



"Connecting Elected Officials throughout the state."

The KCOA

Connection

Fall 2009

President's Message

By Cheryl Remington, KCOA President



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Kansas County Officials Association

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The Kansas County Officials Association is committed to upholding democratic principles which allow Kansans to determine their constitutional right of self-governance including the election of all local officials.

As I am writing this, the sun is finally shining after five days of drizzly weather, and it sure makes the outlook "brighter" for many of us. The KCOA Board has set many goals for the sixth year of KCOA. We met for the KCOA Retreat in July 2009. We reviewed the survey results from the membership, and discussed the direction we plan to take for the future. Communication, unity, and innovation are the three specific topics we plan to take action on.

COMMUNICATION -you are able to access the KCOA website at www.kscountyofficials.org. We will strive to update the website with the committees, policies and educational materials, and future meeting dates. The board minutes will be sent via-email to all KCOA members after being approved by the board. You are able to access the "member only" site of KCOA. If you have forgotten the username or password, please contact Kari Presley at kpresley@kearneyandassociates.com for this information. On the members only site, many new items have been added: committee guidelines, The Fraud Dispatch, KCOA policies and procedures, and much more! Check this out and if you have anything you would like to see added, please let one of the board members know. A letter of "Welcome" to newly elected officials detailing what KCOA will mean for them as members is also being planned.

UNITY- what more can be said for this than what it means. We must strive to work together to make KCOA a strong and reputable organization, and we will only be able to do this by working together.

INNOVATION or "A new way of doing things" - With this idea, we hope to make the conference concentrate more on education that would be of interest to all members. We have also discussed having a longer meeting time

for each organization during the conference.

If you have any suggestions for the conference, please contact a member on the conference committee. A list of committees is available at www.kscountyofficials.org on the About Us page.

Last year, KCOA Day at the Capitol was well-attended for the first year. The board plans to schedule this again for 2010. I feel this is important to our organization as we work together to make sure the legislature knows who KCOA is and what we stand for. We all know that SB 75 (Consolidation Bill) will rear its head again this year, and we will need to stand strong for what KCOA stands for. There is no better way to get our message out than to have this day and introduce ourselves and our goals as an organization.

We have also adopted guidelines for the Conference, Legislative, and Outreach Committees. If you have been appointed to a committee, please read the guidelines that pertain to you. I thank you for your commitment. The pamphlets "Working Together to Build a Stronger Community" and "Kansas for Elected Government" are also available on the KCOA website. Many counties are having these printed and are displaying them in their offices.

Future dates for the KCOA Conference will be: September 15-17, 2010 at the Wichita Hyatt and September 14-16, 2011 at the Wichita Airport Hilton.

As I close, I would like to leave you with this quote from Henry Ford:

Coming together is a beginning; Keeping together is progress AND WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.

**Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association
Kansas County Treasurer's Association
Kansas Register of Deeds Association**

Affiliate News

Kansas Register of Deeds Assn.

In February, the Register of Deeds School was held in Harvey County. The school is held every four years for the newly elected Registers. However, all Registers and staff are also invited to attend.

The Register of Deeds annual June seminar "Around the World" was held in Saline County. Rebecca Seeman, Saline County Register of Deeds, was hostess. We had many informative speakers from motivation to Employment law and manuals. At the seminar, we elected our new officers for the remaining 2009 and 2010 years.

The new officers include: Cristy Tuttle, Gove County-President; Marilyn Nichols, Shawnee County-Vice President; Brenda Pogue, Ford County-Secretary; and Delia Heston, Jefferson County-Treasurer.

During the KCOA conference, Diane Briestensky said her goodbye as President of the Kansas Register of Deeds Association and installed the incoming officers.

-- Diane Briestensky, *KSROD Past President*

Now as I take over the position of KSROD President and look ahead, October is over and everyone wonders where 2009 has slipped off to. What lies ahead for 2010? It is really hard to believe that it has been almost a year since the general election! This year has brought some new faces to our association, and we look ahead with great expectations always keeping focused on County Government and serving the public. It doesn't seem to matter, from the counties that are the biggest to the smallest, everyone has similar issues, challenges, and desires in their counties.

I am thankful for all of you who have served on the executive board, past and present, and for everyone being so willing to serve on the various committees of our association and also the KCOA board and committees. Our associations cannot and will not stay strong without everyone working together and always keeping focused on doing our jobs in the best way possible as elected officials.

Abraham Lincoln said, *"If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."*

-- Cristy Tuttle, *KSROD President*

Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Assn.

