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St. Cloud  
Police Relief Association

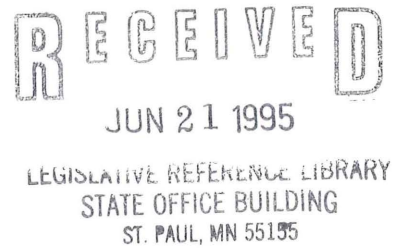


Annual Actuarial Valuation  
December 31, 1994

Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company  
Actuaries and Consultants

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1994

CONSULTANTS' REPORT



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Appendix I Financial Principles and Operational Techniques

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June 15, 1995

Board of Trustees  
St. Cloud Police Relief Association  
St. Cloud, Minnesota

Submitted in this report are the results of the December 31, 1994 actuarial valuation of the assets, actuarial values and contribution requirements associated with the benefits provided by the St. Cloud Police Relief Association.

The valuation results contained in Section A provide the actuarial information needed to determine the employer's "minimum obligation" effective January 1, 1996. Section A also contains comments regarding the valuation results.

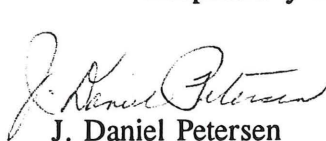
The valuation was based upon information furnished by the Association concerning benefits, financial transactions, active members, terminated members, retirants and beneficiaries. Data was checked for year to year consistency but was not otherwise audited by us. This information is summarized in Section B.

A description of the actuarial funding method and the risk experience assumptions used is contained in Section C. The economic risk experience assumptions, as well as the actuarial funding method to be used, are established by state law.

Information needed to comply with Statement No. 5 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board is contained in Section D.

The actuarial valuation was prepared using generally accepted actuarial principles and practices based upon the methods, assumptions, summary of plan provisions and the member and financial data described in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

  
J. Daniel Petersen

  
Mary Ann Vitale

## **SECTION A**

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### **Valuation Results**

## Comments

### **Economic Assumptions and Financing Method**

The economic assumptions of 5% annual investment return and 3-1/2% annual salary increases are established by state law. State law also specifies that the annual minimum obligation of the municipality shall be determined by adding (i) the employer normal cost percent times covered payroll to (ii) the level dollar amount required to amortize the unfunded actuarial accrued liability by December 31, 2010.

It is worth noting that when the same assumptions and methods are applied to plans which differ in nature, the valuation results may not be comparable. Caution should be exercised when attempting to assess the financial condition of one Association relative to another on the basis of valuation results produced using the assumptions and methods mandated by state law.

## CONTRIBUTION RATE TO PROVIDE BENEFITS

### Member portion & Employer portion

Effective January 1, 1996

<u>Contributions for</u>	<u>If Paid Equally Throughout Year</u>		
	<u>Normal Cost</u> <u>% of Active</u> <u>Payroll for 1996</u>	+	<u>UAAL Dollars</u>
Normal cost of annuities:			
* Age & service: to members	19.79%		
Age & service: to survivors	3.87		
Disability	2.35		
Death before retirement	2.28		
Refunds of member contributions	<u>0.25</u>		
Total Normal Cost	28.54%		
Amortization of unfunded actuarial accrued liabilities (UAAL) (15 year level dollar payment)			
Retired lives			\$364,984
Active members			<u>180,085</u>
Total			545,069
Total Cost of Benefits	28.54%	+	\$545,069
Member contributions	8.25%		
COMPUTED EMPLOYER RATE:			
(a) If Paid Equally Throughout Year	20.29%	+	\$545,069
(B) IF PAID AT CALENDAR YEAR END	20.79%	+	\$558,530

\* Includes 1.86% for medical insurance for current retired members.

## Present Actuarial Condition

The Association's accrued actuarial assets were in excess of \$9.3 million on December 31, 1994 -- a considerable sum of money if unencumbered and allocated among a small group of persons. This is not the case with the Association's assets.

The following schedule puts the \$9.3 million into perspective by showing the relationship between accrued actuarial assets, actuarial accrued liabilities, and the number of persons with actual and potential claims on the Association's assets.

	<u>Valuation Assets</u>	<u>Actuarial Accrued Liabilities</u>	<u>Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liabilities</u>	<u>Percent Funded</u>
Retirants and Beneficiaries				
Retired Members (29)		\$11,391,552		
Surviving Spouses (11)		1,633,512		
Surviving Children (0)		<u>0</u>		
Total (40)	\$9,142,720	\$13,025,064	\$3,882,344	70.2%
Deferred Members (0)	0	0	0	0.0
Active Members (6)	<u>195,682</u>	<u>2,111,254</u>	<u>1,915,572</u>	9.3
Total	\$9,338,402	\$15,136,318	\$5,797,916	61.7%

Actuarial accrued liabilities represent the value, computed as of December 31, 1994 of:

- (i) retirement allowances likely to be paid the 40 retirants and beneficiaries; and
- (ii) the contributions assumed to have been made for the 6 active members from entry into the plan until December 31, 1994.

