.getagameplan.org](http://www.getagameplan.org).



## Mark Your Calendar

Please note that November benefit payments will have an effective date of November 1 which falls on a Sunday.

If the first of the month falls on a holiday or weekend, your financial institution determines if the funds will be available on the first or on the following business day after the first.

## Have you attended a PREP Seminar?

Find out where you can attend below.

Whether you are a new LASERS member or approaching retirement, a Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) Seminar can provide you with essential information and tools to help you plan for one of the most important days of your life. Register for a PREP seminar online. Go to [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), and click *Seminars*. Additional PREP dates are added to the website once confirmed.

### September – November 2015 PREP Schedule

*Seminars are held from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.*

DATES	LOCATION
Sept 16	<b>Hammond</b> Southeastern Louisiana University University Center, Entrance 1, Room 139 800 West University Avenue
Sept 17	<b>New Orleans</b> University of New Orleans University Center, Atchafalaya Room #208 2000 Lakeshore Drive
Sept 29 Oct 22 Nov 19	<b>Baton Rouge</b> Louisiana State Police Training Academy Building A, Classroom 1 7901 Independence Boulevard
Oct 8	<b>Lafayette</b> University of Louisiana at Lafayette Abdalla Hall 635 Cajun Dome Boulevard
Oct 15	<b>Thibodaux</b> Nicholls State University Student Union, Le Bijou Theatre 906 East 1st Street

## Turning 65? Time to Enroll in Medicare!

- Contact Social Security before your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday to avoid a lapse in health coverage. Call 1.800.772.1213.
- The enrollment period is a 7-month window around your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. You can still enroll after that, but may have to wait for a designated period.
- If you or your spouse have health coverage from an employer, contact your plan to find out how your coverage will change when you turn 65.

For more information about Medicare and turning 65, visit [www.ldi.la.gov/turning65](http://www.ldi.la.gov/turning65).

# MEET THE Faces OF LASERS

## NOLAN JONES

Regional Enforcement Supervisor, Agro-Consumer Services,  
Division of Weights and Measures Department of Agriculture & Forestry

Nolan Jones is quiet-spoken and could be described as a man of few words. However, when he speaks, his words carry weight. “Being a public employee means you work in the best interest of Louisiana citizens,” said Jones. “I want to be known as a good, conscientious, employee that doesn’t take shortcuts. Taking care to do a job correctly and to the best of my ability is the kind of state worker I strive to be.” This philosophy has served Jones well in the Weights and Measures Division for the past 23 years.

Jones is described by colleagues as an honest, reliable, good man, which equates to the “salt of the earth.” And this phrase perfectly suits a man with farming in his blood. Jones was born in Natchitoches, Louisiana and raised in the Cane River Community, 15 miles south of town. His father was a farmer and both parents were devoutly Catholic. He describes his upbringing as strict. Jones said, “I was taught that my word was my bond, to do the right thing, don’t go off on tangents, and keep your nose clean. I have brought up my kids the same way.”

Jones’ parents were serious about their children receiving a Catholic education. At the age of 13, he and his sister were sent to Holy Rosary Institute in Lafayette. He spent four years there, finishing high school in 1966. Jones immediately enrolled at USL in Lafayette, majoring in Business Administration, but he also focused on athletics. He played baseball for the Ragin’ Cajuns and was a team member for one year with the legendary New York Yankee pitcher, Ron Guidry. Jones graduated in 1971 and married his wife, Yvonne, the same year.

After college, Jones’ career path was interrupted by the Vietnam War. He received his draft notice and reported for basic training at Fort Polk in November 1971 to begin his official service in the Army. After eight weeks of basic training, he completed additional training for the Military Police (MP) and was sent to Asmara, Ethiopia in East Africa to guard seven different communications bases which monitored Russian activity.

While in East Africa, Jones’ father had a massive stroke and he was called home. After two weeks, his father passed away. As the only son, management of his father’s sizeable farming operation fell to him. Jones was released from military service based on hardship after serving 14 months.

The farm was his family’s livelihood and for the next 20 years, Jones would grow cotton, soybeans, milo, hay, and cattle on 3,000 acres of land. In 1991, he realized that the farm was no longer sustainable, and by 1992, he made the



decision to close the operation. Jones continued to maintain a small beef cattle business on 1,000 acres of property, but he knew that he needed regular, stable employment to support his family.

Jones was encouraged by friends at the Department of Agriculture to apply for a job. With his farming background, it seemed a natural fit. In 1992, a position opened up in the Weights and Measures Division and he was hired as an Agriculture Specialist 1. His duties included inspecting scales of all sizes for commerce or trade, fuel pumps for correct calibration and proper system function, and scanners in businesses for the correct pricing. He progressed through the ranks and was promoted to Regional Enforcement Supervisor in 2001, the position he holds today.

Jones explained, “My most important responsibilities include supervising the inspectors in my division, making sure their clients are treated with respect, handling complaints and problems properly, and assigning the right people to the right positions.” As in most state agencies today, there are fewer employees and resources, so Jones is doing more with less, and taking on additional duties as needed. He explains, “My work is important on several levels. Farmers and ranchers trust me to test their scales and the outcome can go either way. I’m looking out for the consumer and the business and I don’t favor one or the other. It definitely involves building trust.”

