

PENSIONPoints

Member Newsletter | January 2013

Save Time, Save Paper Apply for pension @ www.atrf.com

When it comes time to apply for your pension, you can now complete the entire process electronically in our secure On-Line Services environment. As long as we have copies of your birth certificate and marriage certificate on file, you can "click" to select the pension option that is right for you. You no longer have to wait for forms to arrive in the mail. Plan ahead – use our "Member Inquiry" web page to ask us to confirm if we have copies of your certificates.

Your ATRF On-Line Services account is a valuable tool. Here are some other things you can do:

- Calculate your own pension and purchase estimates
- Get an up-to-date statement of your benefits
- Name or change your Beneficiary
- Receive electronic documents in your Secure Message Centre
- Apply to purchase service and accrue disability service



The Pension Puzzle



In two previous issues we told you about Puzzle Piece #1 – the pension you will receive from ATRF, Puzzle Piece #2 – your Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and Puzzle Piece #3 – Old Age Security (OAS). The fourth piece of the puzzle comprises your personal savings - registered retirement savings plans (RRSP), tax free savings

accounts (TFSA), other savings accounts and investments.

Piece #4 - Personal Savings and Investments

Your employer and government pension plans were never intended to provide all of the income you will require in retirement. Once they retire, most teachers use personal savings, RRSP's and investment income to "top up" income from their ATRF pension and their CPP and OAS.

Accumulating Wealth

One piece of advice that retiring teachers give younger colleagues is, "Start saving as early as you can." Two vehicles with tax-saving advantages are RRSP's and TFSA's.

- An RRSP is an investment account with special tax benefits to help to maximize your retirement savings. The contributions you make to your RRSP are tax deductible, which helps reduce your taxes.
- Another vehicle for saving is a TFSA. You pay no income tax on investment returns earned in the account, and there are no taxes on amounts you withdraw. Any Canadian resident over age 18 with a social insurance number can open a TFSA. The annual contribution limit for years from 2009 to 2012 is \$5,000. The 2013 limit has increased to \$5,500.

continued on page 2...

In This Issue

- Who's Who
- Watch For Our New Website – Spring 2013
- You Asked Us...
- Coming Soon to Your Mailbox
- Top Marks for ATRF Service
- "We'll Be There..."
- Teachers' Conventions 2013

The Pension Puzzle *continued...*

Withdrawing Funds for Retirement

So, once the time comes to start receiving your pensions and withdrawing from your savings vehicles, it takes careful planning and coordination. For example, Canada Revenue Agency requires you convert your RRSP's to a registered retirement income fund (RRIF) by December 31 of the year you turn age 71. If the RRSP is not converted, it is considered to be "deregistered" and the proceeds will be paid out as cash and fully taxed as income.

Get Help from a Professional

It may be beneficial to seek the advice of a professional financial planner. A financial planner can review your retirement income plan and assist you in making sound investment decisions to enable you to have a comfortable retirement. When it comes time to retire, your financial planner can assist you in putting all the puzzle pieces together – your ATRF and CPP pensions, OAS, RRSP's, TFSA's and income from other savings.

If you do not have a financial planner you can deal directly with your

financial institution, or you can ask friends, family or co-workers for their recommendations on finding the right financial planner for you.

Next issue - Piece #5 - Health Benefit Coverage



Who's Who

ATRF administers your pension plan. We often get questions about other issues related to retirement, such as retiree health benefits. We have put together this list that you might find helpful.

Information About	Who to Ask	Phone Number	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health benefits while you are teaching • Health benefits for "early" retirees (before age 65) 	ASEBP Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan	780-431-4786 877-431-4786	www.asebp.ab.ca
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health benefits for retirees over age 65 • Advocacy for pensioners 	ARTA Alberta Retired Teachers' Association	780-822-2400 855-212-2400	www.albertarta.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Pension Plan • Old Age Security 	Service Canada	800-277-9914	www.servicecanada.gc.ca
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Tax 	Canada Revenue Agency	800-267-6999	www.cra.gc.ca



Watch For Our New Website – Spring 2013

We are undertaking a comprehensive revamp of our website. Watch for the launch of our "new look" in spring 2013!