The value of retirement allowances likely to be paid the 40 retirants and beneficiaries, discounted for investment earnings and mortality, was computed to be \$13,025,064 as of December 31, 1994. To put this amount in perspective, the \$13,025,064, together with investment earnings, will just be sufficient to pay the 40 retirants and beneficiaries their allowances for their remaining lifetimes. This assumes the 40 retirants and beneficiaries live and die according to the assumed mortality and the \$13,025,064 is invested to yield an average annual return of 5.0% over the remaining lifetimes of the retirants and beneficiaries.

With respect to the active members, the actuarial accrued liability of \$2,111,254 represents the amount that would have been accumulated by December 31, 1994. This assumes the normal cost (which is expressed as a level percentage of pay) had been contributed from the date of hire until December 31, 1994 for the 6 actives, and that these amounts had earned 5.0% interest. It also assumes that the members in the past have lived, died, withdrawn, retired and received salary increases according to the actuarial assumptions and benefit provisions shown in this report.

### Historical Funding Ratio Schedule (\$ in thousands)

Valuation Date December 31	Actuarial Accrued Liabilities	Valuation Assets	Percent Funded
1985	\$ 9,487	\$4,704	49.6%
1986	9,777	5,400	55.2
1987	10,386	5,966	57.4
1988	11,116	6,553	59.0
1989	11,991	7,208	60.1
1990	12,649	7,499	59.3
1991#	14,295	8,142	57.0
1992	14,179	8,557	60.4
1993	14,377	9,407	65.4
1994	15,136	9,338	61.7

# After change in methodology.

## Computed Contributions - Comparative Schedule

<b>Year Ended December 31</b>		<b>Total Normal Cost as a Percent of Valuation Payroll*</b>	<b>Contribution For Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liabilities</b>
<b>Valuation</b>	<b>Fiscal</b>		
1985	1987	34.04%	\$338,209
1986	1988	33.93	316,656
1987	1989	34.04	327,729
1988	1990	36.18	347,275
1989	1991	36.00	374,489
1990	1992	44.10	415,863
1991	1993#	28.74	513,622
1992	1994	28.92	486,568
1993	1995	29.22	447,436
1994	1996	28.54	545,069

\* Includes employee contributions.

# After change in methodology.

## Contribution for Calendar Year Effective January 1, 1996

For any period of time the percent-of-payroll contribution rate is converted to dollars. The amount of dollars for any calendar year depends upon the results of the last actuarial valuation, and the timing of contributions within the year. The later the contribution date, the greater the dollar amount will be.

The municipality's dollar contribution for the year may be determined as follows:

(1)	Estimated covered payroll for 1996		\$_____
(2)	Total normal cost % from page A-2		28.54%
(3)	Total normal cost (Line 1 times line 2)		\$_____
(4)	_____ x 1.035 1994 Administrative expenses paid from the Special Fund		_____
(5)	Amortization payment on UAAL from page A-2		545,069
(6)	Total contributions required (Line 3 plus line 4 plus line 5)		_____
(7)	Employee contributions (Line 1 times 8%)		\$_____
(8)	(a) State amortization aid based on 12/31/78 UAAL of \$3,517,464	\$52,938	
	(b) State amortization aid based on 1984 legislation	<u>9,284</u>	
	(c) Total State amortization aid		62,222
(9)	Estimated insurance premium aid		_____
(10)	Estimated total contributions from other sources (Line 7 plus line 8 plus line 9)		_____
(11)	Employer's Minimum Obligation if payment is made in equal installments throughout the year (Line 6 minus line 10)		\$_____
(12)	EMPLOYER'S MINIMUM OBLIGATION IF PAYMENT IS MADE IN TWO EQUAL INSTALLMENTS, JULY 30 & DECEMBER 30 (Line 11 times 1.00247)		\$_____

## **SECTION B**

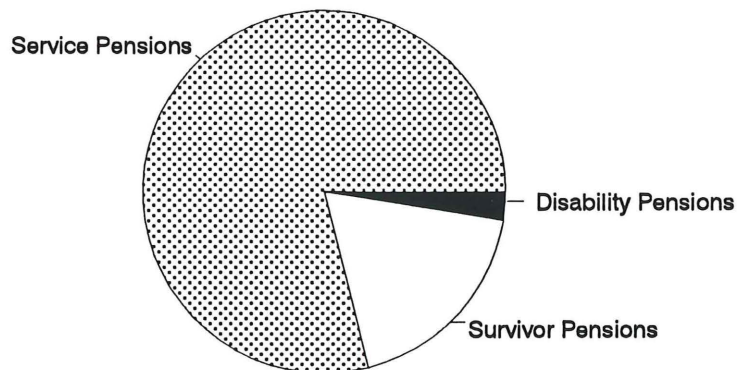
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### **Valuation Data and Summary of Benefit Provisions**

