



# GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' Retirement System of the Virgin Islands

# UPDATE



ISSUE 41 | Forth Quarter

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### ADMINISTRATOR'S 2020 MESSAGE

As we welcome this new year filled with purpose and milestones to accomplish, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our members and their families a joyful, Happy New Year filled with peace, health, happiness and prosperity!

Before I share with my expectations and hopes for this year, let's take a moment to reflect on a few significant moments that occurred this past year at the GERS. Despite the many obstacles we may face, I extend gratitude to the GERS team for their efforts, hard work and continued dedication.

The GERS annual board retreat was held

on August 29th and 30th on St. Croix. This opportunity brought stakeholders and GERS Staff together to discuss solvency initiatives that can extend the lifespan of the GERS system.

We had a wonderful turn out at our 60<sup>th</sup> commemoration where we celebrated 60 years of paying annuities and offering exceptional service

to our members on October 1, 2019. This milestone event took place at our office locations on St. Thomas and St. Croix, bringing together government officials, retired and active members and a number of business and educational partners.

I am also pleased to announce that the annual V.I. Lottery bonus to retirees who are 60 years of age have been on payroll for 1 year have been paid to 7,277 retirees. The amount of the bonus less taxes is \$143.30.

As we look ahead, the goal still remains to sustain the system until the Plan Sponsor infuses the cash

that is needed to keep the fund solvent beyond 2023. We can only continue to hope that a solution is quickly agreed upon so that the GERS can continue to pay its annuities for many more years to come. GERS stands as the backbone for many individuals in our Virgin Islands territory, therefore something must be done.

As the name "GERS" remains a significant subject matter, with many questions and some concerns, we urge our members to stay tuned as we engage you through our Social Media, workshops, quarterly news publication, radio update program, Town hall meetings and other mediums.

I am excited to announce that we have new online webinars scheduled to take place throughout the year so that members can participate in workshops from the convenience of any CPU, tablet or mobile device from any location. If you are interested or



St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix  
U.S. Virgin Islands

# THE BOTTOM LINE



The GERS **funded status**, is the level of accumulated assets that have been set aside for the payment of retirement benefits to employees.

## DEATH BENEFIT PAYOUTS (01/01/19-9/30/19)

**\$1.9 M**

## CY TOTAL REFUNDS PAID (01/01/19-9/30/19)

**\$9.3 M**

## CY TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUNDS (01/01/19-9/30/19)

**594**

## TOTAL RETIREES (AS OF 1/15/20)

**8,707**

## YTD FY 2019 RETIREE PAYROLL 10/1/18 - 9/30/19

**\$251.3 M**

## TOTAL PORTFOLIO ASSETS (QUARTER ENDING 9/30/19)

**\$698 M**

Assets include stocks, bonds, alternatives.

## TOTAL RETURN FOR QUARTER ENDING (9/30/19)

**0.7%**

Note: Return numbers exclude the GERS office buildings. They are however included in the total portfolio assets. **All figures are estimates.**

Continued from front page

would like to learn more, contact our Public Information office at (340) 776-7703 , (340) 718-5480 or [communications@usvigiers.com](mailto:communications@usvigiers.com).

At GERS we truly believe that engagement is key, so please stay tuned for our upcoming Townhall meeting dates, there is much to discuss as solutions to stave off insolvency are forth coming.

Again, I wish you a New Year filled with warm moments and cherished memories, but most of all, good health. May the gift of hope, love and happiness be yours in 2020!

## ENFORCEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION POLICY

Effective April 1, 2020 all members are advised that the GERS will be enforcing the Contribution Policy in accordance with provisions of 3 VIC, Chapter 27, section 718(l) and Chapter 28A, section 768(k) will be strictly enforced which states that no deductions of contributions or bi-monthly loan payments will be allowed to be deducted from your Retroactive Annuity Payments.

Prior to retirement all employee/ employer contributions must be paid in full before a retirement application is completed.

## 5 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR FINANCES IN 2020

One of the main things we like to stress to our members is the importance of having a nest egg. Here are 5 Savings and Financial tips that you can use to ensure a prosperous 2020.

1. Saving money isn't always the easiest thing to do, but if you have a friend or family member who is also planning to save, pairing up might be a great idea to encourage you to stick to your plan. Not only will you have a support system, but you will have someone to share your progress with as well.

2. Set a financial goal you would like to achieve for this year, whether it maybe for something major such as purchasing a home or minor like getting that new laptop you've always wanted. With a goal in mind you are more likely to achieve your savings goal.

3. Try to reduce any high interest debt you have. The quicker you pay it off, the less it will cost you in the long run in interest charges.

4. If possible, make it automatic. Every month schedule a recurring amount of money to be transferred regularly from your checking account to a linked savings account. This tactic relieves you of having to remember to make a deposit and reduces the risk of you spending the money before it's saved.

5. Consider accounts with tax benefits for longer-term goals like college and retirement, funding accounts like a Roth IRA or 529 education plan will give you tax savings and allow your money to grow over time through investments.



**The GERS Update is going Paperless for 2021!**



# YEAR IN REVIEW



The Government Employees' Retirement System ("GERS") extended a warm welcome to the members of the 33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands on February 20, 2019, for a comprehensive orientation and brainstorming session.

GERS Administrator Austin Nibbs testified before the Senate Finance Committee on March 8, 2019 in support of legislation which would increase the amount of monies allotted from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund (IRMF) annually to the GERS, from \$7 million to \$10 million.



On Wednesday May 23, 2019, Administrator Austin Nibbs attended the Caribbean Hotel & Resort Investment Summit as part of the V.I Government delegation to showcase it's properties for potential development.



The GERS annual board retreat was held on August 29th and 30th on St. Croix. This opportunity brought stakeholders and GERS Staff together to discuss solvency initiatives that can extend the lifespan of the GERS system.



This year, GERS' Payroll Division celebrated National Payroll Week, September 3 -7, with the rest of the nation; the program highlights and celebrates payroll professionals.

On October 1, 2019, GERS kicked off its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration with an Open House. This milestone event took place at office locations on St. Thomas and St. Croix



## A note from the Group Health Insurance Office

All retirees under age 65 must complete the HRA assessment by September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. We are also requesting that all retirees who currently have coverage, please contact the Group Health Insurance office to verify their current mailing address and update their telephone number.

# Upcoming Events

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JAN

FEB

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.....	15		RETIREE PAY DAY
	22	---	PRE- RETIREMENT
.....	23	St. Croix	BOARD MEETING
.....	31	---	RETIREE PAY DAY
.....	12	St. Thomas	RETIRING HAZARDOUS WORKSHOP
	15	-	RETIREE PAY DAY
	26	STX	RETIRING HAZARDOUS WORKSHOP
.....	27	STT	BOARD MEETING
.....	29	---	RETIREE PAY DAY
.....	15	---	RETIREE PAY DAY
	18		FINANCIAL WORKSHOP
	26		BOARD MEETING
.....	26	STX	FINANCIAL WORKSHOP
.....	31	---	RETIREE PAY DAY

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