Jones spoke of several passions in his life. His cattle operation is important to him and he plans to increase the number in his herd after retirement from the state. Another love is his family. Jones has been married to Yvonne for almost 45 years and has three successful children; two daughters,

*Nolan Jones continued on page 7*



# RSEA

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

October 5-7, 2015  
 Paragon Casino & Resort,  
 Marksville, Louisiana

Visit the RSEA website for conference costs and agenda information at [www.rseala.org](http://www.rseala.org). For more information, contact: Terri Adams, RSEA Conference Coordinator at 225.933.1309.



LASERS was recognized with three gold awards and one honorable mention in the 2015 Hermes Creative Awards competition. The LASERS 2014 Annual Investment Report and Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) received gold awards in the category of Publications/Annual Reports. The LASERS MINT logo won a gold award in the category of Design/Logo. LASERS new infographic won an honorable mention in the category of Design.

Hermes Creative Awards is an international competition for creative professionals involved in the concept, writing, and design of traditional and emerging media.

**Nolan Jones** continued from page 6

a son, and four granddaughters. His children and grandchildren are all athletes, following in his footsteps, and he enjoys attending their sports events. Jones is active in St. Augustine Catholic Church and serves as a Knight of St. Peter Claver.

In looking back at his career, Jones said, “I wish I had started with the state at a younger age to have a full retirement, but I really had no choice.” For young people coming into the Department, he advised, “Have patience. Don’t expect a high paying job right away. Wait your turn and look to a mentor for guidance.”

For the complete story on Nolan Jones, visit the [Faces of LASERS page](#) on our website.



## Employee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 2015

### Pat Pavlovich

Pat Pavlovich’s smiling face is the first image seen by visitors to the LASERS offices. As a receptionist at the LASERS front desk since 2012, Pat makes people feel welcomed and appreciated.

Members commenting on their visits to LASERS have made the following observations about Pat:

- “Ms. Pavlovich was very courteous and professional.”
- “Sweet and friendly lady.”
- “Keep employees like her.”
- “Yes, she deserves a hefty pay raise for being so kind.”
- “My visit to LASERS was very pleasant. Pat greeted me in a nice and professional manner.”
- “The receptionist had a smile which was inviting. Keep those kind of people at Front desk.”
- “Ms. Pat was very professional & when speaking to you she made eye contact and very polite.”
- “Very friendly and kind. Extra helpful. Went above and beyond. A++++”

Pat has even received a marriage proposal (in jest, he was already married!) from a member impressed with her service!

Pat Pavlovich represents LASERS well in her position and we are proud to name her as our EOQ.



## NEW VIDEO RELEASED

### Annual and Sick Leave:

#### How It Affects You

Gives an overview of how unused accumulated annual and sick leave can become an additional benefit at the time of retirement.

To view this video, please visit [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org), and click the *Annual and Sick Leave* banner.

*Please be aware that access may be denied to YouTube at your workplace because of filters put in place by your agency. LASERS has placed this video on LEO in the event you are unable to view on YouTube. Follow the instructions in this link for the LEO portal: <http://www.lasersonline.org/site367.php>.*



From the Desk of  
**Cindy Rougeou**

LASERS Executive Director

The LASERS staff administers over 20 different retirement plans and handles the complexities associated with each plan in a professional and competent manner. With so many different plans and over 86,000 active and

retired members, we sometimes grapple with how to make information easily accessible and more comprehensible for our members. Specific retirement details can be often challenging to put in laymen's terms. What is true for one member may be different for the next person.

While volumes of information are available on the LASERS website and in publications, we are exploring new ways to assist our members in gaining a deeper understanding of our System. Have you heard talk about LASERS and retirement around the water cooler? Have you had a co-worker speculate about DROP or the rules surrounding the purchase of Airtime? What about the best retirement option when it is time to pick one? Chances are, some misinformation may have been unknowingly shared. LASERS focus is to educate members on the facts, so you can make the most of your retirement.

Our team continuously works to update and improve our [Membership Handbook](#) and other relevant publications, website tools, and communications efforts such as the

[Member Connection Email Service](#) and social media. But to simplify, we are pulling vital information from these sources and condensing these topics into targeted videos, workshops, new learning initiatives, and a soon-to-be announced LASERS training class for all state employees.

I am proud to announce the release of [two new videos](#). [LASERS Benefits Louisiana](#) features talented members of our staff sharing facts about LASERS economic impact on the state. [Annual and Sick Leave: How It Affects You](#) has great information on saving leave to enhance your benefit at the time of retirement. You will see a cameo appearance from LASERS Board of Trustee and State Civil Service Director Shannon Templett in the video.

Plans are underway to introduce some new elements to our PREP workshops, which are offered to members statewide. Take time to check out the new [MINT infographics](#), which are being rolled out each month. We are putting the finishing touches on our new LEO Training Class, [LASERS: Your Retirement System](#), which will be offered in the near future.

In my role as president of the National Association of State Retirement Administrators, (NASRA), I interact with many retirement systems around the country. I am proud to report that LASERS is on the cutting edge in terms of member education. If you have ideas on how to improve our communications efforts, please share them by emailing me at [executivedirector@lasersonline.org](mailto:executivedirector@lasersonline.org). Thank you.

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

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