## Retirants and Beneficiaries December 31, 1994

### By Type of Annuity Being Paid

<u>Type of Annuity Being Paid</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Monthly Amounts</u>	<u>Computed Actuarial Accrued Liabilities</u>
Retirants receiving:			
Age & service	28	\$45,724.32	\$10,818,456
Disability	<u>1</u>	<u>1,464.48</u>	<u>573,096</u>
		47,188.80	11,391,552
Totals	29		
Beneficiaries receiving:			
Spouse	11	10,739.52	1,633,512
Child	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	11	10,739.52	1,633,512
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Totals	40	\$57,928.32	\$13,025,064



Monthly Amount Paid by Benefit

## Retirants and Beneficiaries December 31, 1994

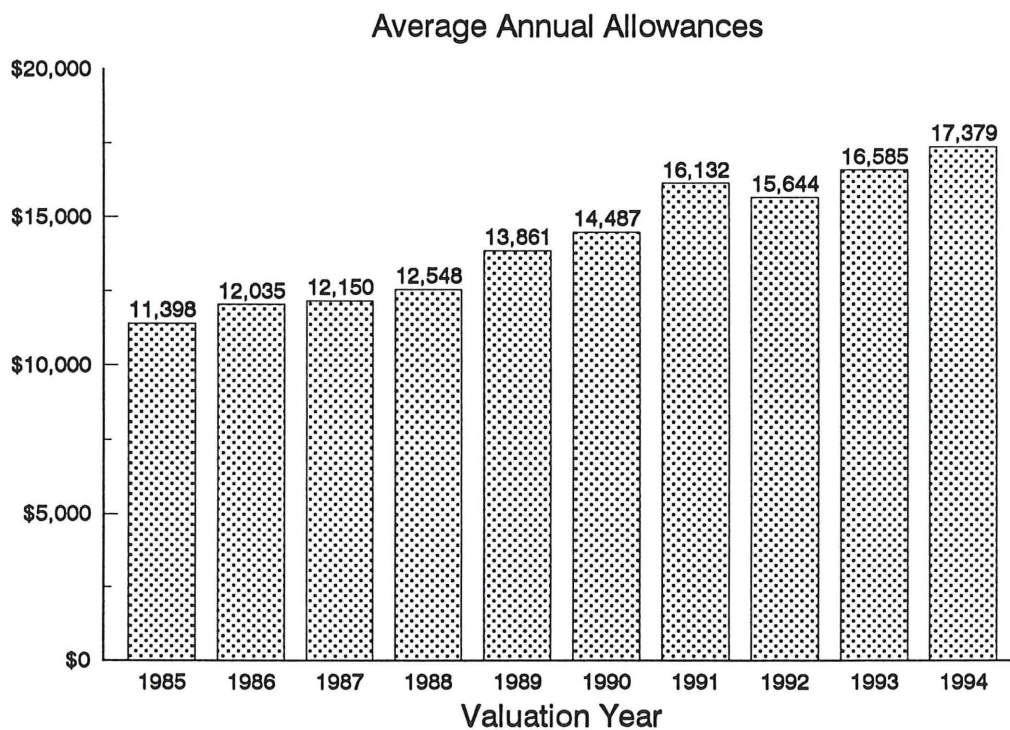
### By Attained Ages

Attained Ages	Number		
	Age & Service	Disability	Death Before Retirement
45-49		1	1
50-54	8		
55-59	8	1	
60-64	6		1
65-69	2	1	
70-74	7		
75-79	1		
80-84	2		
100 & Over	1		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

## Retirants and Beneficiaries Added to and Removed from Rolls

### Comparative Statement

<u>Valuation Date December 31</u>	<u>No. Added to Rolls</u>	<u>No. Removed from Rolls</u>	<u>Rolls End of Year No.</u>	<u>Annual Allowances</u>	<u>Discounted Value of Total Allowances</u>
1985	2	1	30	\$341,954	\$ 5,191,224
1986	1	2	29	349,031	5,335,884
1987	5	2	32	388,795	6,160,572
1988	3	1	34	426,627	6,898,332
1989	1	1	34	471,279	7,611,864
1990	7	2	39	564,982	9,636,756
1991	1	4	36	580,764	10,721,520
1992	1	1	39	610,126	11,085,036
1993	2	3	38	630,244	11,421,060
1994	3	1	40	695,140	13,025,064



