Form 5500

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan

This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.**

OMB Nos. 1210-0110
1210-0089

2017

This Form is Open to Public Inspection

Part I Annual Report Identification Information

For calendar plan year 2017 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2017 and ending 12/31/2017

A This return/report is for:
- ☐ a multiemployer plan
- ☐ a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must attach a list of participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.)
- ☒ a single-employer plan
- ☐ a DFE (specify) ____

B This return/report is:
- ☐ the first return/report
- ☐ the final return/report
- ☐ an amended return/report
- ☐ a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)

C If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here. . . . . ▶ ☐

D Check box if filing under:
- ☒ Form 5558
- ☐ automatic extension
- ☐ the DFVC program
- ☐ special extension (enter description)

Part II Basic Plan Information—enter all requested information

1a Name of plan
ARETE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

1b Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 003

1c Effective date of plan 12/01/2003

2a Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan)
Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. Box)
City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (if foreign, see instructions)

ARETE ASSOCIATES, INC.

9301 CORBIN AVENUE, SUITE 2000
NORTHRIDGE, CA 91324

2b Employer Identification Number (EIN)
95-2954108

2c Plan Sponsor's telephone number
818-885-2236

2d Business code (see instructions)
541700

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	07/31/2018	SALLIE DI VINCENZO
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

3a Plan administrator's name and address ☐ Same as Plan Sponsor

ARETE ASSOCIATES, INC.

9301 CORBIN AVENUE, SUITE 2000
NORTHRIDGE, CA 91324

3b Administrator's EIN: 95-2954108

3c Administrator's telephone number: 818-885-2200

4 If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN, the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report:
a Sponsor's name
c Plan Name

4b EIN

4d PN

5 Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	**5**	280
6 Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines **6a(1), 6a(2), 6b, 6c,** and **6d**).		
a(1) Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year	**6a(1)**	261
a(2) Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year	**6a(2)**	246
b Retired or separated participants receiving benefits	**6b**	0
c Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits	**6c**	27
d Subtotal. Add lines **6a(2)**, **6b**, and **6c**	**6d**	273
e Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits.	**6e**	0
f Total. Add lines **6d** and **6e**.	**6f**	273
g Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	**6g**	271
h Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested	**6h**	9
7 Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item)	**7**	

8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:

2I 2P 3I

b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:

9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply)

(1)	☐	Insurance
(2)	☐	Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts
(3)	☒	Trust
(4)	☐	General assets of the sponsor

9b Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply)

(1)	☐	Insurance
(2)	☐	Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts
(3)	☒	Trust
(4)	☐	General assets of the sponsor

10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)

a Pension Schedules

(1)	☒	**R** (Retirement Plan Information)
(2)	☐	**MB** (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
(3)	☐	**SB** (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary

b General Schedules

(1)	☒		**H** (Financial Information)
(2)	☐		**I** (Financial Information – Small Plan)
(3)	☐	0	**A** (Insurance Information)
(4)	☐		**C** (Service Provider Information)
(5)	☐		**D** (DFE/Participating Plan Information)
(6)	☐		**G** (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)

11a If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) .....…… ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

11b Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ……..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

11c Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2017 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2017 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code_____

SCHEDULE H (Form 5500)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Financial Information

This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**

OMB No. 1210-0110

2017

This Form is Open to Public Inspection

For calendar plan year 2017 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2017 and ending 12/31/2017

A Name of plan
ARETE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 003

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
ARETE ASSOCIATES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
95-2954108

Part I Asset and Liability Statement

1 Current value of plan assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of the plan year. Combine the value of plan assets held in more than one trust. Report the value of the plan's interest in a commingled fund containing the assets of more than one plan on a line-by-line basis unless the value is reportable on lines 1c(9) through 1c(14). Do not enter the value of that portion of an insurance contract which guarantees, during this plan year, to pay a specific dollar benefit at a future date. **Round off amounts to the nearest dollar.** MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 1b(1), 1b(2), 1c(8), 1g, 1h, and 1i. CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 1d and 1e. See instructions.

