

# New Roads

Spring 2004

Published by The Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association

*Abra Colabra!*

Retiree  
Colas  
Pop Up On  
May 1st  
Benefit  
Payments



CCCERA retirees will receive a cost-of-living (COLA) increase in their monthly benefit beginning April 1, 2004. Your May 1, 2004 benefit payment will reflect the new amount. If you are Tier 1, 3, or Safety, and retired before April 1, 2000, the COLA portion of your benefit will rise by 3%, the maximum allowed by law. If you retired between April 1, 2000 and April 1, 2001, your COLA increase will be 2.5%. Members retired after this date will receive 1.0%. Tier 2 members will receive 1%. Tier 3 Disability members will receive 1%, regardless of retirement date.

Your COLA benefit increase is based on several factors:

1. The Bay Area CPI (Consumer Price Index),
2. Your COLA Bank,
3. Your retirement tier.

This year, the CPI was 1%, due to minimal inflation (price increases). By law, there is a cap on the amount CCCERA may increase the COLA portion of your benefit. If the inflation rate is higher than this cap, the remainder is "banked" for future years, then applied if the CPI is low. This helps stabilize the COLA from year to year. The percentage CCCERA can increase your COLA is determined by the law that applies to each different tier.

*(Continued on back page.)*

*We Must Insist. . .*

## All Benefit Payments To Be Sent By Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Due to a payment processing change (the elimination of obsolete payroll equipment), CCCERA will require retirees to accept benefit payments by EFT. Approximately 6,300 out of CCCERA's 7,000 retirees already receive their pensions by EFT. **Even with EFT, you will still receive a monthly check stub that verifies your account deposit.** EFT deposits can be made into ANY bank account, i.e., checking, savings, money market, etc. **Forms must be returned to CCCERA by June 30, 2004.**

Retirement benefit funds are automatically deposited by Electronic Funds Transfer (*it's the safest way to receive your funds, and there are no personal security risks!*). CCCERA deposits to your bank on the dates below; your **bank may not post funds to your account until the next banking day.**

*Check with your bank to verify when funds are available.*

Payment for:	Deposit Date:
March	April 1
April	May 3
May	June 1
June	July 1
July	August 2
August	September 1
September	October 1
October	November 1
November	December 1
December	January 3, 2005

Call the Retirement Office at 925.646.5741 for more information, or to request the simple form you need to sign up for EFT. **You can also print the EFT form from our web site, fill out the required information and send it in.**

## Calculate Your COLA Benefit for 2004

### An Example:

Monthly Basic Allowance	=	\$1,000
New \$ Power	=	\$ + 80
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,080</b>
2003 COLA was 3%		
(\$1,080 x .03 (3%))	=	\$ 32.40
<u>2003 Total Monthly Income</u>	=	\$1,112.40
2004 Monthly Basic Allowance	=	\$1,000
New \$ Power	=	\$ + 80
COLA carried from 2003	=	\$ +32.40
		<b>\$1,112.40</b>
2004 COLA is 3%		
(\$1,112.40 x .03 (3%))	=	\$ +33.37
<u>2004 Total Monthly Income</u>	=	\$1,145.77

The cost of living adjustment is **separate** from other benefit enhancements. While some enhancements, such as "New Dollar Power" for members retired prior to 4/1/82, affect specific groups, **all retirees are eligible for the COLA.**

## Retiree Representation

### 2004 Board Elections

#### Feature 2 Retiree Seats

CCCERA Board of Trustee elections are scheduled to be completed by June 22. Retirees eligible to vote will receive their ballots and return mailer no later than May 24, 2004.

Helen Shea, long time trustee, chose not to run this year, vacating the retiree representative seat. AB1587 (effective January 2004) created an additional "alternate" seat for one more retiree. Thus, members will be asked to choose one representative and one alternate to serve on the Board for a term of 3 years.

Even though elections are for Retirement Board trustee positions, the County Elections Department handles the process. CCCERA verifies membership and provides a list of eligible voters.

For more information, please call the Elections Department at 925.646.4166.

CCCERA office hours are  
8a.m.-12 p.m., 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m.,  
Monday through Friday.  
After business hours,  
voicemail is available  
to take your messages  
24 hours a day at  
925.646.5741.

PERMITTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
OAKLAND, CA  
PERMIT # 3729

