



THE CONTRA COSTA \$100,000 PENSION CLUB HAS ITS FIRST \$300,000 MEMBER

Martinez, CA (May 11, 2012) – Kris Hunt, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association (CoCoTAX) has announced that the membership in the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association (CCCERA) \$100,000 Pension Club has its first \$300,000 member. CoCoTAX has decided to name this pension category in honor of its first recipient Chief Craig Bowen of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

The data came from the March 1, 2012 CCCERA pension payroll with CoCoTAX calculating new pension numbers with the 3% Cost of Living Adjustment granted to the pensioners on April 1 (we confirmed that all of those on the list would be qualified for the 3% COLA.) Ms. Hunt stated "It's nice to see that someone's income is growing in this economy. "

The Contra Costa \$100,000 Pension Club is comprised of those retirees/beneficiaries of CCCERA who are receiving pensions of \$100,000 or more which means they receive more than \$8,333 per month. In contrast, the average monthly Social Security benefit is \$1,229.

In July of 2009 a lawsuit in Contra Costa County confirmed that CCCERA retiree information could be made public. At that time there were 432 recipients of \$100,000 or more. In just 3 years this group has grown to 645. While this select group is less than 10% of CCCERA's pensioners they receive 26.3% of the pension dollars.

Craig Bowen, retired chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire District, has retained the number 1 spot since the list's inception. In fact, firefighters make up 40% of the "Club" (268 out of 645) with Contra Costa Consolidated Fire Protection District (ConFire) firefighters filling 180 of the Club membership slots.

Ms. Hunt stated "ConFire recently announced it needs a parcel tax and the growing pension cost is clearly one of the factors involved." David Twa, Contra Costa County Administrator, speaking at last month's CoCoTAX meeting revealed that ConFire's benefits cost 103% of salary. By way of comparison, private sector benefit costs average in the 33-35% range.

For more information, contact Kris Hunt, Executive Director, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association at 925-289-6900.

ABOUT CoCoTAX - Founded in 1937, CoCoTAX is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization comprised of taxpayers who live or do business in Contra Costa County. CoCoTAX brings the taxpayers' perspective to the governmental scene.