



The TMRS team in 2023

Happy 75th Birthday TMRS!

75 years ago, in June of 1948, a small group of intrepid Texas cities – Bryson, Denison, Grand Saline, Greenville, Lampasas, Mart, Somerville and Weimer – joined a fledgling retirement system called the Texas Municipal Retirement System. Since that very modest start, TMRS now serves 928 Texas cities and more than 210,000 city employees, retirees, and their beneficiaries.

While we may take TMRS for granted today, other retirement options were under consideration in the 1940s:

- contracting with a private insurance company,
- extending social security to municipal employees “if and when it is made available” (the Social Security Act of 1935 excluded local government employees from coverage until the 1950s), or
- having each municipality establish its own pension plan.

However, each of these options presented problems. Private insurance plans were deemed too rigid, inflexible, and expensive; social security, even if it was available to municipal employees, lacked flexibility; and individual municipal pension plans were too financially risky.

These considerations led to a 1944 amendment to the Texas

Constitution to permit the establishment of an official state-wide system to provide retirement benefits to municipal employees. In 1947, the legislature passed the TMRS Act, and, one year later, the intrepid cities joined the System. The rest, as they say, is history.

As you well know, a career in public service is more than just a job. So, too, is working at TMRS where our staff has the privilege to help you who have devoted your career to helping others. Governor Abbott expressed it well in his recognition of TMRS’ 75th anniversary:

A secure retirement is the just reward for a lifetime of honest work, and this system has - for three quarters of a century – ensured that our public servants can attain financial security... TMRS has withstood every test...although much has changed in the past seventy-five years, TMRS’ dedication to municipal employees has not.

In 1949, TMRS was called “one of the very best public employee retirement systems in the nation.” It was true then, and I’m proud to say, it’s still true today. ★

David Wescoe, Executive Director

The First Participating Cities

Here is some history about our first participating cities.

Bryson

The history of Bryson reflects the history of Texas itself. The city began life as a hub for cattlemen, then the Chicago, Rock Island and Texas Railways brought industry to town. Oil was discovered in the area in the late 19th century, which led to a population boom in the early 1900s. Bryson is now home to a vibrant community that epitomizes small town Texas charm.

Denison

Denison is located 50 miles north of Dallas, along the Oklahoma-Texas border. In 1890, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was born in a modest two-story house in downtown Denison. But the city is more than a historical footnote. It is a place of immense natural beauty. From the Dwight D. Eisenhower state park to the nearby Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge on lake Texoma, Denison is one of Texas' most beautiful small towns.



A military parade in Denison

Grand Saline

Grand Saline is located about 70 miles east of Dallas. Since the area was first settled by the Caddo and Cherokee Indians, life in Grand Saline has revolved around the large salt deposits located there. In the 1930s, up to 500 tons of salt per day were produced in the city's salt mines. This 250-million-year-old salt dome

is the largest in the United States and extends 20,000 feet below ground.

Greenville

Greenville is located about 50 miles northeast of Dallas and boasts a deep and fascinating history. In the early 20th century, the city was known as the cotton capital of the world. Mills from around the globe sought out Greenville cotton.

The city's most famous son is Audie Murphy, the most decorated American soldier in WWII. From his humble roots as a sharecropper's son, he rose to fame due to his courage in the face of unimaginable hardship.



The Greenville Opera House

Lampasas

Lampasas is located in central Texas, 70 miles northwest of Austin. Before the first European settlers, Comanches, Tonkawas and Apaches were all drawn to the area due to its natural mineral springs, which produce more than 3,000,000 gallons of water per day. Since the 1800s, Lampasas has been an agricultural hub of central Texas.

Mart

Mart is a town of 1,700 people located just east of Waco. In the early 1900s, it was one of the first communities in the area to introduce such luxuries as sidewalks, telephone lines and electricity.

