



The Grapevine

APRIL 2024

Representing all Fresno County retirees and their families

www.refco1.org • INCORPORATED 1978

Thursday, April 25 Luncheon Reservations

**ALL RESERVATIONS
MUST BE MADE BY CHECK**

PARDINI'S

2257 W. Shaw, Fresno, CA
corner of W Shaw & Van Ness,
Fresno

Check-in: 10 a.m.
**Sit-down luncheon served
at 11:30 a.m.**

**Food Drive benefiting
Valley Animal Shelter**

Reservations: \$23 members;
\$25 nonmembers.

Please make your check
payable to REFCO,
and mail to:

REFCO
P.O. BOX 26384
FRESNO, CA 93729-6384

Deadline for reservations is
Monday, April 15, 2024. Your
check must reach us by that
date, so please mail it early
to allow for USPS delivery.
**Note: Your check will not
be deposited until after the
April 15th deadline.**

**EXCEPT FOR FREE
LUNCHESES PHONE
RESERVATIONS WILL NOT
BE ACCEPTED**

To cancel reservations:

Call Mary Ann Rogozinski
at 559-801-2171 prior to
February 5. If you get a voice
mail, leave your name, phone
number, and that you are
canceling your reservation.
Cancellations after the dead-
line cannot be refunded.



Debbie Blankenship

President's Message

by Debbie Blankenship, President

Spring is here!

We hope this newsletter finds you in good health and spirits as we welcome the Spring season. Spring is a time of renewal, growth, and hope, and we want to share some of the latest news and updates from REFCO that may interest you.

The FCERA Board of Retirement approved a cost-of-living-adjustment of 3% for 2024. The COLA will go into effect on April 1st. FCERA retirees and beneficiaries can expect to see that change on their April 30th pension payment.

Our REFCO board elections were held at the February luncheon/annual meeting. I would like to welcome our newest board member Dawn Gallegos. Dawn retired from the Department of Social Services and has been serving as the Chair of the Sunshine Committee for the board.

During the annual meeting, under new business, I let attendees know that due to increased costs, the board is proposing an increase in member dues from \$1 a month to \$2 a month. The proposed increase would not take effect until 2025.

I hope you have a wonderful Spring and stay safe and healthy. As always, we are here to serve you and answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact us anytime or visit our website for more resources and updates.

Retirement Board Approves A 3% Cost of Living Increase

Contributed by Laura P. Basua, FCERA Retiree Trustee

At its regular board meeting February 1, 2023, the Fresno County Employees' Retirement Association Board of Retirement approved a 3% cost of living increase for retirees and beneficiaries in all tiers except tiers 4 and 5. This change is effective April 1, 2023. This action was taken in accordance with Government Code section 31870.1 and, for 2022, the average annual change in the Consumer Price index for the West Region was 8.01 %, rounded to 8% (the nearest ½%). Because the maximum COLA that can be granted in a given year is 3.0%, the remaining 5% was rolled into a "COLA Bank" for years when the calculated COLA is below 3%.

Retirees who retired on or after April 2, 2022 and on or before April 1, 2023 now have a COLA Bank of 5%. Retirees who retired on or after April 2, 1982 and on or before April 1, 2021 now have a COLA Bank of 6.5% (1981 is 14.5%, 1980 is 26.5%, and 1979 32.0%).

Please reach out to FCERA with any questions: 559-457-0681 or FCERA@FresnoCountyCa.gov.



