



RECOM

Retired Employees City of Mesa



Volume 1 Issue 2

RECOMAZ.org

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Message from the President

They say that "time flies when you're having fun"! Well, if that's true then I must be living in an amusement park, because for me, time is going faster than a ten dollar bill at an Oktoberfest beer garden. Here we are in October, and I'm wondering where the summer went, why I am already looking forward to the holidays, and how is it that I'm already four months into my term as president of RECOM? Maybe I'm having too much fun!

Actually, being on the RECOM board and serving as this year's president has been a lot of fun, mixed with equal portions of hard work. Things are going well, largely because of the outstanding leadership of our most recent past presidents, Fred Conway and Barb Seperich. Together with the board members, they have built RECOM into the great organization it is today.

So what's in store for the future? Well, if you like the direction our organization is going, then expect more of the same. Last spring you adopted our revised By-laws that contained RECOM's mission, which is to develop, promote and carry out activities for the benefit of our members, provide information on matters of interest, and advocate on behalf of the membership on issues affecting them. How do we accomplish this? Well, for starters, our new website is up and operating, and as we work out the start-up bugs I think you'll find it to be a very useful tool to keep abreast of RECOM activities. I hope you like the new "newsletter" format replacing the membership meeting minutes. We will continue to bring high quality, informative, and entertaining speakers to our monthly membership meetings, as well as reports on benefit issues, current legislative issues, and other topics of interest.

One of the goals this year is to increase RECOM's visibility in the community. To that end we will be sponsoring a candidate's forum after the first of the year, and a retirement seminar in early spring. But the board can't (and shouldn't) do it all. One of my

goals this year is to get more members involved in RECOM activities. An easy way to get involved is by volunteering to serve on a committee. RECOM has five standing committees: Membership, Nominating, Programs, By-laws, and Issues. The duties of each committee are further spelled out in the By-laws. If you have any questions, or want to serve on a committee contact me or any of the board members. Also, please consider running for the Board next year. Don't be afraid – while there is work involved, it is really a lot of fun and very rewarding. But even if you can't serve on a committee or on the board, by all means give us your suggestions and ideas to make RECOM better. Remember, the only bad suggestion is the one that's never made.

Finally, I want to mention that this column in the future will be called "Message from the Board". You elected all seven of us and we each bring something special to the table, so we think you'd enjoy hearing from each of us. So enjoy the fall weather, look forward to the holidays, and most of all have fun!

Guest Speaker

On September 19th Jody Topping of the Employee Benefits Office was our guest speaker. As usual, the meeting was well attended. As your writer was happily on vacation at the time, she was unable to hear Jody's presentation, but the following information is gleaned from Secretary Lin Adams' minutes. Any mistakes will be strictly due to my having vacationed too hard.

Open Enrollment dates: Oct 22 – Nov2, 2007

Retirees who do not re-enroll for 2008 will default to 2007 coverage. But reenrolling will make sure the City has your most current information. Phone numbers change. Email addresses change. Sometimes dependents change ... To avoid unpleasant or costly surprises, make sure the City has your most current information and re-enroll. Please.

No enrollment workbooks will be mailed out:

Directions for reenrolling can be found on www.mesachip.org. A few books will be available at the Benefits Office at 200 S. Center Street, Bldg.3, but if you can check on the website, you'll save a tree – not to mention the City's printing budget.

Is your doctor still on the list?

Check to see if your doctor is still on the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Directory of Providers by

checking on www.mesachip.org. When you get to the homepage, click on **Resources**, and then on **Directory**. This writer once waited three weeks for an appointment at one of her mom's specialists, only to find out he was no longer taking her insurance!

Still have the premiums flyer?

The flyer entitled "For your Benefit"

that was mailed out in July listed the premiums for 2008. If you no longer have that flyer, you can find it on (you guessed it) www.mesachip.org. Retirees will also get letters during the first two weeks of October with their individual premiums calculated because they may vary a bit from one person to another – depending on number of years served, whether they have dental coverage etc.

The Good News Is: Effective Jan. 1, 2008

1. There will be a new provider for **vision services**.

The city council hadn't officially approved the carrier at the time of this writing – so we can't reveal the name of the company yet. Coverage will be similar, with some changes in co-pays and out of network reimbursements. When it's all official, you'll be notified.

2. All medical plans will include **orthotics** up to \$500.00 per calendar year. Deductibles, co-pays and co-insurance apply.
3. Adult well care is not subject to deductibles.