Assets		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
a Total noninterest-bearing cash	1a	6930	5
b Receivables (less allowance for doubtful accounts):			
(1) Employer contributions	1b(1)		
(2) Participant contributions	1b(2)		
(3) Other	1b(3)		
c General investments:			
(1) Interest-bearing cash (include money market accounts & certificates of deposit)	1c(1)		
(2) U.S. Government securities	1c(2)		
(3) Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(3)(A)		
(B) All other	1c(3)(B)		
(4) Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(4)(A)		
(B) Common	1c(4)(B)		
(5) Partnership/joint venture interests	1c(5)		
(6) Real estate (other than employer real property)	1c(6)		
(7) Loans (other than to participants)	1c(7)		
(8) Participant loans	1c(8)		
(9) Value of interest in common/collective trusts	1c(9)		
(10) Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1c(10)		
(11) Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	1c(11)		
(12) Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1c(12)		
(13) Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	1c(13)		
(14) Value of funds held in insurance company general account (unallocated contracts)	1c(14)		
(15) Other	1c(15)		

			(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
1d	Employer-related investments:			
	(1) Employer securities	1d(1)	36825653	39687675
	(2) Employer real property	1d(2)		
e	Buildings and other property used in plan operation	1e		
f	Total assets (add all amounts in lines 1a through 1e)	1f	36832583	39687680
	Liabilities			
g	Benefit claims payable	1g		
h	Operating payables	1h		
i	Acquisition indebtedness	1i		
j	Other liabilities	1j	9641819	8277767
k	Total liabilities (add all amounts in lines 1g through1j)	1k	9641819	8277767
	Net Assets			
l	Net assets (subtract line 1k from line 1f)	1l	27190764	31409913

Part II Income and Expense Statement

2 Plan income, expenses, and changes in net assets for the year. Include all income and expenses of the plan, including any trust(s) or separately maintained fund(s) and any payments/receipts to/from insurance carriers. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 2a, 2b(1)(E), 2e, 2f, and 2g.

	Income		(a) Amount	(b) Total
a	**Contributions:**			
	(1) Received or receivable in cash from: **(A)** Employers	2a(1)(A)	1870788	
	(B) Participants	2a(1)(B)		
	(C) Others (including rollovers)	2a(1)(C)		
	(2) Noncash contributions	2a(2)		
	(3) Total contributions. Add lines **2a(1)(A), (B), (C),** and line **2a(2)**	2a(3)		1870788
b	**Earnings on investments:**			
	(1) Interest:			
	(A) Interest-bearing cash (including money market accounts and certificates of deposit)	2b(1)(A)		
	(B) U.S. Government securities	2b(1)(B)		
	(C) Corporate debt instruments	2b(1)(C)		
	(D) Loans (other than to participants)	2b(1)(D)		
	(E) Participant loans	2b(1)(E)		
	(F) Other	2b(1)(F)		
	(G) Total interest. Add lines **2b(1)(A)** through **(F)**	2b(1)(G)		0
	(2) Dividends: **(A)** Preferred stock	2b(2)(A)		
	(B) Common stock	2b(2)(B)		
	(C) Registered investment company shares (e.g. mutual funds)	2b(2)(C)		
	(D) Total dividends. Add lines **2b(2)(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**	2b(2)(D)		0
	(3) Rents	2b(3)		
	(4) Net gain (loss) on sale of assets: **(A)** Aggregate proceeds	2b(4)(A)		
	(B) Aggregate carrying amount (see instructions)	2b(4)(B)		
	(C) Subtract line **2b(4)(B)** from line **2b(4)(A)** and enter result	2b(4)(C)		0
	(5) Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of assets: **(A)** Real estate	2b(5)(A)		
	(B) Other	2b(5)(B)	4486432	
	(C) Total unrealized appreciation of assets. Add lines **2b(5)(A)** and **(B)**	2b(5)(C)		4486432

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
(6) Net investment gain (loss) from common/collective trusts	2b(6)		
(7) Net investment gain (loss) from pooled separate accounts	2b(7)		
(8) Net investment gain (loss) from master trust investment accounts	2b(8)		
(9) Net investment gain (loss) from 103-12 investment entities	2b(9)		
(10) Net investment gain (loss) from registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	2b(10)		
c Other income	2c		
d Total income. Add all **income** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2d		6357220
Expenses			
e Benefit payment and payments to provide benefits:			
(1) Directly to participants or beneficiaries, including direct rollovers	2e(1)	1861049	
(2) To insurance carriers for the provision of benefits	2e(2)		
(3) Other	2e(3)		
(4) Total benefit payments. Add lines **2e(1)** through **(3)**	2e(4)		1861049
f Corrective distributions (see instructions)	2f		
g Certain deemed distributions of participant loans (see instructions)	2g		
h Interest expense	2h		277022
i Administrative expenses: (1) Professional fees	2i(1)		
(2) Contract administrator fees	2i(2)		
(3) Investment advisory and management fees	2i(3)		
(4) Other	2i(4)		
(5) Total administrative expenses. Add lines **2i(1)** through **(4)**	2i(5)		0
j Total expenses. Add all **expense** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2j		2138071
Net Income and Reconciliation			
k Net income (loss). Subtract line **2j** from line **2d**	2k		4219149
l Transfers of assets:			
(1) To this plan	2l(1)		
(2) From this plan	2l(2)		

