

January 30, 2008

**In addition to the benefits granted to members and spouses each month, the Secretary will also be presenting, for informational purposes only, items of interest that may affect our members.**

**Questions regarding any member's specific situation should be addressed directly to the Fund Office.**

## **MONTHLY NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE FUND SECRETARY**

### **PENSION PROTECTION ACT**

Retired members that are in the City of Chicago Medical Plan for Annuitants and paid premiums for their coverage from their annuity checks to the City were all mailed individual letters advising them of the total amount of premiums they paid to the City of Chicago for their health care coverage in 2007.

Included in the mailing were specific instructions from the IRS that they can take to their tax advisors to take advantage of a reduction to their taxable income by virtue of the Pension Protection Act, signed by President Bush late in 2006.

### **WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND**

The Fund, working together with the newly created Ende, Menzer, Walsh & Quinn Retirees', Widows' and Children's Assistance Fund distributed a tax free gift check of \$500 to 733 of our neediest widows and all 106 of our children annuitants. Our thanks to all members and friends that continue to provide support for this wonderful cause.

### **MAYOR'S COMMISSION**

The Mayor has established a commission to examine the underfunded status of the City's four public pension systems. Representatives from the funds, including the executive directors and several trustees will be part of the commission that is expected to exist for 18 months. Elected Trustee Dan Fabrizio will be looking after our best interests as a member of this commission.

## **RETIREE HEALTH CARE BOARD**

We are awaiting the appointment of another board entitled the Retiree Health Benefits Commission (RHBC) after July 1, 2008. Under the settlement agreement in the Korshak Retiree Health Care case, the City is required to appoint this board comprised of objective experts from the following categories: health benefits professionals; actuarial and/or benefit consulting professionals; officers or principals responsible for benefits in business; professors or research academics; former officials of health insurance companies; leaders of civic organizations or retiree groups; professionals experienced in municipal finance. Additionally, there will also be one representative of the City of Chicago and one individual representing all four funds to analyze the City's ongoing responsibilities for retiree health care beyond the 2013 expiration date of the Korshak Agreement.

## **PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR**

The Fund is scheduling its next pre-retirement seminar for March 15, 2008. Fund staff kept names and phone numbers of those members who were unable to attend the last seminar which "sold out" quickly. Other members will be allowed to fill the remaining space. A second Spring seminar may be scheduled if needed. These seminars are intended for members that are 1 to 2 years away from actual retirement.

## **CALL FOR APPOINTMENTS**

The Fund office and the Chicago Fire Department get a lot of calls from members thinking about retirement. I am going to reprint the following information that appeared in our Fall 2007 newsletter. Remember – Plan ahead – Make an appointment.

- **ESTIMATED MONTHLY ANNUITY PAYMENTS** – Call for an estimate when you know a realistic date for your retirement. Obviously our staff will give priority to those nearest retirement. The Fund does not like to provide estimates for dates beyond two years. Many variables impacting your calculation can change and make the estimate inaccurate.

Given the fact that the existing salary structure is frozen until a new contract is ratified, estimates will not be 100% accurate. The Fund will not guess salary increases above the existing contract. You may request an estimate by contacting the Fund office at (312) 726-5823 and provide us with a date.

- **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** - The average retirement application and interview process takes 2-3 hours per individual. The Fund will review all items in your file that might have an impact on your immediate retirement, your eligibility and enrollment for retiree health care and your spouse's and children's future benefits if applicable. Other factors may complicate the process further, Divorces, Quidro Orders, etc. To make an appointment to retire, call the Fund office at (312)726-5823.
- **RESIGNATION FROM CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT** - You must resign from the Chicago Fire Department before we will accept your application for retirement. The Fund needs the pink copy of your resignation to proceed. This specifically lists your 8:00 a.m. separation date. Please contact Commander Edgar Ignacio at CFD Personnel at (312) 746-6902 ext. 148 to make an appointment and to ask questions concerning Chicago Fire Department pay issues.

The transition from active employment to retirement is a BIG STEP. The Trustees and staff of the Firemen's Annuity and Benefit Fund of Chicago are committed to assist our members throughout this entire process. Please plan ahead and help us help you.

## **DOCUMENT IMAGING**

The Fund is undertaking a massive project to capture all member documentation in an easily accessible imaging program and to utilize that program for current Fund office use and for disaster back up purposes. Staff estimates anywhere between 2.5 to 3 million documents will be processed and stored for retrieval.

Make sure you keep all personal documents up to date including birth and marriage certificates and divorce decrees.

Thank you.

Anthony R. Martin  
Fund Secretary