- Easier access to your On-Line Services account
- Quick Links for the places you visit most often
- Updated and easier to understand articles
- Easier access to publications and forms

You Asked Us...



Q: *I have completed my first year of teaching under contract. I hear my colleagues talking about an annual pension statement. When will I receive a statement?*

A: Annual plan member statements are created by ATRF once your employer has completed reporting service and salary information for the school year. We are currently mailing statements for the year ended August 31, 2012.

Q: *Why can't I get a statement sooner?*

A: Your employer submits data electronically to ATRF each month. Once they have completed reporting a school year, your employer reconciles the data, and any changes are submitted to ATRF with the first

file of the new school year. Many employers submit this data to ATRF by mid-October. Once all the data from your employer is correct, we can generate annual statements for all the teachers employed by that employer.

We do a number of statement mailings from November to mid-January. This means that not every plan member will receive a statement at the same time. However, if your colleagues have received their statements, and you have not, you should contact ATRF.

- To see if statements for your employer have been generated, go to the Teachers section of our website. Click on Plan Member Statements on the sidebar. This will take you to a list showing the statement mailing date for each employer.

- If you register for Join Our Email List, you don't have to wait for the mail. You will receive an email notifying you that your annual statement is available online - several days before the paper copies go in the mail.

Q: *What do I do if the information on my statement is incorrect?*

A: If the following personal information is incorrect, please contact ATRF:

- Spouse/pension partner name and date of birth
- Your designated beneficiaries
- Your email address

However, if your salary or service information is incorrect, you should contact your employer directly.

Coming Soon to Your Mailbox

Annual Plan Member Statements - August 31, 2012

If you have not already received yours, check the Teachers section on our website for the list of statement mailings – Plan Member Statements on the sidebar.

ATRF Annual Report Highlights

Early in the New Year, we will be mailing the August 31, 2012 Annual Report Highlights to all teachers. If you prefer to "go green" and read your copy electronically, please sign up for Join Our Email List. It's easy - after you Sign In to On-Line Services, select the Join/Update Our Email List from the Member Menu.



Top Marks for ATRF Service

Our objective is to provide you with complete, timely and cost-effective service. How are we doing?

- ✓ We continue to receive high ratings for our services and communication material in plan member surveys.
- ✓ Again last year, we exceeded our service turnaround benchmarks for all services and we improved our average elapsed time in two of the nine key processes.
- ✓ Our costs for plan member services continue to be about half of the average cost of other major Canadian public sector pension organizations.



"We'll Be There..."

Personal Interviews

You can always call ATRF to arrange a personal interview at our office in Edmonton. In the spring of 2013, we plan to hold personal interviews in the following locations:

Calgary • Medicine Hat • Lethbridge • Red Deer

These interviews are for plan members who want information about your pension amount, increasing your pension, or preparing for retirement.

Web Registration is Easy and Convenient

The interview schedule for spring 2013 is posted on our website. To register for an interview outside the ATRF office, click on **Meet with Us**.



Teachers' Conventions 2013

To register for a 15-minute personal interview at your 2013 Teachers' Convention, use the link from your convention website or go to the Teachers section at www.atrf.com and click on **Meet with Us**, then Teachers' Conventions. Registration is now open for all conventions.

North Central | Edmonton – February 7 & 8

Calgary City | Calgary – February 14 & 15

Northeast | Edmonton – February 14 & 15

Central Alberta | Red Deer – February 21 & 22

Palliser | Calgary – February 21 & 22

South Western Alberta | Lethbridge – February 21 & 22

Southeastern Alberta | Medicine Hat – February 21 & 22

Greater Edmonton | Edmonton – February 28 & March 1

Central East Alberta | Edmonton – March 7 & 8

Mighty Peace | Grande Prairie – March 7 & 8

