

Farewell from Carl Nelson

After 14 years with the San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust, I will be retiring at the end of December 2023. I love my job, but I think retirement will do just fine!

I have had the privilege to meet and work with so many great public servants during my tenure here at the Pension Trust. SLO county is a sound and solid provider of important services to County residents. The staff of the County, the SLO Court, the APCD, LAFCO, RTA. are all hard working and dedicated public servants doing beneficial things for people. Whether it is providing social services, public health, law enforcement, planning, elections or taking care of the public infrastructure for the County, our employees and retirees have done a job they can be proud of.

Providing a solid Defined Benefit pension for these employees is a job that the Board of Trustees, myself, the Pension Trust staff, and Human Resources take seriously. A decent pension is a valuable benefit that remains viable mostly just in the public sector. Defined Benefit pensions are expensive to fund, but they are a cornerstone of the compensation provided to public servants for a career of service to people. DB pensions provide a big part of the income so important to a dignified and comfortable retirement.

I will miss working with the Pension Trust staff – they are an extremely capable, knowledgeable and professional team. They truly believe in taking care of “our people” and their pensions. Apart from how I do as a pension administrator, I apparently do a really good job of hiring great people – and this is the team that I leave behind.

Who will be the new Executive Director of the Pension Trust?

The Board of Trustees govern the Pension Trust and the Executive Director reports to them. The Executive Director is responsible for administering the retirement plan and the staff that make the system work. Since the Pension Trust is just that – a “Trust” – it is independent from SLO County and exists to administer the SLO County Employees Retirement Plan on behalf of the County (and for the contracting agencies in the retirement plan such as the SLO Court). As such, the Executive Director and all the staff are employees of the Pension Trust and its Board of Trustees.

For the sake of fiduciary prudence, the Board did a nationwide internal & external search. The Board selected Katie Girardi from Oklahoma to be the new Executive Director. Katie brings strong experience in a similar size of public sector defined benefit pension system. I have high expectations for her - I should - it will soon be her signature on my pension check (figuratively speaking – we all do direct deposit nowadays).

Greetings from Katie Girardi!

I’m Katie Girardi, and I’m thrilled to dive into my role as the new Executive Director of the SLOCPT. Originally an Okie, I spent the past stretch over at the Oklahoma Municipal Retirement Fund (OkMRF), starting in 2016 as their Retirement Plan Administrator. My gig wasn’t just about numbers; I orchestrated investment portfolios, built solid client relationships, got down and dirty with actuarial studies, and made sure participants were in the know about their retirement game.

But let me tell you, life's taken a turn – I've traded the plains for the Pacific, moving to San Luis Obispo with my partner Greg and our Corgidor, Birdie. Navigating from Oklahoma to California has been an adventure, but hey, who can resist the sunshine in California? I'll learn to swap my love for a cold beer with an appreciation for Central Coast wine. When I'm not focused on helping public servants reach retirement goals, you'll find me outdoors – whether it's swinging clubs on the golf course or casting a line while fishing.

Here's to a new chapter, where I sincerely look forward to serving and earning the trust of the San Luis Obispo County retirement plan Members and Retirees. Cheers!