**Active Members December 31, 1994**  
**By Attained Age and Years of Service**

Attained Age	Years of Service to Valuation Date							Totals	
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30 Plus	No.	Valuation Payroll
45-49					2	1		3	\$113,424
50-54					1			1	37,808
55-59							1	1	37,808
61							1	1	37,808
<b>Totals</b>					<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$226,848</b>

*While not used in the financial computations, the following group averages are computed and shown because of their general interest.*

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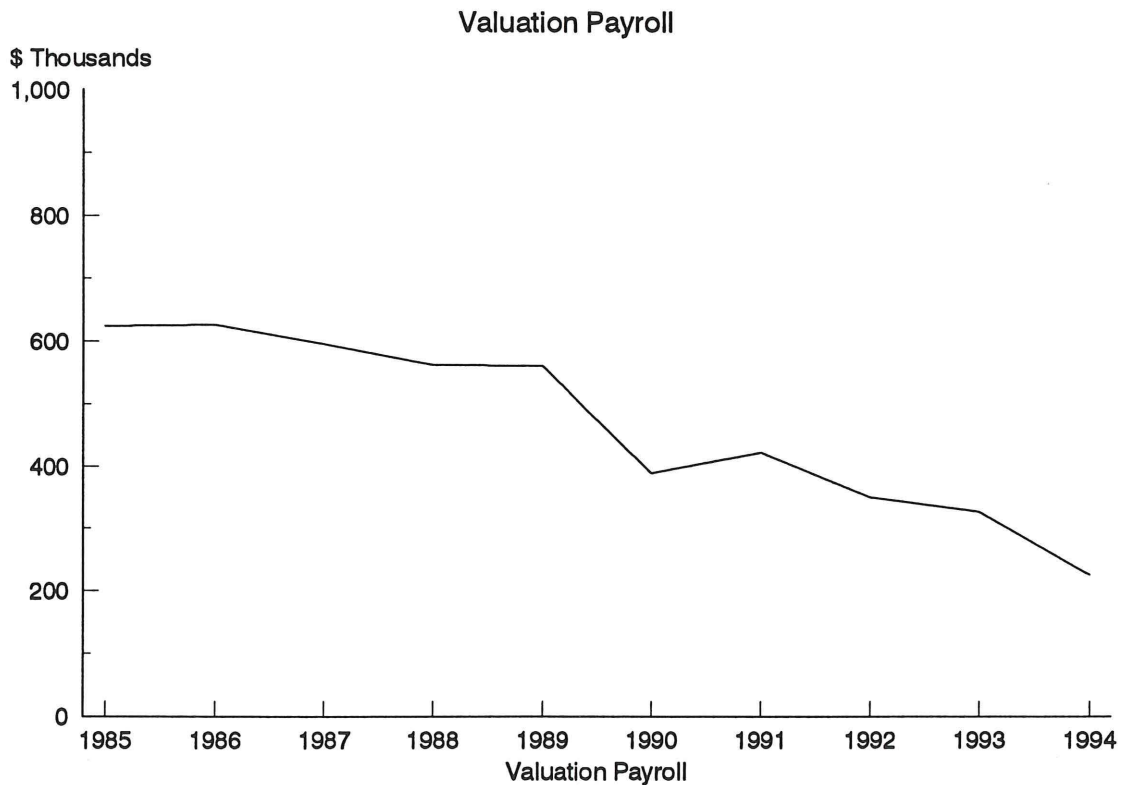
**Group Averages:**

Age: 51.7 years  
Service: 27.9 years  
Annual Pay: \$37,808

## Comparative Schedule Of Active Members

<u>Valuation Date December 31</u>	<u>Active Members</u>	<u>Valuation Payroll</u>	<u>Average</u>			
			<u>Age</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Pay</u>	<u>% Incr.</u>
1985	25	\$623,700	45.3 yrs.	20.9 yrs.	\$24,948*	(0.9)%
1986	24	625,824	45.8	21.2	26,076	4.5
1987	21	595,224	46.2	22.3	28,344	8.7
1988	19	562,704	47.3	23.3	29,616	4.5
1989	18	561,600	48.1	24.1	31,200	5.3
1990	12	389,808	48.1	24.0	32,484	4.1
1991	12	422,196	49.1	25.0	35,183	8.3
1992	10	351,240	49.8	25.9	35,124*	(0.2)
1993	9	327,564	50.6	26.4	36,396	3.6
1994	6	226,848	51.7	27.9	37,808	3.9

\* Reported pay used in the previous valuation was based on an estimate provided by the Association. Actual pay was less.



