



PENSIONPoints

Member Newsletter | December 2011

The Pension Puzzle

Putting together a jigsaw puzzle can be an interesting and relaxing task... It's stress free because you know what the picture will look like, and the fun is sorting through the pieces to make them all fit together.

Creating what your retirement "picture" will look like can be compared to putting together a puzzle. There are five key "pieces" in your retirement puzzle. When you see how all the individual pieces look and fit together, you will get a clearer picture of your retirement.

1. Your ATRF pension
2. Canada Pension Plan benefits
3. Old Age Security benefits
4. Personal savings and investments
5. Health and dental benefit coverage for retirees

When you understand how each of these components fit together for you, it can help you set goals and timelines that will make the journey into retirement less stressful. When researching the pieces, it is best to speak with the experts.



Puzzle Piece #1: Your ATRF Pension

Who are the Experts? - ATRF Pension Counsellors and ATRF web tools at www.atrf.com.

- You can discuss your pension options with a Pension Counsellor in person, or on the phone.
- Every fall you receive your Annual Plan Member Statement. It explains your pension entitlements as of August 31. See the article on page 2 for more details.
- You can calculate future-dated pension estimates using the pension estimator in your On-Line Services account.
- Watch the information videos on our website.

Watch for puzzle pieces 2 and 3 in the spring edition of *Pension Points*.

New On-Line Service Features



Register for On-Line Services at www.atrf.com to access our new features:

- Name or change your beneficiary designation
- Request and receive pension estimates through the Secure Message Centre

Available Spring 2012:

- Apply for your pension and select your pension option

In This Issue

- Your Annual Statement Explained
- Are You a New Teacher?
- You Asked Us

- Meet the ATRF Board
- "We'll Be There..."
- Teachers' Conventions 2012

The Key Elements of Your Annual Statement Explained



Many of you will have received your Annual Plan Member Statement for the year ended August 31, 2011.

Once employers complete reporting service, salary and contribution information for the 2010-11 school year, ATRF prepares your Annual Statement. If you have not yet received your Statement, check our website before you call us. Go to www.atrf.com (Teachers > Plan Member Statements). This will show the mailing date for each employer.

Don't Just File It!

Your Annual Statement contains important information that will assist you in understanding the benefits to which you are entitled.

On the left side of each section, you will find an explanation of the numbers contained in that section. Questions about your pensionable service, contributions or salary displayed on page 2 (of your statement) should be directed to your employer. If you do not understand the benefits displayed on page 3, you are welcome to call our office.

The "Personal Information" Section

If you have a Spouse/Pension Partner, but that person's name and date of birth do not appear on the front page of your statement, then you should advise ATRF. How to do that is explained on the bottom of the front page.

Naming a Beneficiary

Please carefully review the names listed as your designated beneficiaries on the front page of your statement. You will need to complete a "Designating a Beneficiary" form if:

- there is a note saying "No beneficiaries on file,"
- the last name of your beneficiary has changed due to marriage, or
- the names listed are no longer who you wish to receive a death benefit.

When you complete the "Designating a Beneficiary" form, do not name your Spouse/Pension Partner because they will automatically receive the benefit if you die before your pension begins. Name who should be next in line for your benefit after your Spouse/Pension Partner. You may name one or more people, or even a charitable organization.

Priority of Beneficiaries

The Plan provides a benefit if you die before your pension begins. A death benefit is paid to your:

- spouse/pension partner,
- dependent minor children, if you have no spouse,
- named beneficiaries, if you have no spouse or dependent minor children; otherwise,
- your estate (Note: payments made to your estate could be subject to fees or claims).



Are You a New Teacher?

ATRF needs some information from you:

- If your employer did not give you our "Information Update" and "Designating a Beneficiary" forms to complete, please download them from our website, complete them and mail them to ATRF.
- If you prefer to "Go Green" and choose not to receive paper mailings, register for 'Join Our Email List' once you have registered for On-Line Services.

You Asked Us...

Q: *I'm thinking of returning to teaching after I start receiving my ATRF pension. What are the consequences of doing that?*

A: You may work up to 0.6 of a year under contract with an ATRF employer without affecting your pension. Effective September 1, 2011, the *Teachers' Pension Plans Act* was amended to exclude substitute service from the 0.6 rule. This change was agreed to by the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Government of Alberta.

Should you work more than 0.6 of a year, under contract, within any school year (September to August),

your pension is reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of salary relating to service accrued once the limit is reached. The pension payable for the remaining months in the school year is similarly reduced.

Q: *What changes have been made to the Canada Pension Plan?*

A: Between 2011 and 2016 the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will be making a number of changes to your CPP benefits.

- Your monthly CPP retirement pension amount will increase by a larger percentage if you take it **after** age 65.

- The monthly amount will decrease by a larger percentage if you take it **before** age 65.
- If you are under age 65 and you work while receiving your CPP retirement pension, you and your employer will **have to** make CPP contributions, and your benefit will increase (between age 65 and 70 you can choose to make contributions).

You can learn more about these changes and the effective dates on the CPP website at www.servicecanada.gc.ca.

Meet the ATRF Board



Harry Buddle

Prior to retirement in 2007, Harry was President and CEO of Servus Credit Union. He has served on several boards including Afexa Life Sciences, Credential Group Inc., Alberta Financial Investment & Planning Advisory Commission, and the Capital Health Authority.

Lowell Epp *Vice Chair*

Lowell is currently Executive Director, Capital Markets with Alberta Finance. As well, he serves as Vice President for the Alberta Capital Finance Authority.

Karen Elgert

Karen is currently the principal at Gwynne School and has taught in the Wetaskiwin Regional School Division for over 20 years. She has been an instructor in the ATA's Healthy Interactions Program since 2000 and has ongoing involvement with the Wetaskiwin ATA Local.

Greg Meeker *Chair*

Greg is Science Department Head at Victoria School of the Arts in Edmonton. Previously he taught at Centre High in Edmonton. Greg is a former member of the ATA Pension Committee and a member of the Science Council.

Sharon Vogrinetz

Sharon is Coordinator, Teacher Welfare with the Alberta Teachers' Association. She taught for 13 years with the County of Lamont and Elk Island Public School Division.

Gene Williams

Gene is Executive Director, Strategic Financial Services with Alberta Education. His career has spanned over 25 years in various financial positions within the Alberta Government.

"We'll Be There..."

Personal Interviews

In the spring of 2012, we will be holding personal interviews in the following locations:

Calgary • Medicine Hat • Lethbridge • Red Deer

These interviews are for those of you who want information about your pension amount, increasing your pension, or preparing for retirement.



Web Registration is Easy and Convenient

To register for an interview at www.atrf.com, click on 'Meet With Us' in the Teachers section.

Teachers' Conventions 2012

North Central | Edmonton - February 9 & 10

Central Alberta | Red Deer - February 9 & 10

Calgary City | Calgary - February 16 & 17

Northeast | Edmonton - February 16 & 17

Palliser | Calgary - February 23 & 24

South Western Alberta | Lethbridge - February 23 & 24

Southeastern Alberta | Medicine Hat - February 23 & 24

Greater Edmonton | Edmonton - March 1 & 2

Central East Alberta | Edmonton - March 8 & 9

Mighty Peace | Grande Prairie - March 8 & 9



To register for a personal interview at your 2012 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.