Clerks on a Road Trip

Pauline Lee, Atchison County Clerk and I recently took a road trip to southwest Kansas. We were invited to the Southwest Kansas County Officials meeting by Ness County Clerk Renee Kerr. The trip was a "double duty" trip as we also were planning to go to Kiowa County to assist Carmen Renfrow with November Abstract preparation. Carmen had expressed interest in the peer assistance program that was discussed at the KCOA meeting in September.

We left Oskaloosa on Monday afternoon and had a beautiful travel day west on I-70. We especially enjoyed seeing the wind turbines in Lincoln County. They seem to stretch on for miles and miles. By the time we got to Hays, it was getting dark, and I'm not one to drive when I can't see the deer coming, so we spent the night in Hays.

The next morning we were up early and off to Ness County. We made it on time and ready for the meeting at the American Legion in Ness City. The courthouse and grounds were absolutely beautiful. Ness County Officials had the perfect fall day for hosting the meeting. Ness County closed the courthouse and allowed all County employees to attend the meeting. We enjoyed visiting with the road and bridge crew and comparing our counties to theirs.

After the meeting we headed south and back east a little through Hodgeman, Pawnee, Stafford, and Pratt Counties. We ended up in Pratt for the night. The next morning, we headed for Greensburg. Coming in from the east, it looked pretty good, and I was starting to be concerned about finding the courthouse, but then as we got closer to downtown, it wasn't a problem. The courthouse is clearly visible at the point where you can see where the tornado went through. We turned on Main Street and found our way through the construction to the courthouse to park.

The grounds and the building look fresh and new with new landscaping and new windows. We were greeted by friendly faces when we walked in the door and enjoyed a tour of the renovated facility by Carmen before we got down to work. The building is beautifully restored and back in business. The things that are being done in Greensburg and Kiowa County are amazing and inspiring. We left Greensburg with a thunderstorm following us and made our way back up through Hutchinson and Salina. We ended up stopping in Junction City for the night. The thunderstorms followed us and made for a rainy night. We were home pretty early the next day and back to our offices to work on tax statements and November abstract.

We appreciated the hospitality shown to us by Ness and Kiowa Counties on our adventure, and we both have a new appreciation for the time and effort it takes to travel from southwest Kansas to northeast Kansas.

-- Linda M. Buttrick, *KCCFOA President*

Affiliate News

Kansas County Treasurers Assn.

The Kansas County Treasurers Association elected new officers for 2010 at the KCOA Conference held last September in Wichita. The officers are Mark E. Schemm, Smith County-President; Joe Grisolano, Crawford County-Vice President; Ron Estes, Sedgwick County-Treasurer; and Gloria Auchard, Morris County-Secretary. District Representatives are (NE) Dora Hartig, Lyon County; (NW) Cindy Linner, Norton County, and (SC) Ruth Fechter, Butler County.

Nancy Weeks, Haskell County, was elected by the KCTA Legislative Committee as Chairperson with Cynthia Linner, Norton County as Secretary. The Legislative Committee meets once a month in select cities across Kansas. Last February, KCTA held its Legislative Seminar followed by our Legislative Reception, which we invite Kansas Legislators from across the state to come and visit with Treasurers about the Legislative session and how it will affect the public back home. The reception is funded with personal money. No funds from the Association are used. More than 60 legislators attended the 2009 Legislative Reception. The KCTA held its June Seminar at the Ramada Inn in Topeka. At this conference Jeannine Bateman, Marion County Treasurer, received the "Betty McBride Outstanding County Treasurer Award." We also honored the retiring and outgoing Treasurers and wished them well in their endeavors. Lastly, we honored Peggy Stalcup, DMV Supervisor, and wished her well in her retirement.

We have had a busy year, and we look forward to the challenges of 2010. With limited funding, Treasurers across the state will have many new challenges to maintain the high level of customer service and professionalism the citizens across Kansas deserve and expect. A special thanks for a job well done for the many Treasurers who have devoted their time away from families and duties of their own office to team up with the Kansas Department of Revenue Motor Vehicle Department on the new DMV Modernization project.

This year Kansas law that allows the public to vote for their local elected officials is going to be an issue in some counties. Treasurers from across the state will join forces to ensure that the power of the public's vote will remain intact. Treasurers will maintain professionalism and perform outstanding customer service to ensure that the public will keep our positions as elected officials elected by the public, and not appointed by a board. This task will be accomplished by the KCTA Certification Committee's continued work of training our association members with the best training possible. We look to the future of providing online training and testing for the association.

As County Treasurers, we look forward to a busy, challenging, and rewarding year serving county government across Kansas.