## **Brief Summary (12/31/94) of Benefit Provisions**

### **Evaluated and/or Considered**

#### **AGE & SERVICE RETIREMENT**

*Eligibility.* 20 years of service and 50 years of age.

*Amount.* For first 20 years of service, 35/75 of base pay. For each year in excess of 20, an additional 1/75 is added up to a maximum of 42/75 of base pay for 27 or more years of service.

**PAY USED FOR PLAN PURPOSES.** For benefit determination purposes, "base pay" means the salary of a first grade patrolman for the second month of the previous fiscal year. For contribution purposes, it means the present base pay of a first grade patrolman.

#### **DISABILITY**

*Eligibility.* Permanently disabled to the extent that unable to perform duties of police officer before being eligible for age & service retirement.

*Amount.* 36/75 of base pay.

#### **MEMBER'S DEATH WHILE ACTIVE, OR IN DEFERRED STATUS, OR RETIRED**

*Eligibility.*

*Spouse.* Legally married to member one year before separation from service and residing with member at time of death. Benefits terminate upon remarriage.

*Child.* Younger than 18.

*Amount.*

*Spouse.* 24/75 of base pay.

*Child.* 6/75 of base pay. Children's maximum is 12/75 if spouse is receiving or 36/75 if no spouse is receiving.

**VESTED DEFERRED.** 20 years of service and separated before age 50. Payment benefit of 40/75 base pay. Payment beginning is deferred to attainment of age 50.

**POST-RETIREMENT ADJUSTMENTS.** Each time base pay is changed, payments to all benefit recipients are simultaneously changed by the same percent that base pay is changed.

**MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS.** 8.25% of base pay. 75% of total member contributions is refundable, without interest, if no monthly benefit is payable upon separation from service.

**MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE.** For retirants up to age 65, \$228.78 per month if they are single or \$514.91 per month if family coverage is required.

**LUMP SUM PAYMENT AT RETIREMENT.** \$5,000 after 20 years service and age 50 or \$6,000 after 25 years service and age 50.

## **SECTION C**

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### **Valuation Methods and Assumptions**

## Valuation Methods and Assumptions

The Entry Age Normal Cost method was used to determine the normal cost of all benefits. The rate of investment return (interest) as required by state law used in making the valuation was 5.0 percent per annum, compounded annually. Age & service retirement was assumed to occur at age 56, attained age if older.

### Mortality Table\*

Sample Ages	Single Life Values: Present Value of \$1 Monthly				Future Life Expectancy (Years)	
	Level		Increasing			
	For Life		3.5% Yearly			
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
45	\$177.21	\$189.58	\$280.82	\$314.75	29.50	34.00
50	163.12	177.21	246.55	280.82	25.20	29.50
55	147.50	163.12	212.60	246.55	21.16	25.20
60	130.52	147.50	179.49	212.60	17.42	21.16
65	112.87	130.52	148.28	179.49	14.05	17.42
70	95.20	112.87	119.70	148.28	11.09	14.05
75	77.77	95.20	93.83	119.70	8.52	11.09
80	61.71	77.77	71.69	93.83	6.39	8.52

\* UP-1984 Table set forward 2 years for males and set back 3 years for females.

### Sample Rates of Separating from Active Employment Before Retirement, Death or Disability

Sample Ages	% of Active Members Separating within Next Year
20	1.50%
25	1.25
30	1.00
35	0.75
40	0.50
45	0.25
50+	0.00

## Pay Adjustment Factor Used To Project Current Pays

<u>Sample Ages</u>	<u>Present Pay Resulting in Pay of \$1,000 at Age 60</u>	<u>Present Increase in Pay During Next Year</u>
20	\$ 253	3.5%
25	300	3.5
30	356	3.5
35	423	3.5
40	503	3.5
45	597	3.5
50	709	3.5
55	842	3.5
60	1,000	3.5

Use of the pay adjustment factor illustrated above is required by state law.

## Anticipated Disability Retirements

<u>Sample Ages</u>	<u>% of Active Members Becoming Disabled within Next Year</u>
20	0.08%
25	0.08
30	0.08
35	0.08
40	0.20
45	0.26
50	0.49
55	0.89

## **SECTION D**

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### **The Pension Benefit Obligation and Certain Other Disclosures Required by Statement No. 5 of The Governmental Accounting Standards Board**

## Pension Benefit Obligation

The amount shown below as the "pension benefit obligation" is a standardized disclosure measure of the present value of pension benefits, adjusted for the effects of projected salary increases, estimated to be payable in the future as a result of employee service to date. The measure is the actuarial present value of credited projected benefits and is intended to (i) help users assess the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis, (ii) assess progress being made in accumulating sufficient assets to pay benefits when due, and (iii) allow for comparisons among public employee retirement plans. The measure is independent of the actuarial funding method used to determine contributions to the plan.