Part III Accountant's Opinion

3 Complete lines 3a through 3c if the opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is attached to this Form 5500. Complete line 3d if an opinion is not attached.

a The attached opinion of an independent qualified public accountant for this plan is (see instructions):

(1) [X] Unqualified **(2)** [ ] Qualified **(3)** [ ] Disclaimer **(4)** [ ] Adverse

b Did the accountant perform a limited scope audit pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.103-8 and/or 103-12(d)? [ ] Yes [X] No

c Enter the name and EIN of the accountant (or accounting firm) below:

(1) Name: BEESON, HOFFMAN & SIDDALL, INC. **(2)** EIN: 95-3654092

d The opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is **not attached** because:

(1) [ ] This form is filed for a CCT, PSA, or MTIA. **(2)** [ ] It will be attached to the next Form 5500 pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-50.

Part IV Compliance Questions

4 CCTs and PSAs do not complete Part IV. MTIAs, 103-12 IEs, and GIAs do not complete lines 4a, 4e, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, or 5. 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 4j and 4l. MTIAs also do not complete line 4l.

During the plan year:

		Yes	No	Amount
a Was there a failure to transmit to the plan any participant contributions within the time period described in 29 CFR 2510.3-102? Continue to answer "Yes" for any prior year failures until fully corrected. (See instructions and DOL's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program.)	4a		X	
b Were any loans by the plan or fixed income obligations due the plan in default as of the close of the plan year or classified during the year as uncollectible? Disregard participant loans secured by participant's account balance. (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part I if "Yes" is checked.)	4b		X	

			Yes	No	Amount
c	Were any leases to which the plan was a party in default or classified during the year as uncollectible? (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part II if "Yes" is checked.)	4c		X	
d	Were there any nonexempt transactions with any party-in-interest? (Do not include transactions reported on line 4a. Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part III if "Yes" is checked.)	4d		X	
e	Was this plan covered by a fidelity bond?	4e	X		1500000
f	Did the plan have a loss, whether or not reimbursed by the plan's fidelity bond, that was caused by fraud or dishonesty?	4f		X	
g	Did the plan hold any assets whose current value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	4g		X	
h	Did the plan receive any noncash contributions whose value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	4h		X	
i	Did the plan have assets held for investment? (Attach schedule(s) of assets if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	4i	X		
j	Were any plan transactions or series of transactions in excess of 5% of the current value of plan assets? (Attach schedule of transactions if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	4j		X	
k	Were all the plan assets either distributed to participants or beneficiaries, transferred to another plan, or brought under the control of the PBGC?	4k		X	
l	Has the plan failed to provide any benefit when due under the plan?	4l		X	
m	If this is an individual account plan, was there a blackout period? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-3.)	4m		X	
n	If 4m was answered "Yes," check the "Yes" box if you either provided the required notice or one of the exceptions to providing the notice applied under 29 CFR 2520.101-3.	4n			

5a Has a resolution to terminate the plan been adopted during the plan year or any prior plan year? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If "Yes," enter the amount of any plan assets that reverted to the employer this year _____.

5b If, during this plan year, any assets or liabilities were transferred from this plan to another plan(s), identify the plan(s) to which assets or liabilities were transferred. (See instructions.)

5b(1) Name of plan(s)	**5b(2)** EIN(s)	**5b(3)** PN(s)

5c If the plan is a defined benefit plan, is it covered under the PBGC insurance program (See ERISA section 4021.)? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not determined
If "Yes" is checked, enter the My PAA confirmation number from the PBGC premium filing for this plan year_____. (See instructions.)

SCHEDULE R (Form 5500)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Retirement Plan Information

This schedule is required to be filed under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code).

▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**

OMB No. 1210-0110

2017

This Form is Open to Public Inspection.

For calendar plan year 2017 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2017 and ending 12/31/2017

A Name of plan
ARETE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 003

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
ARETE ASSOCIATES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
95-2954108

Part I Distributions

All references to distributions relate only to payments of benefits during the plan year.

1 Total value of distributions paid in property other than in cash or the forms of property specified in the instructions **1** 0

2 Enter the EIN(s) of payor(s) who paid benefits on behalf of the plan to participants or beneficiaries during the year (if more than two, enter EINs of the two payors who paid the greatest dollar amounts of benefits):

EIN(s): 20-0464157

Profit-sharing plans, ESOPs, and stock bonus plans, skip line 3.

