

## WRS Investment Team Members Receive Accolades

Chief Investment Officer, Sam Masoudi and Senior Investment Officer, John Kreiter each received investment industry accolades recently. Sam was twenty-fifth in the [2018 Power 100](#) which is an annual list honoring top asset owners in the world. John was among those listed by [Trusted Insight's Top 30 List](#) for public pension funds.

When asked to comment Sam said "Because of the Governor's and JAC's backing, the Board's and our executive director's stewardship, WRS staff's support, and the investment team's hard work, it has definitely been a broad team effort. We have accomplished a lot, and we are working hard

to keep the momentum going!"

Want to know more about the entire WRS investment team? Read their [bios](#) at [retirement.wyo.gov](http://retirement.wyo.gov) under the *About* tab. 🐾



Sam Masoudi



John Kreiter

## What's the Power of Three?

Most WRS members have access to three retirement vehicles – Social Security, your WRS Pension and 457 Plan, which allows you to supplement your pension with personal investments. That's what we mean by the *Power of Three*. As you develop your personal retirement savings strategy, use these vehicles to your best advantage. WRS is here to assist, and offers an array of [educational materials](#) and individual counseling. 🐾



## National Retirement Security Week

During the week of October 14-20, hundreds of WRS members engaged in taking proactive steps toward good retirement outcomes during National Retirement Security Week 2018. The educational materials promoted during the week are still available at [retirement.wyo.gov](http://retirement.wyo.gov) and all are encouraged to use them! WRS won a leadership award for the effectiveness and impact of its NRSW campaign efforts.

WRS thanks all the elected leaders who lent their support to NRSW. Senator Mike Enzi co-sponsored the U.S. Senate Resolution and Governor Matt Mead proclaimed it Retirement Security Week in Wyoming.

The following 32 state legislators signed on as supporters.

Senator Ogden Driskill, SD 1  
 Senator Curt Meier, SD 3  
 Senator Fred Emerich, SD 5  
 Senator Chris Rothfuss, SD 9  
 Senator Glenn Moniz, SD 10  
 Senator Liisa Anselmi Dalton, SD 12  
 Senator John Hastert, SD 13  
 Senator Fred Baldwin, SD 14  
 Senator Bruce Burns, SD 21  
 Senator Bill Landen, SD 27  
 Senator Tara Nethercott, SD 4  
 Senator Affie Ellis, SD 8  
 Senator Eli Bebout, SD 26  
 Senator Jim Anderson, SD 28  
 Representative Dan Kirkbride, HD 4

Representative Sue Wilson, HD 7  
 Representative Bob Nicholas, HD 8  
 Representative Landon Brown, HD 9  
 Representative Cathy Connolly, HD 13  
 Representative Dan Furphy, HD 14  
 Representative Don Burkhart, Jr., HD 15  
 Representative Andy Schwartz, HD 23  
 Representative Dan Laursen, HD 25  
 Representative Jamie M. Flitner, HD 26  
 Representative Mark Kinner, HD 29  
 Representative Joe MacGuire, HD 35  
 Representative Debbie Bovee, HD 36  
 Representative Steve Harshman, HD 37  
 Representative Mike Madden, HD 40  
 Representative Bill Henderson, HD 41  
 Representative Dan Zwonitzer, HD 43  
 Representative John Freeman, HD 60 🐾

# Team Spotlight: Pension Operations Staff



*Nadine Perkins, Beth Baker, Beth Cecil, Cathy Corso, Kelli Adkison, Renee Winfrey, Rose Todd, Kathrine Patton, Marcy Stoinski, Dove Lansden, Missie Avila, Lina Kramer, Cynthia Fernandez, and Lindsie Conrad is not pictured.*

Have you ever wondered about the people behind the scenes at WRS who make sure retirees are getting their checks and active employees are getting credited for another month of service? How do they do what they do?

There are 44 employees in total at WRS and 14 of them are Pension Operations staff. On average Operations staff have 12 years at WRS. There are a few relatively new employees as well more experienced. Dove Lansden has been at WRS for thirty years and is still going strong. “When I first came to work at WRS we were human computers. All the pension benefits were calculated by hand and verified by a supervisor. Establishing a member’s highest average salary, which is used for the calculation, was very time consuming. Records for salary and months of service were kept on paper and microfiche,” said Dove.

WRS has modernized and harnessed the power of technology. The Operations staff are organized into three sections all under the management of Rose Todd, Operations Manager. “Most of my staff were drawn to working at WRS because they enjoy people and providing customer service. They value public service and want to make sure our members get the very best,” said Rose.

**Employer Relations** – Together they assist employers with the process of submitting pension contributions each pay period. “We work together to accurately post about \$1 million every day to individual member accounts and assist employers where needed,” said supervisor Renee Winfrey.

**Distributions** – Under the supervision of Cynthia Fernandez, her team takes care of executing the payroll for retirees each month along with providing customer service to our retirees whenever needed. “At \$50 million per month, it could be considered the largest payroll in the entire state,” said payroll specialist Beth Cecil.

**Member Benefits** – Under the supervision of Marcy Stoinski, there are seven people in this section. Their mission is to ensure every member’s account reflects accurate data to support the calculation of fair and equitable pension benefits for all. These are the people you talk to when you want to know where you stand with your future pension benefit.

