



The Grapevine

APRIL 2026

Representing all Fresno County retirees and their families

www.refco1.org • INCORPORATED 1978

Thursday, April 16 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.**

Donations Collected for Marjaree Mason Center

Reservations: \$25 members;
\$27 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 6, 2026. 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 6 deadline.**

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

To cancel reservations:

Call Mary Ann Rogozinski at
559-801-2171 prior to April
6. 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.



Christine Balbas

President's Message

by Christine Balbas, President

Spring Greetings to all of you! I hope your retirement is turning out to be all you hoped it would be.

We held our annual REFCO meeting on February 19, and Board members and officers who will be working on behalf of the organization for the upcoming year were confirmed on that date. We are still seeking willing volunteers for the committees

that keep the organization going. A list of our committees is included on Page 2 of this publication. If you're interested in working with us, send an email, or give us a call and let us know.

As you may recall, our monthly membership dues were increased last year, partly to allow for an increase in the number of scholarships, as well as the dollar amount granted to our kids who are attending college at Fresno State or the State Center Community College campuses. The deadline for applications just passed. We are hoping many of you reminded your students to apply! The college Financial Aid offices will determine who gets the scholarships. We do confirm that the student is a qualified relative of a REFCO member. Fingers crossed that we get lots of qualified applicants so that we can help your young family members achieve their goals!

I hope to see you at the upcoming Spring Luncheon on April 16. It will be fun!

REFCO Luncheon Sponsors Poverello House

by Patrice White, Community Outreach Coordinator

Our REFCO charitable food drive and money contributions will continue with our luncheon in April. This Month it will benefit the Marjaree Mason Center. The Marjaree Mason Center is a non-profit community agency that provides shelter to both women and children that are victims of domestic violence. They provide housing, food, clothing and other needed services in their emergency shelter, as well as longer-term safe housing. They also offer counseling, life skills and parenting classes to mothers, and education and enrichment activities to the children.

Last year, REFCO members donated over \$7,000 cash as well as 455 food items to six non-profit organizations through our luncheon donation efforts. Here is a breakdown of the donations:

Month	Agency	# of Food items	Money Donated
February	Evangel Home	51	\$609
April	Poverello House	52	\$757
July	Central Valley Honor Flight		\$1,455
September	Bulldog Pantry	146	\$605
October	Central Valley Vets	52	\$525
December	Toys for Tots	154	\$3,307
TOTAL		455	\$7,258

Thank you for your generous support!



OFFICERS

President.....Christine Balbas
 1st Vice President..... James Hackett
 2nd Vice President..... DeAnn VonBerg
 Recording Secretary..... Kelly Woodard
 Membership Secretary Vacant
 Treasurer..... Linda Robinson
 Assistant Treasurer.....Mary Ann Rogozinski
 Immediate Past PresidentDebbie Blankenship

DIRECTORS

Dawn Gallegos, Judy Lemos, Nicole Ohanian, Irene Romero,
 Karen Sebilian, Patrice White, Sue Wirt

RETIREMENT BOARDLaura Basua, James Hackett (alt)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy.....James Hackett
 By-LawsJames Hackett
 CRCEADelegate: James Hackett, Alternate: Chris Balbas
 Community Outreach Patrice White
 DJ..... Richard Montanez
 Employee Benefits.....DeAnn VonBerg
 Events.....DeAnn VonBerg
 Finance & Budget Linda Robinson
 Grapevine/NewsletterChristine Balbas
 Health..... Michele May
 Luncheon Reservations..... Mary Ann Rogozinski
 Luncheon Master of CeremoniesKen Smith
 Nominating.....Judy Lemos
 Parliamentarian Debbie Blankenship
 Scholarship Liaison Julie Hornback
 Sunshine..... Dawn Gallegos
 Technology Irene Romero
 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
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.

2026 REFCO EVENTS CALENDAR

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

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
8 BOARD MTG	12 BOARD MTG 19 LUNCHEON	12 BOARD MTG
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
9 BOARD MTG 16 LUNCHEON	14 BOARD MTG	11 BOARD MTG
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
9 BOARD MTG 16 LUNCHEON	13 BOARD MTG	3 LUNCHEON 10 BOARD MTG
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
8 BOARD MTG 15 LUNCHEON	12 BOARD MTG	3 LUNCHEON

FCERA NEWS

Retirement Board Approves a 2.5% COLA Increase

by Laura Basua, Elected Retiree Trustee

At its regular Board meeting February 4, 2026, the Fresno County Employees' Retirement Association ("FCERA") Board of Retirement approved a 2.5% cost of living increase ("COLA") for retirees and beneficiaries in all tiers except tiers 4 and 5, effective for retirements between April 2, 2024 and April 1, 2026.