The pension benefit obligation was determined as part of an actuarial valuation of the plan as of December 31, 1994. Significant actuarial assumptions used in determining the pension benefit obligation include (a) a rate of return on the investment of present and future assets of 5.0% per year compounded annually, (b) projected salary increases of 3.5% per year compounded annually, attributable to inflation, and (c) the assumption that benefits will increase 3.5% per year after retirement.

At December 31, 1994, the unfunded pension benefit obligation was \$5,739,473 determined as follows:

### Pension Benefit Obligation:

Retirants and beneficiaries currently receiving benefits and terminated employees not yet receiving benefits	\$13,025,064
Current employees --	
Accumulated employee contributions including allocated investment income	260,909
Employer financed - vested	1,727,987
- non-vested	<u>0</u>
Total Pension Benefit Obligation	\$15,013,960
Net assets available for benefits, at cost (market value was \$9,466,231)	<u>9,274,487</u>
Unfunded Pension Benefit Obligation	<u>\$ 5,739,473</u>

The total pension benefit obligation as of January 1, 1994 was \$14,185,027. During the year, the plan experienced a net change of \$828,933 in the pension benefit obligation.

## Contributions Required and Contributions Made

The Association's funding policy provides for periodic employer contributions at actuarially determined rates that, expressed as percentages of annual covered payroll, are designed to accumulate sufficient assets to pay benefits when due. The normal cost and actuarial accrued liability are determined using an entry age actuarial funding method. Unfunded actuarial accrued liabilities are being amortized as a level dollar amount over a period of 15 years.

During the year ended December 31, 1994 contributions totaling \$689,878 -- \$667,859 employer and \$22,019 employee -- were made in accordance with contribution requirements determined by an actuarial valuation of the plan as of December 31, 1992. The employer contributions consisted of \$72,601 for normal cost and \$595,258 for amortization of the unfunded actuarial accrued liability. Employer contributions represented 190.1% of covered payroll.

Significant actuarial assumptions used to compute contribution requirements were the same as those used to compute the standardized measure of the pension benefit obligation.

## Computed Contribution Comparative Schedule

Fiscal Year Dec. 31	Valuation Date Dec. 31	Contribution Rates		Valuation Payroll	Dollar Contribution For Fiscal Year	
		Normal Cost % of Valuation Payroll	UAAL Dollars		Computed	Actual
1987	1985	25.79%	\$338,209	\$623,700	\$499,061	\$582,557
1988	1986	25.68	316,656	625,824	477,368	576,065
1989	1987	25.79	327,729	595,224	481,237	567,313
1990	1988	27.93	347,275	562,704	504,438	539,905
1991	1989	27.75	374,489	561,600	530,333	580,220
1992	1990	35.85	415,863	389,808	555,609	514,692
1993	1991*	20.49	513,622	422,196	600,130	708,269
1994	1992	20.67	486,568	351,240	559,169	667,859
1995	1993	20.97	447,436	327,564	516,126	
1996	1994	20.29	545,069	226,848	591,096	

\* After change in methodology.

## Required Supplementary Information

### Analysis of Funding Progress

Val'n Date Dec. 31	(1) Net Assets Available for Benefits	(2) Pension Benefit Obligation (PBO)	(3) Percent Funded (1)/(2)	(4) Unfunded PBO (2)-(1)	(5) Annual Covered Payroll	(5) Unfunded PBO as a % of Covered Payroll (4)/(5)
1987	\$6,065,626	\$10,086,767	60.1%	\$4,021,141	\$595,224	675.6%
1988	6,704,895	10,845,100	61.8	4,140,205	562,704	735.8
1989	7,259,614	11,784,297	61.6	4,524,683	561,600	805.7
1990	7,509,569	12,505,902	60.0	4,996,333	389,808	1,281.7
1991	7,837,527	14,043,724	55.8	6,206,197	422,196	1,470.0
1992	8,237,868	13,959,793	59.0	5,721,925	351,240	1,629.1
1993	9,239,703	14,185,027	65.1	4,945,324	327,564	1,509.7
1994	9,274,487	15,013,960	61.8	5,739,473	226,848	2,530.1

Analysis of the dollar amounts of net assets available for benefits, pension benefit obligation, and unfunded pension benefit obligation in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the net assets available for benefits as a percentage of the pension benefit obligation provides one indication of the plan's funded status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage over time indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan. The unfunded pension benefit obligation and annual covered payroll are both affected by inflation. Expressing the unfunded pension benefit obligation as a percentage of annual covered payroll approximately adjusts for the effects of inflation and aids analysis of the progress being made in accumulating sufficient assets to pay benefits when due. Generally, the smaller this percentage, the stronger the plan.