This same pioneering spirit is on display at the

Mart Post Office, which is home to the mural "McClennan Looking for a Home." The mural depicts early Scottish settler, Neil McClennan traveling through Texas in the 1830s. It is painted by the celebrated artist Jose Aceves, whose works still hang in galleries across the world today.



"McClennan Looking for a Home" by Jose Aceves

Somerville

Somerville is located halfway between Austin and Houston on the idyllic shores of Somerville lake. In the 1880s, the Santa Fe Railway constructed a new line through the area and population boomed. In fact, the city is named after Albert Somerville, the first president of the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway.



*The Weimer Railroad Depot in the Early 1900s:
Photo Courtesy of texasoldphotos.com*

Weimar

Weimar is located along Highway 90, in between San Antonio and Houston. This city's name reflects its location in Texas' "German Belt," a large area in the south central part of the state that attracted German immigrants beginning in the 1830s. ★

TMRS' 75th Anniversary Honored by Governor & Texas Legislature



The TMRS team with Representative Rafael Anchia.

On February 28, Texas state Representative Rafael Anchia, former chair of the House Pensions, Investments and Financial Services Committee, introduced House Concurrent Resolution No. 66 that recognized the 75th anniversary of TMRS. The Resolution passed unanimously. Members of TMRS' Senior Staff were in attendance and acknowledged for their hard work on behalf of TMRS Members.

We are also honored to have been recognized by Governor Abbott for our many years of service.

You can read the full resolution, the Governor's recognition, and learn more about TMRS' 75th anniversary celebrations on tmrs.com/TMRS_75th_Anniversary. ★

TMRS Over the Years: Pete Krnavek



Pete Krnavek (far right) with the TMRS Information Systems team in 1998.

Pete Krnavek, Enterprise Architect, has been a pillar of TMRS for nearly 30 years. As a software engineer, he was instrumental in the development and implementation of TMRS' NextGen Pension Administration system, which is still in use today. His enthusiasm, kindness and expertise is second-to-none. Also, he has the most infectious laugh in the organization.

To celebrate our 75th year, we asked Pete, one of our longest tenured employees, to reflect on the changes he's seen during his time at TMRS.

I joined TMRS in 1995 as the 29th employee, and the 3rd member of the Information Systems Department. I am now in my 28th year with TMRS.

When I first got here, the staff was very warm and welcoming, and it felt like I was joining a family-owned business. I had come from a much larger organization with over a thousand employees, so the adjustment to such a small organization was pretty significant. It was obvious that the staff really cared about the work they were doing and cared deeply about taking care of their customers, whether that was a retiree from a little town or an employee of a major city.

The most significant change over the years has been the growth of the organization. When I started, the staff was 29 people. Now, it's 125. The Member Benefits Department, as they were known at that time, was only 11 people. Those responsibilities are now shared across 4 departments with more than 50 staff members providing significantly more service than ever imagined in 1995.

From its beginning, TMRS has maintained a culture of service to our Members and cities that has kept us very engaged in the work that we do here. We are not here to earn a paycheck. We really believe in the mission of TMRS: to provide a lifetime of security to our members and their beneficiaries. The underlying structure of the plan that was designed and built in the 1940s is more sound and relevant today than ever was.

My favorite thing about working here is that every day brings a new challenge and a new opportunity to support the organization. Whether that challenge is brought about by the introduction of new state legislation or federal tax law, or just a new way of trying to tackle a problem or improve a process, there is always opportunity to sharpen the saw. ★



The most popular man at TMRS, Pete Krnavek in 2023.



TEXAS MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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From Mainframe to Mobile



TMRS' First Computer

In the 70s, TMRS used a mainframe computer to serve Members. In 2023, you can now self serve by logging into MyTMRS using your smartphone.

On MyTMRS you can:

- ▶ Review and update your beneficiary designation
- ▶ Update your contact information
- ▶ Review your account information and service history
- ▶ View your account balance
- ▶ Run retirement estimates



To join the more than 25,000 Members who have already downloaded the TMRS app, scan the QR code to the right. ★