One of the newest staff members, Lindsie Conrad, commented “This is such a small staff, and we have a big job. We all have to back each other up and also be very consistent in how we communicate to our members. It has been fascinating to learn about this function and my own personal retire-

ment planning has gotten better as a result of working here.”

“WRS has extremely long relationships with its members, sometimes from first employment to end of life,” commented Missie Avila who handles death claims as well as pension benefit counseling. The Pension Operations staff takes care of you all along the way! 🐾

**Rose Todd,**  
*Operations Manager*

**Renee Winfrey,**  
*Employer Relations Supervisor*

Kelli Adkison, *Senior Accountant*  
Cathy Corso, *Senior Accountant*  
Lina Kramer, *Senior Accountant*  
[ret-employer-relations@wyo.gov](mailto:ret-employer-relations@wyo.gov)

**Cynthia Fernandez,**  
*Distribution Supervisor*

Beth Cecil, *Payroll Specialist*  
[retirementchange@wyo.gov](mailto:retirementchange@wyo.gov)

**Marcy Stoinski,**  
*Member Benefits Supervisor*

Nadine Perkins, *Lead Benefit Specialist*  
Missie Avila, *Benefit Specialist*  
Beth Baker, *Benefit Specialist*  
Lindsie Conrad, *Benefit Specialist*  
Dove Lansden, *Benefit Specialist*  
Kathrine Patton, *Benefit Specialist*  
[wrschange@wyo.gov](mailto:wrschange@wyo.gov)



## WRS Board

### Representing the Community at Large

Michael Ceballos  
Max “Tom” Chapman III  
Keith Hay  
Laura Ladd, *Chair*  
Eric Nelson, *Vice Chair*

### Representing Public Employees

Brian Foster  
Tim Sullivan

### Representing School District Employees

Kay Watson

### Representing Higher Education Employees

Garth Shanklin

### Representing Retirees

Vicci Colgan

### Wyoming State Treasurer

The Honorable Mark Gordon

# Updates to Assumptions May Impact Your Benefit Estimate

The WRS Board made changes to the assumptions used for pension plan administration earlier in the year during its evaluation of the funding status of each pension. These adjustments have been implemented and may have an impact on benefit calculations. As such, we recommend actively employed members log into the WRS pension portal and get updated pension estimate information.

The health of a pension plan depends primarily on having reasonable assumptions and adequate contributions. Changes were made to reduce

the assumed rate of return, adjust mortality assumptions to reflect longer lifespans, and adjust wage and payroll growth assumptions to be more in-line with actual experience.

If you are close to retiring, you’ve probably gotten an estimate of your future pension benefit from WRS. Make sure you know the impact these updates will have, and incorporate that into your retirement planning. You can contact a benefit specialist at (307) 777-1977 or [wrschange@wyo.gov](mailto:wrschange@wyo.gov) for assistance. 

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## SERG — State Employee Retiree Group

SERG invites you to join them the second Monday of each month at the Red Lion Hotel in Cheyenne for a no-host lunch and to visit with your retired co-workers. If you worked for the State anytime during your career and are now retired, you are eli-

gible to join. For more information, contact Donella Marrs (307) 635-5858 or Marianne Bixler (307) 631-3622.

There may be other retiree groups. If you know of one, submit the details to WRS and we will include the information in the next newsletter. 

## Recommended Reading

We suggest you read, *When it came to retirement planning, I needed a nudge*, by Vicci Colgan who represents retirees on the WRS Board. It was published in the Wyoming Education Association [Back to School Issue 1](#) (page 17). She gives a personal and relatable account of the things she wished she had done differently for her retirement planning, and highlights ways employers can help.



## Once Again, WRS Reduces Administrative Costs for 457 Plan

The Board voted to reduce the level of administrative charges for participants of the Deferred Compensation 457 Plan effective January 1, 2019. The current annual fee of 0.27% of total assets will be reduced to 0.26%, which is equivalent to 26 cents on every \$100 of your account balance. The asset cap for administrative charges was also reduced to \$150,000 from \$182,000. The Board evaluates the amount charged for administration each year and seeks to reduce it whenever possible. 

## New Issuer for Pension Payments

Starting in January, retiree pension payments will be issued on behalf of WRS by Northern Trust's Benefit Payment Services Division. This transition will result in better service and reduced costs. If you pay state income tax, WRS will be able to withhold it from your pension payment. WRS

intends to provide state income tax withholding services early in 2019 once the initial transition is completed. More details will be coming in a letter direct mailed to retirees.

We will be testing in January, and depending on your bank's procedures you may see a credit of \$0.00 on your

bank statement. This test is necessary to ensure acceptance of the transaction by your bank. Every effort is being made to make this transition smooth. If you have any questions, contact WRS at (307) 777-1988 or [retirementchange@wyo.gov](mailto:retirementchange@wyo.gov). 



### Misrepresentation Alert

WRS has been made aware that several of our members have been contacted both at home and by phone by individuals claiming to be affiliated with the "Wyoming Retirement System" and wanting to discuss WRS benefits in the context of trying to sell other investment and retirement products.

WRS does not sell insurance or other investment products and does not visit members at their homes. WRS has taken steps to ensure that the individuals at fault identify themselves to our members and clearly indicate that they do not represent WRS. If you suspect individuals are misrepresenting themselves as employees of WRS, please contact us so we can take appropriate action. 