This action was taken in accordance with Government Code section 31870.1 and on December 21, 2025, the average annual change in the Consumer Price index for the West Region was 2.67 %, rounded to 2.5% (the nearest ½%).

Anytime a COLA is less than 3.0% the difference is taken from the COLA bank, if available. Since last year's COLA was 3.0%, there was no excess COLA banked in that year, so only retirees who retired prior to April 2, 2024, will receive a 3.0% COLA adjustment due to available COLA bank balances.

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

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 (irromero@refco1.org). We may also have an incorrect email address for you. Please send your current email address to REFCO.emails@gmail.com, and let us know that you're not getting the emailed *The Grapevine*.

Business Sponsor Membership

You can advertise your business to REFCO members by becoming a REFCO Business Sponsor Member. Business Sponsor members receive a free advertisement in each *Grapevine* and may attend REFCO functions at the regular member rate. Feel free to share this information with any business you think would benefit from a sponsor membership. Request information by emailing REFCO.emails@gmail.com; be sure to include a follow-up phone number contact.



2026 REFCO LUNCHEON DATES

All luncheons are at Pardini's. Doors open at 10:00. Lunch served at 11:30.

February 19, 2026 - Annual Meeting Luncheon

April 16, 2026 - Spring Luncheon

July 16, 2026 - Summer Veteran Recognition Luncheon

September 3, 2026 - Bingo Bash Luncheon

October 15, 2026 - Health and Wellness Fair Luncheon

December 3, 2026 - Holiday Christmas Party Luncheon

Event Updates

by DeAnn VonBerg, Events Chair

Our Spring Luncheon on April 16th features a Celtic Duo consisting of Carl and Kathryn Johnsen of Rose Tree. They will be performing before lunch is served from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Make sure to get your reservation and money in before the April 6th deadline. Plan on coming in early to get your table and listen to some beautiful music.

NEW this year, based on inquiries by members, we will provide a Member Bulletin Board which will allow members to post information that may be of interest to our members, such as volunteer opportunities, fundraisers, senior services and community events. Guidelines will be available at our April luncheon and posted on our website when approved by the REFCO Board. Any questions can be [emailed to refcoevents@gmail.com](mailto:refcoevents@gmail.com).

In case you missed it, the Christmas Luncheon Goodie Bag contained a magnet with all of our 2026 luncheons listed. Above is a copy for your reference. If you come to one of our luncheons, you can get a magnet. Mark your calendars for the rest of the year. The deadline for registration is always the Monday of the week before the luncheon. We hope to see you soon.

February Luncheon Raffle Winners

50/50: Marsha Allen, \$269

Jacks In the Bag: Debbie Blankenship, \$10

Noble CU Gift Cards, \$25: Joe Lopez, Peter J. Rivera, Lynn Nelson, Jon Langworthy

REFCO, \$20: Linda Robinson, Jessie Ciancetti, Ann Lamb, Herbert Peterson, Sally Lopez

Food Drive: Dick Estel

Your Family Is Our Family



Where you're all
worth more.

