



THE BRIDGE:

Connecting State Civil Service and You

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The SCS Mission:

To provide human resource services and programs that enable state government to attract, develop and retain a productive and diverse workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana.

Prohibited Political Activity

In the height of this year's election cycle, it is important to remember that as classified state employees, Article X, Section 9 of the State Constitution governs our participation in political activities. The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized the right of a state to restrict such activity in order to avoid the appearance of such support. This means that classified state employees must avoid the ACTUAL support of a candidate, party, or faction, and avoid the APPEARANCE of giving such support.

SCS has produced a video entitled Political Do's and Don'ts for Classified Employees, which details the political activities in which classified employees can and cannot participate. You can view the video [here](#).

STAYING CONNECTED:

From the Desk of Shannon S. Templet, SCS Director



In this issue of *The Bridge*, we feature the Annual NCASG Conference, of which Louisiana State Civil Service was a host. This conference brought together professionals to discuss compensation and classification issues of state government employees. It was both enlightening and educational!

The CPTP/Workforce Development Division is now piloting Executive Retreats. The article on page 2 has more information on this new endeavor. Louisiana Job Connection, featured on page 4, is a great, new tool for recruiting and connecting with potential job applicants. Also, check out the newest video, Political Do's and Don'ts for Classified Employees, on the SCS YouTube Channel.

I would like to congratulate my staff on receiving the 2014 Customer Partnership Award at the 13th Annual NEOGOV Training Conference. Also, congratulations to current Civil Service Commission member D. Scott Hughes, former member Kenneth Polite, and the other recipients of the 2014 Monte M. Lemann Award for their support of Louisiana's merit system of public employment.

REMINDER: Annual Open Enrollment Oct.1 - Dec. 7

The Office of Group Benefits (OGB) annual enrollment period begins October 1 and lasts through December 7. During that period, all current members will be required to select a health plan for 2015. OGB's plan options for 2015 include several new plans that were not available in previous years. You can get details about all plan options in the decision guide available [here](#).

You can access even more information about OGB's plans, including frequently asked questions, an out-of-pocket cost calculator, and the Ask OGB blog at annualenrollment.groupbenefits.org or by contacting the OGB Call Center at 1.800.272.8451.

CPTP Pilots Executive Retreats

By John DiCarlo
Training Program Manager – Business Development

The Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP) is happy to announce an exciting new initiative available to state agencies. CPTP is piloting the offering of executive retreats for Appointing Authorities and Executive-Level staff of state agencies. The curriculum for these retreats will be developed and facilitated by members of the CPTP staff.

Prior to conducting executive retreats, CPTP staff members will correspond with executives from the agency to ascertain the specific needs of the organization for which training would be beneficial. The content of the curriculum will be tailored to address those specifically-identified needs of the agency.

The curriculum could consist of a combination of original courses, developed and facilitated by CPTP staff, and existing courses already offered and facilitated through the CPTP Program, including courses from the nationally-renowned Franklin Covey (i.e. “5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity”, “Inspiring Trust”, and “Leading Across Generations”).

For more information about Executive Retreats, please contact John DiCarlo, CPTP Training Program Manager of Business Development, at (225) 342-8558 or review the CPTP website homepage found at the following address: <http://www.civilservice.louisiana.gov/Divisions/Training/Default.aspx>

Louisiana Hosts the Annual NCASG Conference

By Heather Hebron
Compensation Division Consultant

Louisiana State Civil Service was excited to host the 2014 National Compensation Association of State Governments Pay Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 5-8, 2014. Director Shannon Templet welcomed professionals from across the nation to discuss current issues related to compensation and classification of state government employees. For three days in the Crescent City, member states were enlightened, entertained and educated by an array of talented speakers, member state reports, and annual survey results.

The National Compensation Association of State Governments was formed in 2010 when the Central and Southeastern Compensation Associations merged. The NCASG provides a network to exchange valuable knowledge and information between compensation professionals within state governments. The organization also conducts three annual NCASG surveys, which include a salary survey, a benefits survey, and a pay practices survey. Louisiana is responsible for the pay practices survey.

The conference brought together a collection of gifted speakers who spoke on a variety of topics ranging from federal wage and hour explanations, to administering total rewards. An important part of the conference is the sharing of perspectives and experiences by compensation and classification professionals. A panel discussion offered ideas and

solutions to current concerns of personnel changes related to agency consolidations, as well as how to address the span of control. The panel discussion provided several recommendations ranging from the idea of eliminating span of control to redesigning the classification plan in order to provide more flexibility for those high demand job titles. Another informative part of the conference was the presentation of each state's report, which provided an overview of each state's current problems and their solutions. The session offered an opportunity for an open forum as member states offered their insight on current issues.

Next year's annual NCASG conference will be in Charleston, West Virginia. If you are currently working in administering compensation for Louisiana state employees, be sure mark your calendar for next year's event, which is generally scheduled in early fall. Plan to check the [NCASG website](#) for conference agenda updates as well as early registration discount details in the coming year.

2014 Monte M. Lemann Award Winners

By Paul St. Dizier
Appeals Division Administrator

On October 24, 2014, the Louisiana Civil Service League presented the 49th Annual Monte M. Lemann Awards in New Orleans. This prestigious award is given to five individuals outside of the state classified service who have made the greatest contributions to the advancement of Louisiana's merit system of public employment. The award is named for Monte M. Lemann, a longtime supporter and defender of civil service in Louisiana.