-- Mark E. Schemm, *KCTA President*

KPERS Needs a Cooperative, Comprehensive Solution

By Glenn Deck, Executive Director, Kansas Public Employees Retirement System

This recession has affected practically everyone in one way or another. Most investors, including KPERS, saw unprecedented losses. KPERS' investments did better than many others, but market declines still created a \$2.9 billion decrease in assets.

Fortunately, KPERS' investments have stabilized. But not before the losses had a substantial impact on the long-term funding outlook. A loss that big cannot just be absorbed.

How Bad Is It?

The most recent actuarial valuation shows the Retirement System's funded ratio has dropped to 59 percent. The funded ratio is the ratio of assets to liabilities. For public defined benefit pension plans like KPERS, funding over 80 percent and rising is good. Funding below 60 percent is poor and needs prompt attention.

KPERS' unfunded liability has increased to \$8.3 billion. The unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) is the difference or gap between actuarial value of assets and actuarial liability for benefits already earned by public employees.

News articles in the last few months have quoted a report issued by the Center for Applied Economics at the University of Kansas calling KPERS bankrupt. KPERS is not bankrupt. KPERS is solvent in the near term.

Benefits for current retirees are safe. And the state also has a legal obligation to pay the benefits employees have already earned. Most members are still working and contributing. KPERS receives over \$700 million in contributions annually. In addition, current retirees are paid over a lifetime, so not all benefits are due at once. KPERS has about \$11 billion in assets

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KPERS Needs a Solution

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and pays out about \$1 billion in benefits each year.

While this is not an immediate crisis, it is serious. Going forward, the UAL will continue to increase and the funded ratio will continue to drop. Investment returns alone can't fix the funding shortfall. The longer the problem continues, the worse it will get, and the more it will cost.

How Did We Get Here?

The most direct and immediate cause of the funding shortfall is the recession. This last year has been the worst year for the stock market since 1931. Large investment losses have significantly weakened KPERS' long-term financial health.

Benefit enhancements from the 1990s have also increased the System's liabilities. In addition, state and local governments have contributed less than the actuarial rate for 15 years. Both have had a lasting negative effect on funding.

Lastly, members are living longer and retiring earlier than previously projected. That means KPERS is paying benefits to individual members over a longer period of time than we expected.

All of these issues have combined to create a serious funding problem.

Where Do We Go From Here?

This fall, KPERS has been doing a new top-to-bottom analysis using this formula:

$$\text{BENEFITS} = \text{contributions} + \text{investments} - \text{expenses}$$

We looked at each of these areas. Based on our findings, we are now in the process of fine-tuning options for consider-

ation by the Governor and legislative committees. In developing ideas, we looked at factors like:

- What are the legal issues?
- What is sustainable?
- Is it consistent with actuarial standards?
- Does it include shared responsibility?
- Does it support an adequate retirement?

A Five-Year Look

	UAL (billions)	Funded Ratio
2004	\$4.74	70%
2005	\$5.15	69%
2006	\$5.36	69%
2007	\$5.55	71%
2008	\$8.28	59%

Possible options include contribution increases for employers. Employers have shouldered increases in the past, and now they pay almost double the employee rate. In addition, options could mean changes to benefits that haven't been earned yet or contribution increases for members.

The Legislature also asked that we look at options for a 401(k)-type defined contribution plan for **future** employees. With a traditional pension like KPERS, benefits are defined by a formula and plan assets are professionally invested for the membership. With a defined contribution plan,

individuals typically direct investments on their own and decide how to pay out their savings during retirement. A switch to this type of plan won't help the current funding shortfall, but it could affect how benefits for future employees are funded.

At this point, we need more analysis and feedback from legislative committees to better define options and see how they fit together.

Long-term funding and benefit plan designs sound cold and bureaucratic. But at KPERS, we realize they affect members' lives in a very real way. We understand this is your future livelihood. The Legislature and Governor are ultimately responsible for KPERS benefits and funding. With 268,000 members, we have 268,000 reasons to work for a cooperative, comprehensive solution.

There is no easy fix to the challenges we face, but members can count on us to be a trusted partner in finding the solution.

**Visit www.kscountyofficials.org
and check out the members only section.**

Lots of new items have been added including:

- ◆ Documents from the Board planning retreat
- ◆ KCOA Policies and Procedures
- ◆ Issues of The Fraud Dispatch
- ◆ Committee Guidelines
- ◆ Legislative RFP Forms
- ◆ and much more!