Fresno | Clovis | Madera | Selma
559-252-5000 NobleCU.com

Federally Insured by NCUA



NOBLE
CREDIT UNION

Congratulations, New Retirees

through February 2026

RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE	RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE
Mabol Barbosa Flores	DSS	29.1847	Joseph R Martinez	DSS	24.3123
Rosemary Barela	VMC	13.9699	Ervin Mathis	Sheriff	23.7562
David F Barnett	Prob Juv	31.7151	Brian Melikian	County Counsel	37.4744
Judy L Becerra	DSS	6.2849	Diana C Monopoli	AC/TTC	5.7096
Anthony C Beltran	DSS	26.7671	Leticia Moreno	Probation	12.8658
Susan L Bishop	HR - Risk	10.389	Rodolfo R Perez	Sheriff	23.0877
Michael V Bowman	Facility	15.5979	Jeffrey Perkins	Fleet	11.1041
Subenie Bruton	Sheriff	19.1014	Douglas V Poochigian	Pub Health	6.7014
Denise Dale Butler	Pub Health	37.0658	Diane B Prosser	Behav Hlth	13.7945
Gina Chacon	DSS	24.8	Heather Allyn Redmond-Archer	Behav Hlth	23.1233
Tou Chang	Prob Juv	21.5725	Manuel G Reyes	DSS	21.0904
Katherine A Clausen de Contreras	Agri	3.6576	Analinda Polanco Reyes	Behav Hlth	10.8877
Jennifer S Day	Pub Health	20.1288	Elsa Rios	DSS	30.4877
Gerald L Finney	DSS	22.0301	Delia Rivera-Sandoval	Comm Health	13.0788
Maria De La Luz Gonzalez	DSS	25.0427	Elva N Rodriguez-Nelson	DSS	24.5808
Eric Hedlund	ITSD	26.1151	Thomas R Sayer	Roads	19.7151
Richard U Hernandez Jr	DSS	21.9068	Jeffery James Scott	Payroll	16.1068
Leonard Herrera	Agri	3.5616	Sammie L Simonic	DSS	10.1781
Lisa M Hobbs	DSS	10.1973	Harold W Sohrweide	ITSD	6.8775
Kerry Hohenbrink	ITSD	27.1699	Latrice Stokes	Sheriff	19.3315
David W Huls	Child Sup	31.5616	Elizabeth A Stone	Behav Hlth	14.6849
Octavio Jauregui	Probation	6.0712	Larry W Swain	Sheriff	23.589
Julia Lynn Jimenez	Sheriff	13.8028	Todd E Talent	Sheriff	26.611
Ruth Johnson	DSS	37.4341	Mark E Thornton	Library	26.5857
Martha Jue	DSS	20.5541	Tina B Torres	DSS	37.1616
Judy Ann Keel	Facility	12.6274	Dennis D Verzosa	DA - Crim	20.0274
Sherri Lynn Kephart	PW&P	20.937	Sabrina S Williams	Probation	3.1781
Brian Klassen	Sheriff	31.0219	Eddie Samuel Wirawan	AC/TTC	4.737
Margaret Ann Koontz	DSS	12.8439	Her Xiong	DSS	26.2733
Carolyn Kornoff	Superior Ct	3.2082	Dennis Bruce Yamada	Pub Defender	23.5541
Fernando Macias	Sheriff	25.3096	Xiong P Yang	DSS	26.7288
Teri A Marquez	DSS	16.0411	Brian C Young	Sheriff Jail	1.8392

IN MEMORIAM

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

Allene J Kahl
Kathleen Elia
Patricia A. Hurtado
Geraldine Castillo-Gilstrap

George W Davis
Julie M Grant
Surain S Songer
Troy Whitlow

Alfonso B Ward
Dianne Bane
Jennifer B. Miller
Glynmary Bateman

Raymond H Calloway
Alice M Michel

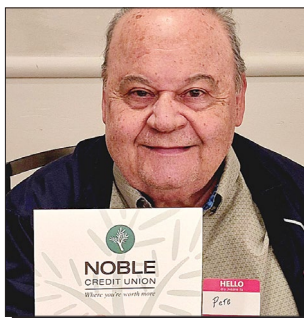
February Luncheon Highlights



Congratulations!



Raffle Winners (for a complete list see page 3)





Think You Missed Your Chance? Think Again!

by Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.

As you are probably aware, members used to be limited to enrolling in dental and vision benefits in the Fall during open enrollment. **We are now excited to announce that Dental and Vision benefits are available for enrollment year-round!** While plans still have a one-year commitment, you have the flexibility to begin mid-year as needed. We are thrilled to be able to make this meaningful improvement. Questions about eligibility? Reach out to our office for more information!

Did open enrollment pass you by in the hustle and bustle of the holidays? Do you no longer have your 2026 Benefits Guide? Wondering how

to add plans throughout the year? Our website – www.pgagencies.com/REFCO has copies of the annual benefits guide, helpful links, and online enrollment information. ***Be sure to check regularly as we prepare to roll out exciting new benefit options and discount plans for members.***

Our team is available year-round to assist you by phone or email. You can connect with us during our regular office hours, **Monday–Friday, 7:00 AM–4:00 PM.**

Phone: 800-511-9065

Email: REFCO@pgagencies.com

Website: www.pgagencies.com/REFCO

Affiliate:

 **PACIFIC GROUP AGENCIES**



AMBA