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NHRS Statement on Supreme Court Ruling in Union Leader v. New Hampshire Retirement System

CONCORD, N.H. – The New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS, the retirement system) has issued the following statement regarding the New Hampshire Supreme Court decision in the case of Union Leader Corporation v. NHRS (No. 2010-784):

“On November 3, 2011, the New Hampshire Supreme Court affirmed a 2010 Hillsborough County Superior Court ruling that found that the names and pension amounts of the 500 pension recipients who received the highest annual payments in 2009 was public information.

“NHRS has an obligation to protect the privacy of retirees, as appropriate. The retirement system appealed the lower court ruling on the basis that the right-to-know law (RSA 91:A) was vague regarding whether pension annuities were public information. The Supreme Court agreed with the retirement system’s contention that the right-to-know law was ambiguous, but further determined that the public’s right to the information in question outweighed the privacy interest of individual retirees.”

NHRS will comply with the court’s decision.

The text of the decision is available on the Supreme Court website at:

<http://www.courts.state.nh.us/supreme/opinions/2011/2011118union.pdf>.

The New Hampshire Retirement System provides retirement, disability, and death benefits to its eligible members and their beneficiaries. The State of New Hampshire and more than 470 local government employers participate in the retirement system for their employees, teachers, firefighters, and police officers. NHRS has approximately 49,700 active members and 27,000 pension recipients. NHRS administers a defined benefit plan qualified as a tax-exempt entity under section 401(a) and 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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