



## Benefit Statement Enclosed

Enclosed is your revised Annual GARS Benefit Statement which contains detailed information about your benefit payment, deductions, health and life insurance amounts. As we have previously notified you, the State Comptroller's Office is no longer mailing the Benefit Earnings Statement to you each time your net benefit changes. Information contained in this year's Annuitant Statement should provide you with the same information previously contained on the Comptroller's Earning Statement.

GARS encourages you to access the new SRS Member Services website to access your personal membership data. An electronic version of this annual statement will be maintained for your future reference on this website. If you have questions about your statement, contact GARS at 217-782-8500.

## Retiree News

### Your GARS Benefit is Secure

**All GARS benefits will be paid in full and on time.** Even though the State has yet to make the November 2015 employer contribution to GARS, the State has made the December through February contributions. Comptroller Leslie Geissler Munger reported at the January 12th SERS Board of Trustees meeting that it is her intent to make the November contribution by April 2016. **GARS is not in danger of defaulting on the payment of benefits or expenses.**

#### GARS FACTOID

The average age of a GARS retiree is 72.8

### Revisions to Annuitant Statement

Based on several requests from annuitants last year regarding the need for verification of the health insurance premiums paid by annuitants, the 2016 Annuitant Statement specifically addresses the premiums paid by each annuitant that may be useful in completing their federal tax return for 2015.

You will find this information in the "Authorized Deductions" portion of your statement under the column "Calendar Year 2015". The deduction will list the name of your health insurance carrier and will provide you with the January 2016 monthly premium you paid for dependent health insurance as well as the Calendar Year 2015 premium.

## Federal Income Tax Withholding

You may have noticed a change in the amount of federal tax deducted from your GARS benefit



payment due to revised federal withholding tables that went into effect on January 1, 2016.

GARS withholds taxes based on your request on file with our office. To change your withholding, you must submit a new W-4P to GARS (the W-4P is available on our website at [www.srs.illinois.gov](http://www.srs.illinois.gov)).

You are encouraged to contact a qualified tax advisor or the IRS at 800-829-1040 to ensure you have adequate withholding for the 2016 tax year.

## The Member Services Website

Check out our secure and easy to use Member Services website at [www.memberservices.srs.illinois.gov](http://www.memberservices.srs.illinois.gov). You can access your current account information, annual statements and other important information.

Over 60 GARS retirees have signed up to use this website and we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Log on to this website to view your latest information.



The SRS Member Services website provides members with secure interactive access to their membership data. There are several steps for your first visit.

### To sign up for an Illinois Public Id (if you do not have one):

1. From your Internet browser enter <https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov> or access our Member Services website link from [www.srs.illinois.gov](http://www.srs.illinois.gov).
2. Click the **Sign Up** button and complete the new Account form and click **Register**.
3. Enter your "First Name" and "Last Name".
4. Enter your "Email Address" and again in "Confirm Email Address".
5. Enter your chosen "Password" (be sure to review link for the State of Illinois password requirements).
6. "Confirm Password" by reentering your chosen password.
7. A confirmation email will be sent to your email to complete the signup process. You only need to create this Illinois Public ID once. Now you are ready to sign in!



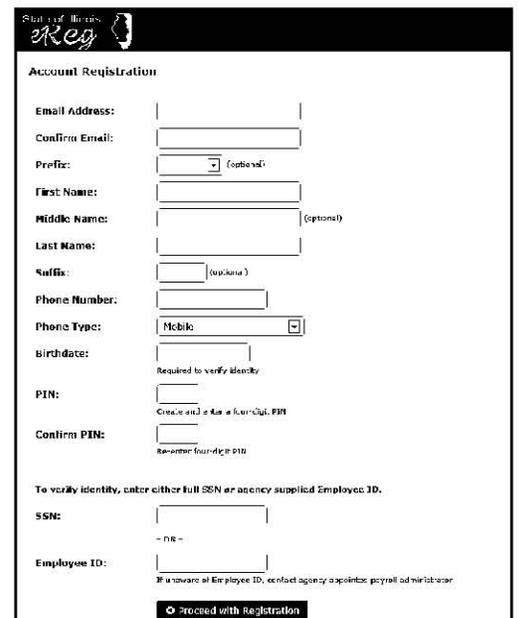
### To sign in after you have an Illinois Public Id:

1. From Internet browser enter <https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov/>
2. Under Sign In section, enter your Username and Password and then click the **Sign In** button.



### To complete one-time ERegistration on first visit:

1. If it's your first time visiting the website, you will complete a one-time "State of Illinois ERegistration".
2. Enter your "Email Address" and again in "Confirm Email".
3. Enter your name "First", "Middle", "Last" and Suffix if applicable.
4. Enter your Phone Number and type (mobile, home or work).
5. Enter your "Birthdate" as mm/dd/yyyy (example: 01/01/1960).
6. Enter a four-digit Personal Identification Number as your "PIN". This protects your privacy and prevents unauthorized access to your account.
7. Re-enter your "PIN" to confirm it.
8. Enter your "Social Security Number" or "Employee ID". Your employee id is on your most recent member statement or you may contact SRS about it.
9. Click on the **Proceed with Registration** button.
10. Review the registration entry for accuracy. To finalize the registration, again click the **Proceed with Registration** button.



### After registration, you will be redirected to the SRS Member Services website.

On future visits, you will sign in once and be directed to the website automatically.