OFFICERS

President.....Debbie Blankenship
1st Vice President.....Christine Balbas
2nd Vice President..... Irene Romero
Recording Secretary..... Dick Estel
Membership Secretary Vacant
Treasurer..... Linda Robinson
Assistant Treasurer.....Mary Ann Rogozinski
Immediate Past President Kelly Woodard

DIRECTORS

Dawn Gallegos, James Hackett, Judy Lemos, Karen Sebilian,
DeAnn VonBerg, Patrice White, Sue Wirt

RETIREMENT BOARD Laura Basua, Vicki Crow (alt)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy.....James Hackett
By-Laws Debbie Blankenship
CRCEADelegate: James Hackett, Alternate: Chris Balbas
Community Outreach Patrice White
Employee Benefits.....Vacant
Events.....DeAnn VonBerg
Finance & Budget Linda Robinson
Grapevine/Newsletter.....Christine Balbas
Health.....Charlotte Tilkes
Luncheon Reservations..... Mary Ann Rogozinski
Luncheon Master of CeremoniesKen Smith
Membership & Awards Vacant
Nominating..... Dick Estel
Parliamentarian Dick Estel
Scholarship Liaison Julie Hornback
Sunshine..... Dawn Gallegos
Webmaster..... Daniel Moore

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

RETIREMENT OFFICE559-457-0681

Address Change, Retirement Check, Withholding Forms,
Beneficiary Change, Retirement Board Meetings

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS 559-600-1810
County Health Insurance

REFCO559-431-5032

website: refco1.org email: refco.emails@gmail.com

mailing: P.O. Box 26384, Fresno, CA 93729-6384

Address Change, The Grapevine, Membership

Don Nelsonrefco.media_mgr@gmail.com

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS..... 559-801-2171

THE US POST OFFICE DOES NOT TELL US YOU'VE MOVED

New US Post Office regulations require REFCO to maintain mailing addresses that are updated no later than 90 days. To help us keep costs down, we need you to immediately notify us when you move.

THE GRAPEVINE DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

The information printed in "The Grapevine" is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by "The Grapevine" for inaccuracies contained herein.

Privacy Statement

REFCO recognizes the need for the privacy of its members and is committed to protecting your personal information. The Officers and Directors of REFCO restrict access to information about you to those who need to know the information to provide services to you.

The information that REFCO has about you is your name, mailing address and payment of membership dues. This list of members is provided to us by the Retirement Office.

REFCO does not disclose any of this information about our members and former members to third parties. The information is limited to those who assist us with mailings such as The Grapevine Newsletter. The companies who act on our behalf are obligated to keep this information that we provide them confidential.

REFCO does not sell or share our member list.

2024 REFCO EVENTS CALENDAR

LUNCHEONS – **SEE MEETING NOTICE DETAILS ON PAGE 1**

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
11 BOARD MTG 25 LUNCHEON	8 BOARD MTG 15 LUNCHEON	14 BOARD MTG
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
11 BOARD MTG 25 LUNCHEON	9 BOARD MTG	13 BOARD MTG
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
11 BOARD MTG 18 LUNCHEON	8 BOARD MTG	5 LUNCHEON 12 BOARD MTG
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
10 BOARD MTG 17 LUNCHEON	14 BOARD MTG	5 LUNCHEON

April's Sponsored Organization: Valley Animal Center

Contributed by Patrice White

The Spring REFCO luncheon will feature the Valley Animal Center. Representatives will bring some dogs that are available for adoption and give a short presentation on the center.

Valley Animal Center houses thousands of dogs and cats annually until they are placed in loving homes. Most of their shelter animals are rescued from local animal control agencies who have no more space for their animals. Even animals who have been abused, mistreated, abandoned, or injured are cared for and nurtured until a loving home is ready to adopt them.

Valley Animal Center is a community-supported organization. Financial support is derived solely through donations from the community, grants, program services, and fundraising efforts. Their mission is to unite dogs and cats with loving people.

The donated items needed are liquid laundry detergent, bleach and dish soap (Dawn). Also needed are blankets and wet cat and wet dog food. Monetary donations are always accepted at the REFCO luncheon.

In Memoriam

The surviving spouse of a member is eligible for REFCO membership. The application is available on the REFCO website at www.refco1.org.

Charles Barrett
Allen J Boudreau
Frances P Buffaloe
Santos Esparza

Boyd Jones
Carol Nelson
Dolly Quan
Janice A Robinson

Missing Grapevines

If you aren't getting your emailed copy of *The Grapevine*, check the spam folder on your computer. It may be there. If so, try adding REFCO Membership Team to your contacts (daliaromerol@gmail.com).