## APPENDICES

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## **Appendix I**

### **Financial Principles and Operational Techniques**

*Promises Made, and Eventually Paid.* As each year is completed, the plan in effect hands an "IOU" to each member then acquiring a year of service credit -- the "IOU" says: "The Pension Plan owes you a portion of your retirement benefits, payments to be made in cash, commencing when you qualify for retirement."

The related key financial questions are: Which generation of taxpayers contributes the money to cover the IOU? The present taxpayers, who receive the benefit of the member's present year of service? Or the future taxpayers, who happen to be in town paying taxes at the later time when the IOU becomes a cash demand?

A sound principle of sound retirement plan financing is to have this year's taxpayers contribute the money to cover the IOUs being handed out this year. By following this principle, THE CONTRIBUTION RATE WILL REMAIN APPROXIMATELY LEVEL FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION -- our children and grandchildren will contribute the same percents of active payroll we contribute now.

### **A Pension Plan Becomes Closed**

The diagram in this appendix shows two important activities which occur after a plan has been closed to employees hired in the future.

Cash benefits paid continue to increase for decades, while active member payroll begins to decrease to zero.

***Funding Method.*** A funding method is the long-term, planned pattern for employer contributions.

For an open plan (a plan covering future employees), the level-percent-of-active-member payroll funding method is the basic funding method.

The level-percent funding method can also be applied to a closed plan. However, the resulting contribution percent usually jumps to a high rate, because the number of covered active members is decreasing.

A preferred funding method for a closed plan consists of: level-percent funding for normal cost (the cost of members' service now being rendered); plus a level dollar contribution for unfunded actuarial accrued liabilities over a limited period of years. The period of years must be limited so that plan assets don't become zero while benefits are still payable.

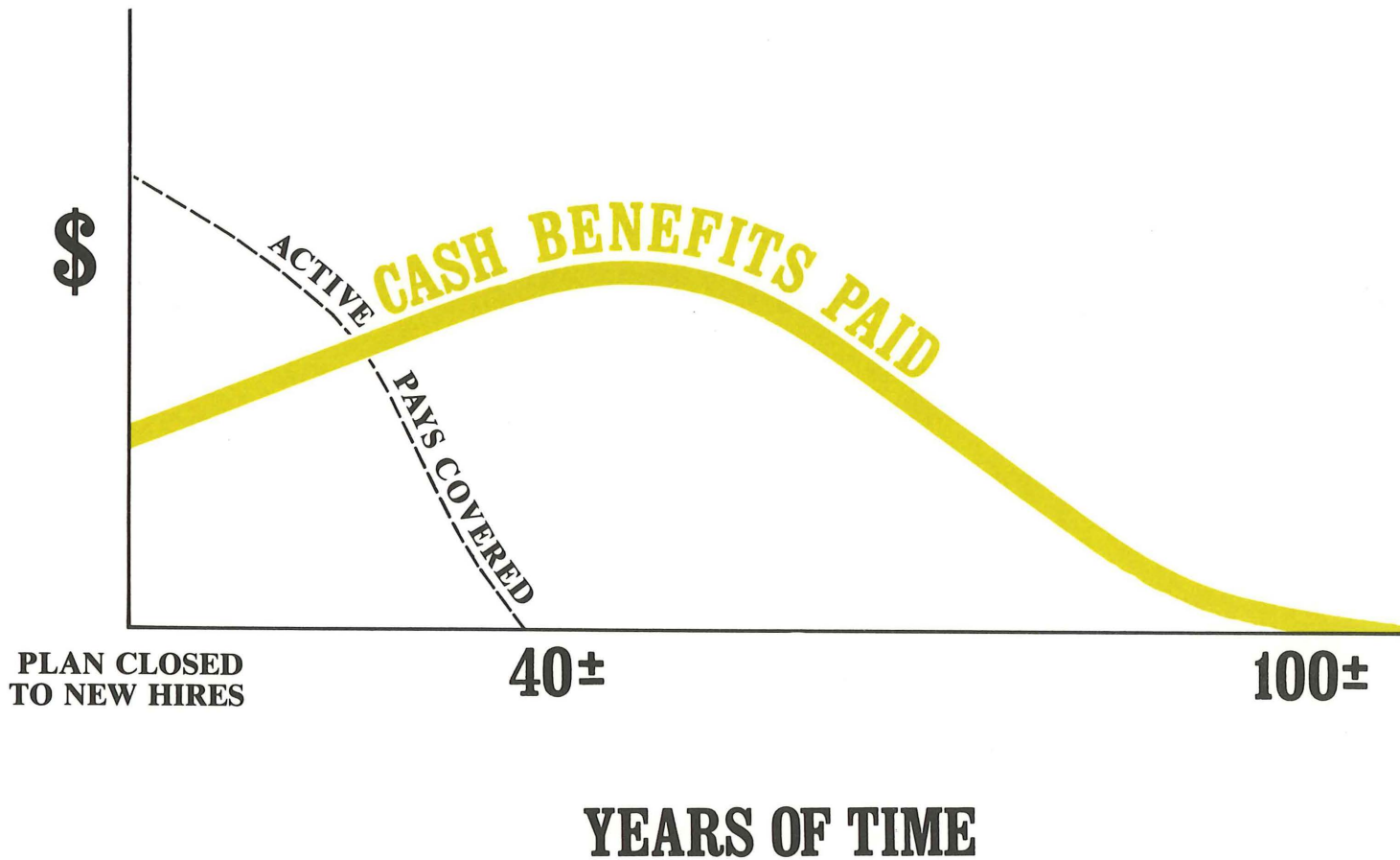
***Computing Contributions To Support Plan Benefits.*** From a given schedule of benefits and from the employee data and asset data furnished him, the actuary determines the contribution rates to support the benefits by means of an actuarial valuation and a funding method.