The Not So Good News Is: Effective January 1, 2008

1. For the **Basic Choice Medical Plan only**, a \$250.00 annual deductible will be applied to all prescription drugs (both retail and mail). And there will be increased maximum co-pays.
2. The **deductible carryover** will be discontinued. Amounts applied to deductibles during the last quarter will no longer be applied to the deductible the next calendar year.
3. **Benefit Reserve Payments** will be discontinued. This affects

those on Medicare and/or those who have other insurance as their primary insurance. The "Your Benefit Flyer" will explain this in more detail.

4. For a City of Mesa retiree who takes a **medical retirement** and is in ASRS (not PSRS), the City calculates his/her insurance premiums as if the retiree had worked for the City of Mesa for 20 years. Once the person reaches his/or her normal retirement age, ASRS converts the person to regular retirement. At that point, the City no longer considers that person medically retired and will recalculate their premiums based on the actual number of years the person worked for the City of Mesa. **If that person did not work the minimum required number of ten years to be eligible for benefits, they would no longer be insured by the City of Mesa. They will have to apply for insurance with ASRS or another insurance carrier.**

Medical retirees in the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSRS) are not affected by the above change. They'll continue to be considered the same as 20 year retirees for the duration of their retirement and premiums will not change.

If it seems as if this column will never end, there's just one more thing – but it's really important – so don't skip this part. Please!

If a City of Mesa retiree becomes **eligible for Medicare** there are a few things to do:

1. Sign your Medicare card and photocopy it.
2. Send the photocopy to **Leslie Rogers**

City of Mesa Employee Benefits
200 S. Center Street, Bldg. 3
Mesa, AZ 85201

3. When going to the doctor, **show both** the Medicare card and City of Mesa insurance card to the doctor and tell him that **Medicare is the primary provider.**

4. The doctor will need to submit the claim to **both** Medicare and the City of Mesa.

5. If the doctor does not submit claims to both, **you** must submit the claim to the City. The City cannot pay a claim it doesn't know about! Be sure to ask the doctor if he will submit to both insurers.

Medicare does not contact the City.

When Leslie receives a copy of your signed Medicare card, she will record that you are now on Medicare. Premiums will probably change, because the City will get a subsidy from the Arizona State Retirement System on behalf of the retiree. Leslie will contact you and tell you what the change in premiums is.

As always, Jody generously gave her email address and telephone number so that any one with questions can contact her at:

Jody.topping@cityofmesa.org

Or at 480-644-3009.

Committee News:

Program Committee:

Frank Mizner announced that the Speaker for **October 17th** meeting will be Doug Nintzel from the Arizona Dept. of Transportation. Doug will speak on freeway development in the Valley and state.

The speaker for the November meeting will be Patrick Murphy from Mesa Downtown Redevelopment

Frank reminds members that the November meeting will be on **November 14th** (the second Wednesday) because we thought no-one would show up at our usual meeting date -- the day before Thanksgiving! Please don't hurt my feelings by showing up on the wrong date! I'll know you didn't read my pearls of wisdom if you bang on the door on wrong date.

But please do come to the **December 19th** meeting, which is the usual meeting date and will be our Holiday Social. Please bring a can of food which will be donated to United Food Bank.

Secretary's Report:

Lin Adams reported that RECOM member and retired Mesa Fire Dept. Captain Ken "Pat" Brown passed away in Oklahoma on August 20th, 2007. Ellmer Young, RECOM member and retired

Mesa PD Major is gravely ill and under hospice care.

For reasons of privacy, addresses are not published in the newsletter, but if anyone wishes, Lin has contact information for both families.

Employee & Retiree Benefits Task Force

Jody has announced that the Employee Benefit Trust Fund DVD is available online at www.mesachip.org.

The content is divided into chapters and each chapter can be viewed individually. You do not need to look at all 29 minutes of it if only certain parts interest you. Chapter 1 includes brief overview of the plans, and new benefits planned for 2008. Chapter 2 includes tips on choosing plans that best meet your needs and Chapter 3 has Open Enrollment information.

Announcements

Don't forget to vote on November 6th On Proposition 300 – The Waveyard. Election booklets have been mailed out by the City Clerk's office. If you didn't receive one, please call 480-644-4868. Your polling place is listed on the back of the pamphlet. Please note – it may not be the same place you voted the last time!

Finally, just to see if you read the newsletter all the way through: You probably noticed that Volume 1, Issue 1 was dated July, 2007. There was no August 2007 issue. To catch up with ourselves, we've dated the current newsletter Vol. 1, Issue 2 September 2007.

Next Meeting:

Membership meetings are held at 9:00am on the third Wednesday of each month in the community room of the Fire Station at First Street and Mesa Drive.

October 17th – Speaker: [Doug Nintzel](#),
Media Relations Director,
Arizona Department of Transportation