KCOA Committee Assignments

KCOA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:

Linda Schreppel, Labette County Clerk, **CHAIR**
Inge Luntsford, Kingman County Clerk
Kelly Arnold, Sedgwick County Clerk
Tammy Moulden, Jackson County Register of Deeds
Karen “Jill” Freeman, Dickinson County Register of Deeds
Lynn Young, Clark County Register of Deeds
Jeannine Bateman, Marion County Treasurer
Brenda Becker, McPherson County Treasurer
Dena McDaniel, Anderson County Treasurer
Cheryl Remington, ex-officio member

KCOA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:

Nancy Weeks, Haskell County Treasurer, **CHAIR**
Mickey Billinger, Ellis County Treasurer
Eileen King, Riley County Treasurer
Ruth Fechter, Butler County Treasurer
Mark Schemm, Smith County Treasurer
Linda Weber, Marshall County Treasurer
Susan Hubbell, Kingman County Register of Deeds
Ruth Rahe, Republic County Register of Deeds
Mary Marrow, Cheyenne County Register of Deeds
Suzanne Simon, Wabaunsee County Register of Deeds
Kay Pesnell, Douglas County Register of Deeds
Stacy Driscoll, Leavenworth County Register of Deeds
Sherrie Riebel, Allen County Clerk
Sonya Stohs, Marshall County Clerk
Jamison Shew, Douglas County Clerk
Kelly Arnold, Sedgwick County Clerk
Rebecca Bossemeyer, Geary County Clerk
Cheryl Remington, ex-officio member

KCOA OUTREACH COMMITTEE:

Missie Gerritzen, Kearny County Register of Deeds, **CHAIR**
Susan Lucas, Stanton County Register of Deeds
Jeanette Nepote, Crawford County Register of Deeds
Tami Kerth, Lincoln County Register of Deeds
Sharon Wolters, Smith County Clerk
Crysta Torson, Lane County Clerk
Debbie Wyckoff, Greenwood County Clerk
Pat Sharp, Lane County Treasurer
Gayla Shields, Miami County Treasurer
Joe Grisolano, Crawford County Treasurer
Cheryl Remington, ex-officio member

KCOA POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE:

Shane Shields, Allen County Clerk, **CHAIR**
Missie Gerritzen, Kearney County Register of Deeds
Cheryl Remington, Gove County Treasurer

KCOA CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMITTEE:

Lisa Robertson, Greeley County Register of Deeds
Sherry Wenrich, Pratt County Register of Deeds
Linda Buttron, Jefferson County Clerk
Crysta Torson, Lane County Clerk
Nancy Weeks, Haskell County Treasurer
Ron Estes, Sedgwick County Treasurer

KCOA PEER REVIEW TEAM :

Register of Deeds:

Lisa Robertson, Greeley County
Missie Gerritzen, Kearney County
Linda Fincham, Marshall County
Lillian Swartz, Wallace County
Guyneth Snyder, Comanche County
Betty Jo Abitz, Pottawatomie County

County Clerks:

Sherrie Riebel, Allen County
Marcia Ashmore, Hamilton County
Inge Luntsford, Kingman County
Shane Shields, Sumner County
Stacia Long, Seward County

County Treasurers:

Jeannine Bateman, Marion County
Nancy Weeks, Haskell County
Kathy Tremont, Geary County
Eileen King, Riley County
Dena McDaniel, Anderson County
Cheryl Remington, Gove County
Clark Miller, Reno County

BUDGET/AUDIT COMMITTEE:

David Lamb, Linn County Clerk, **CHAIR**
Gayla Shields, Miami County Treasurer
Robert Keese, Phillips County Register of Deeds
Cheryl Remington, ex-officio member

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

Shane Shields, Sumner County Clerk,
Immediate Past President, Non-Voting Member
Nancy Weeks, Haskell County Treasurer
Linda Buttron, Jefferson County Clerk
Missie Gerritzen, Kearney County Register of Deeds

Calendar of Events

**ANNUAL KCOA
CONFERENCE
SEPT. 15-17, 2010
HYATT REGENCY
WICHITA, KANSAS**

*Visit the website for a schedule and
registration information when it is
available.
www.kscountyofficials.org.*

KCOA Board of Directors

Cheryl Remington, President
Gove County

go_county_treasurer@wan.kdor.state.ks.us

Marilyn Nichols, Vice-President

Shawnee County

Marilyn.nichols@snco.us

Sherrie Riebel, Secretary-Treasurer

Allen County

coclerk@allencounty.org

Board Members

Linda Buttron
Jefferson County

Mark Schemm
Smith County

Delia Heston
Jefferson County

Pat Sharp
Lane County

Joanne Long
Bourbon County

Cristy Tuttle
Gove County

Don Merriman
Saline County

Nancy Weeks
Haskell County

Brenda Pogue
Ford County

Shane Shields, *Past President*
Sumner County

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