

SUTTER COUNTY CONTRACT

Over a period of several days and meetings at different locations, the SCEA membership voted on whether to approve a new three year contract that would have the employee assume responsibility for paying the Employee Contribution to CalPERS. Under the 2.7@55 retirement formula that amount is 8%. The Employer Contribution fluctuates up and down based upon investment returns, but currently it is about 18%. In exchange for assuming the Employee Contribution the base salary of employees represented by SCEA will be increased by 6.5%. Since the 8% is paid on a pre-tax base the adjustment to the base salary should significantly offset the impact to the employee's net take home pay (depending on the employee's IRS filing status).

New employees will be under the 2% @60 formula and their final compensation will be based upon the highest three years. New employees will

also pay the Employee Contribution of 7%, required by this formula. This change will take place once the CalPERS' contract amendment process has been completed.

The new contract also called for employees to forfeit the previously negotiated COLA of 3% that had already been postponed by one year. In exchange for the COLA, the County agreed to pay the entire health insurance premium increase implemented in July 2010 (14%), any increase that takes effect July 2011 and any increases applied in July 2012 and 2013 up to a cap of 15%. If the increase in 2012 and/or 2013 exceeds the 15%, the excess will be split on an 80/20 basis. The employer would pay the larger share. Additionally, employees will receive two Personal Leave days in each year, which are not accruable year to year or compensable if



the employee separates from the county for any reason.

Another significant improvement was the elimination of the Pay for Service with Distinction, which required employees to obtain an above standard evaluation for three years straight prior to completing 15 years and 20 years service, in order to receive a 2.5% salary adjustment at each point in the employee's career. These increases could also be taken away if the employee's performance rating was standard or below. In the future these increases only require a standard evaluation and once they are obtained, they are permanent. The SCEA membership approved the tentative agreement by a vote of 247 yes to 74 no.

Thank you to Ray Hogan, Ben Harper, Alice Williams-Root, Anne Westlake, Terry Barber, Lorie Thomas and Robert Ahu for their hard work and dedication to securing this new contract.

SCEA is requesting assistance for union mail distribution for the Mental Health Department. Please call our office at 674-0185 and ask for Anna. We hope to get key people from the different divisions so we can get your mail to you as soon as possible. (Protective Services/Child Staff)

ORANGE COUNTY COURT CASE

After the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in Orange County approved pension benefit improvements a few years ago, this included applying these improvements to prior service. A new majority was elected to the BOS. The newly elected majority disagreed with these improvements and filed a lawsuit seeking to over-turn these improvements. That case has worked its way through the Court system and has now been appealed to the State Supreme Court (SSC).

The SSC has not yet decided to hear the matter, but it is expected that they may feel obligated given the pressure on government at all levels to balance budgets and maintain services to the public. Add to this the misconception that public pensions have caused these budget problems. The central issue is whether a BOS (or other governing body) have the power under the law to grant such improvements or should such improvements be solely reserved to the taxpayers to decide.

We are watching this case very closely and you should as well. The case law in California was decided under much more liberal and public employee friendly Courts of the past. It is uncertain how the current SSC would rule on this matter or how upholding the pleadings in this case could affect pension benefits both of current employees and potentially those of retirees.

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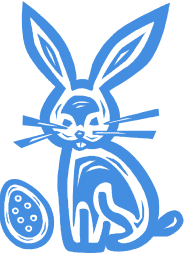
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