In making an actuarial valuation, assumptions must be made regarding anticipated financial experiences for the next year and for decades in the future. Only the subsequent actual experience of the plan can indicate the degree of accuracy of the assumptions.

***Reconciling Differences Between Assumed Experience and Actual Experience.*** Once actual experience has occurred and been observed, it will not coincide exactly with assumed experience, regardless of the wisdom of the assumptions or the skill of the actuary and the millions of calculations he made. The future can be predicted with considerable but not 100% precision, except for inflation which seems to defy reliable prediction.

A well-managed plan copes with these continually changing differences by having periodic actuarial valuations. Each actuarial valuation is a complete recalculation of assumed future experience, taking into account all past differences between assumed and actual experience. The result is continuing adjustment in financial position.

# A CLOSED PENSION PLAN



A plan becomes closed when no new hires are admitted to active membership. The persons covered by the plan at the time of closing continue their normal activities and continue to be covered by the plan, until the last survivor dies.

**CASH BENEFITS LINE.** After a pension plan becomes closed, the usual pattern is for cash benefits to continue to increase for decades of time. Eventually the cash benefits will peak, and then gradually decrease over more decades of time, ultimately to zero. The last cash benefit is likely to occur a century after the time the plan is closed.

The precise amounts of cash benefits cannot be known now, and must be estimated by assumptions of future experiences in a variety of financial risk areas.

## Appendix II

### Meaning of Unfunded Accrued Liabilities

Almost every pension plan (public or private) has "unfunded accrued liabilities," so whatever they are, they aren't rare. Since the term is not part of everyday conversation, it needs some definition.

"Accrued liabilities" are the present value \$ of plan promises to pay benefits in the future based upon service already rendered - - - a liability has been established ("accrued") because the service has been rendered, but the resulting monthly cash benefit may not be payable until years in the future. Accrued liabilities \$ are the result of complex mathematical calculations, which are made by the plan's actuary (which is the name given to the specialist who makes such calculations).

If "accrued liabilities" at any time exceed the plan's accrued assets (cash & investments), the difference is "unfunded accrued liabilities." This is the common condition. If the plan's assets equalled the plan's "accrued liabilities," the plan would be termed "fully funded." This is a rare condition.

Each time a plan adds a new benefit which applies to service already rendered, an "accrued liability" is created, which is also an "unfunded accrued liability" because the plan can't print instant cash to cover the accrued liability. Payment for such unfunded accrued liabilities is spread over a period of years, commonly in the 20-40 year range.

Unfunded accrued liabilities can occur in another way: If actual financial experience is less favorable than assumed financial experience, the difference is added to unfunded accrued liabilities. In plans where plan benefits are directly related to an employee's pay near time of retirement (a common plan provision) rather than his average pay throughout his working career, unfunded accrued liabilities have been increasing in recent years because unexpected rates of pay increase have created additional accrued liabilities which could not be matched by reasonable investment results. Some of these unexpected pay increases are the direct result of inflation, which is a very destructive force on financial stability.

The existence of unfunded accrued liabilities is not bad, then (any more than a mortgage on your house is "bad"), but the changes from year to year in amount of unfunded accrued liabilities are important - - - "bad" or "good" or somewhere in between.

Nor are unfunded accrued liabilities a bill payable immediately (your food costs are payable immediately), but it is important that policy-makers prevent the amount from becoming unreasonably high and it is vital that your plan have a sound method for making payments toward them so that they are controlled.

The existence of large amounts of unfunded accrued liabilities indicates that total contributions in past years were less than level - - - an almost certain history if retired life liabilities are not fully funded now.