Volunteers Needed

Submitted by Dick Estel

Do you like reading *The Grapevine* newsletter? Have you sat with your friends enjoying good food and conversation at one of the six annual luncheons? Are you happy that all attempts to weaken our pension system and reduce our benefits have failed?

These things do not happen by magic. They are the result of hard work by a dedicated group of volunteers who step up to serve on the REFCO Board, attend conferences with other counties, edit and deliver a quality newsletter, and make sure that everything runs smoothly at the luncheons.

We are always on the lookout for new people to serve as officers and board members, and to handle various volunteer duties. We are particularly in need of people with computer skills.

Some of these people could be you! If you are interested in being part of the action, send an email to refco.emails@gmail.com or call the REFCO Customer Service line at 559-431-5032. You'll be rewarded with personal satisfaction and the gratitude of your fellow retirees.

Book Exchange Volunteer Needed

We are in search of a REFCO Book Exchange Coordinator.

As you know, REFCO members bring books they want to exchange to the luncheons. The coordinator takes the containers of books to each REFCO Luncheon and places the bins on the book table with lids off. REFCO members (or guests) pick out the books they want and leave those books they want to exchange. After the luncheon the coordinator places all the remaining books back into the containers and takes them home. (There are two dollies to help handle the container of books.) A date stamp of the latest luncheon is placed in front of the book. When four stamps appear in the book it is taken out of circulation and donated to a library.

If anyone is interested in taking over the REFCO book assignment, please contact Dick Estel, or email refco.emails@gmail.com.

Did We Miss You?

Did you retire in the last year and joined REFCO, but were not acknowledged in the Grapevine? If so, you have our sincerest apologies and we'd like to make it up to you! Please let us know who you are by sending us an email message at refco.emails@gmail.com, or calling the REFCO phone line at 559-431-5032.

We'll share the good news of your retirement right away.

Supporting Your Legacy



NOBLE
CREDIT UNION

Children Accounts | Trusts | Investments
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Fresno | Clovis | Madera | Selma
559-252-5000 NobleCU.com

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January 2024 Luncheon Highlights

Luncheon Raffle Winners Awarded

The lucky winners from the October luncheon are as follows:

50/50: Dawn Gallegos (\$275)

Food Drive: Terri Songer (\$50)

Noble CU Gift Cards: Charlotte Tilkes, Nancy Beltran, Ruby Waller, Mary Herman

REFCO \$20: John Weiser, Debra Beaird, Eva Torres, Janet Zelenak, Irma De La Pena

Jacks in the Bag: Emily Piercy (\$10)



Luncheon Photos Available on the REFCO Website

Many of us look forward to seeing photos of our friends and former coworkers in *The Grapevine*, but did you know that many more are available on the REFCO website? Following each luncheon, we will post a variety of photos to the REFCO website for members to enjoy. Links to the October and December 2023 luncheon photos are on the website's home page, and are also included here:

October 2023:

<https://link.shutterstock.com/hWUHaG65vHb>

December 2023:

<https://link.shutterstock.com/UeIA58S5vHb>

The **February 2024** luncheon photos will be posted to the website (refco1.org) shortly.