This year's honorees included D. Scott Hughes and Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. Mr. Hughes is a current member of the State Civil Service Commission, having served in that capacity since 2010. He is also the Association Executive of the Northwest Louisiana Association of Realtors. Mr. Polite served on the Commission from 2010 until his appointment as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana in Sept. 2013. Messrs. Hughes and Polite were nominated for the award as a result of their exemplary service on the Commission.

Other present members of the Commission who are previous recipients of the Monte M. Lemann Award are David L. Duplantier (2010),



*M. Craig Colwart
New Iberia*



*Dr. Abdalla Darwish
Kenner*



*Ron Henson
Baton Rouge*



*D. Scott Hughes
Shreveport*



*Kenneth Polite, Jr.
New Orleans*

Chairman; John McLure (1995), Vice-Chairman; and G. Lee Griffin (2008), Member.

The winners of the 2014 Monte M. Lemann Awards are pictured above.

LASERS Benefits Louisiana, So Know Your Retirement!

Have you attended a LASERS Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) workshop?

These helpful statewide workshops can be beneficial in preparing you for retirement. Topics include information on eligibility requirements for retirement, purchase of service credit, the Deferred Option Retirement Plan (DROP), the Initial Benefit Option (IBO), and much more. Register now for the [six-hour workshop](#) on the LASERS website.

Do you use the LASERS Member Self-Service feature?

Check it out and see what you have been missing. Active and retired LASERS members have secure access to their personal information through [Member Self-Service](#) on the LASERS website.

Have you used the LASERS Membership Handbook?

This may be your most important LASERS resource. [The Membership Handbook](#) contains the most up-to-date information about membership, including details defining all categories of your plan, information on the IBO and DROP plans, and clear answers to many of the questions you might have about planning for and enjoying your retirement. The Membership Handbook is located on the LASERS website under Publications.

Are you routinely utilizing the LASERS website and LASERS social media?

The LASERS website is literally your retirement library. If you are interested in LASERS investment performance, the latest news releases, or benefit information, simply go to www.lasersonline.org. Choose whether to read content, watch videos, or listen to podcasts. LASERS social media outlets are also a great way to stay informed. Sign up to receive emails through [LASERS Member Connection](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), subscribe to [YouTube](#), or subscribe to the [eBeam blog](#).

State Civil Service Wins Award at National Training Conference

By Lindsay Ruiz de Chavez
Public Information Director

The Louisiana Department of State Civil Service received the 2014 Customer Partnership Award at the 13th Annual NEOGOV Training Conference.

The Customer Partnership award is given to an organization that continually provides valuable input, is open to sharing and helping others use the system features and is actively involved in NEOGOV user call discussions offering best practice tips and suggestions. State Civil Service uses NEOGOV as the technology platform for the LA Careers online application and applicant tracking system.

“NEGOV has over 1,300 customers including state and local government and educational institutions. It is an honor for State Civil Service to be selected for the 2014 Customer Partnership Award,” said SCS Director Shannon S. Templet. “I commend my staff for their constant dedication and commitment to providing the best possible service to job applicants and human resources offices around the state. Exchanging ideas and best practices with other NEOGOV customers is one of many ways State Civil Service strives to achieve our mission.”

LED Introduces New Recruiting Tool — Louisiana Job Connection

By Lindsay Ruiz de Chavez
Public Information Director

Over the summer, Louisiana Economic Development announced the creation of Louisiana Job Connection, a new, free website that will help meet the talent recruitment needs of Louisiana employers, while serving as a centralized hub for job seekers.

Louisiana Job Connection is designed to address the needs of employers with innovative job posting-and-matching functionality and an intuitive, easy-to-use interface.

In Louisiana State Government, Louisiana Job Connection can be used in conjunction with the LA Careers Online Application System. The link to the job vacancy can be imbedded in the posting on LA Job Connection.

By using Louisiana Job Connection, the applicant pool will be expanded and the quality of applicants will most likely go up. This is a great tool to use for recruiting for hard-to-fill jobs. Visit LouisianaJobConnection.com for more details.

The Roth Option: Is It Right for You?

Starting in January 2015 you may elect to make ROTH contributions to your Deferred Compensation Account. ROTH contributions can begin as early as the first paycheck in February. But how do you know if it is right for you? Read on to find out.

The Roth 457 Option essentially “locks in” today’s tax rates on all contributions.

For some people—especially those who expect to be in a higher tax bracket when they retire—the Roth 457 option may make the most sense. If you’re one of those people, the Roth option allows you to pay taxes on your contributions when they are contributed (presumably at a lower tax rate than you would expect to pay at retirement). If you expect to be in a lower tax bracket when you retire, you might want to consider contributing to your 457 on a before-tax basis. You won’t pay taxes on your contributions or any earnings on your contributions until you take a distribution, which is usually at retirement (when many people expect their retirement earning power and tax burden to be lower than they are today).

Regardless of which type of contributions you choose, the important thing is to contribute as much as you can today for your retirement tomorrow. If after you’ve done your research and consulted the experts you decide that Roth 457 contributions are right for you, you can make the appropriate changes to your account by completing a Salary Deferral Agreement form, and soon you will be able to make changes to this designation by visiting the website at LouisianaDCP.com or calling KeyTalk® at (800) 701-8255.