Congratulations, New Retirees

through February 2024

* REFCO members in **bold**; listed alphabetically by last name

RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE	RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE
Mina Abdollahian	Library	17.8082	Maria C Mercado	Social Services	6.1288
Ruth Mary Aliser	Social Services	18.1178	Kimberly Corrinne Montana	Prob-Juv	26.811
Elizabeth Alvarez	DA-Crim	29.104	Marcise D Moore	Social Services	25.4247
Paul Andrews	Payroll	26.8106	Renee Murray Russell	Social Services	34.4965
Kimberly Badertscher	Sheriff	3.	Nicole Ohanian	Social Services	29.3186
Mark H Bray	AC/TTC	17.9042	Joseph S Ontiveros	Behav Hlth	11.6219
Christopher Campise	ITSD	24.2932	Joan Helene Pacella	Child Sup	8.7973
Ramon Castaneda	Library	10.2778	Priscilla K Pang	Social Services	33.5817
Nina NT Chang	Social Services	14.5096	Todd Joseph Parsons	DA	5.0055
D Cathleen Cook	Social Services	15.2767	Angel Alberto Pinedo Rosales	Parks	10.4219
Monica Delgado	Probation	11.0656	Marjelyn V Ramiro	Comm Hlth	18.2959
Patti Julyenne Dervishian	Dvlpmt Svc	8.3616	Eric Razavi	Comm Hlth	10.4466
Tuan Quoc Dinh	Social Services	20.4822	Gerardo Razo	Social Services	31.2164
Yolanda K Dinwiddie	Social Services	16.5973	Richard "Kevin" Reisz	Roads	7.8575
Robin Louise Dodd	Probation	11.5781	Linda J Richards	Family Law	17.537
Dolores Anne Dodge	Roads	8.5534	Steven Ridley	Social Services	34.0356
Suha Tahir Fakira	Social Services	12.9315	Nancy Ellen Rocha	Social Services	15.1397
Alice T Franco-Carrillo	Social Services	32.2301	Joe L Rodriguez	Sheriff	19.4466
Rebecca Lynn Fuentes	Social Services	10.789	Christopher S Rose	Sheriff	19.8438
Ruth Garcia-Mota	Social Services	19.5825	Jan Rowden	Assessor	9.1671
Robert C Glaspie	Public Adm	7.9123	Beatrice F Sanchez	Probation	31.4052
Rolinda S Gomez	Child & Fam	7.4877	Oladehinde B Sangokoya	Social Services	26.2014
Sylvia Hernandez	Social Services	10.1014	Glen E Schafer	Sheriff	3.1781
Rachel Wright Hill	Pub Defndr	12.6849	Cornelius A Shiver	Prob-Juv	20.4822
Raymond Charles Jeffrey	Payroll	2.8904	Tanya Jean Shour	Social Services	4.9863
Wayne R Kangiser	Roads	26.1206	Michael V Snowden	Prob-Juv	21.6082
Phannga Keo	Social Services	30.3957	Susana Sotelo	Comm Hlth	21.8192
Carolyn Knod	VMC	10.5096	Nola L Tamayo	Behav Hlth	25.2303
Rhonda Lasater	Social Services	23.5224	Tami Lynne Todd	Child Sup	32.4247
Johnny Lujan Jr	Prob-Juv	26.9973	Robert R Trudgen	DA	3.9934
Marlene M Martinez	Social Services	8.5288	Kenneth W Van Ornam	NCFPD	16.5698
Sarah Jannett Mata	Probation	2.6411	Shoua VangXiong	Agriculture	12.2315
Raymond Patrick McPherson	DA-Crim	7.6274	David W Vermason	Sheriff	22.4384
Jerry Medrano	Payroll	31.9041	Blair Wayte	Roads	23.7562



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Armadillo

Home Warranty, Reinvented

A home repair service plan covers the cost of repairs and replacements of certain appliances and systems in a home caused by everyday wear and tear, or from old age.

- Old HVAC system? \$5,000 cost to replace
- Old Water Heater? \$2,000 cost to replace
- Old Appliances? Over \$1,000 to replace

Exclusive program created for REFCO retired employees.

Ensure your HVAC system is covered BEFORE it breaks down during the hot summer months!

- ✓ We can dispatch a qualified technician to your home, but you also have the option to **use your own trusted pro.**
- ✓ **No gotchas!** 80% fewer exclusions than typical home warranty.
- ✓ **100% US-based service.** We won't send your claims overseas!

To Learn More and Enroll visit www.pgagencies.com/REAVC/home

Call PGA
(800) 511-9065

Call Armadillo
(844) 403-2123