3 Number of participants (living or deceased) whose benefits were distributed in a single sum, during the plan year **3**

Part II Funding Information (If the plan is not subject to the minimum funding requirements of section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code or ERISA section 302, skip this Part.)

4 Is the plan administrator making an election under Code section 412(d)(2) or ERISA section 302(d)(2)? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

If the plan is a defined benefit plan, go to line 8.

5 If a waiver of the minimum funding standard for a prior year is being amortized in this plan year, see instructions and enter the date of the ruling letter granting the waiver. **Date:** Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

If you completed line 5, complete lines 3, 9, and 10 of Schedule MB and do not complete the remainder of this schedule.

6 **a** Enter the minimum required contribution for this plan year (include any prior year accumulated funding deficiency not waived) **6a**

b Enter the amount contributed by the employer to the plan for this plan year **6b**

c Subtract the amount in line 6b from the amount in line 6a. Enter the result (enter a minus sign to the left of a negative amount) **6c**

If you completed line 6c, skip lines 8 and 9.

7 Will the minimum funding amount reported on line 6c be met by the funding deadline? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

8 If a change in actuarial cost method was made for this plan year pursuant to a revenue procedure or other authority providing automatic approval for the change or a class ruling letter, does the plan sponsor or plan administrator agree with the change? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

Part III Amendments

9 If this is a defined benefit pension plan, were any amendments adopted during this plan year that increased or decreased the value of benefits? If yes, check the appropriate box. If no, check the "No" box. ..... ☐ **Increase** ☐ **Decrease** ☐ **Both** ☐ **No**

Part IV ESOPs (see instructions). If this is not a plan described under section 409(a) or 4975(e)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code, skip this Part.

10 Were unallocated employer securities or proceeds from the sale of unallocated securities used to repay any exempt loan? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

11 **a** Does the ESOP hold any preferred stock? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

b If the ESOP has an outstanding exempt loan with the employer as lender, is such loan part of a "back-to-back" loan? (See instructions for definition of "back-to-back" loan.) ..... ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

12 Does the ESOP hold any stock that is not readily tradable on an established securities market? ..... ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Part V Additional Information for Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

13 Enter the following information for each employer that contributed more than 5% of total contributions to the plan during the plan year (measured in dollars). See instructions. *Complete as many entries as needed to report all applicable employers.*

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify):

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

---

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*
(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____
(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

14 Enter the number of participants on whose behalf no contributions were made by an employer as an employer of the participant for:

a The current year	**14a**	
b The plan year immediately preceding the current plan year	**14b**	
c The second preceding plan year	**14c**	

15 Enter the ratio of the number of participants under the plan on whose behalf no employer had an obligation to make an employer contribution during the current plan year to:

a The corresponding number for the plan year immediately preceding the current plan year	**15a**	
b The corresponding number for the second preceding plan year	**15b**	

16 Information with respect to any employers who withdrew from the plan during the preceding plan year:

a Enter the number of employers who withdrew during the preceding plan year	**16a**	
b If line 16a is greater than 0, enter the aggregate amount of withdrawal liability assessed or estimated to be assessed against such withdrawn employers	**16b**	

17 If assets and liabilities from another plan have been transferred to or merged with this plan during the plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment. ☐

Part VI Additional Information for Single-Employer and Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

18 If any liabilities to participants or their beneficiaries under the plan as of the end of the plan year consist (in whole or in part) of liabilities to such participants and beneficiaries under two or more pension plans as of immediately before such plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment ☐

19 If the total number of participants is 1,000 or more, complete lines (a) through (c)

a Enter the percentage of plan assets held as:
Stock: 0.0% Investment-Grade Debt: _____% High-Yield Debt: _____% Real Estate: _____% Other: _____%

b Provide the average duration of the combined investment-grade and high-yield debt:
☐ 0-3 years ☐ 3-6 years ☐ 6-9 years ☐ 9-12 years ☐ 12-15 years ☐ 15-18 years ☐ 18-21 years ☐ 21 years or more

c What duration measure was used to calculate line 19(b)?
☐ Effective duration ☐ Macaulay duration ☐ Modified duration ☐ Other (specify):

ARETÉ ASSOCIATES
EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AND SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULE

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017
AND AT DECEMBER 31, 2016

BEESON, HOFFMAN & SIDDALL, INC.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

ARETÉ ASSOCIATES
EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

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BEESON, HOFFMAN & SIDDALL, INC.
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REPORT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

July 30, 2018

To the Trustee and Administrative Committee
Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan, which comprise the statements of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2017, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Plan management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Plan's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Plan's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Trustee and Administrative Committee
Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan
July 30, 2018

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the net assets available for benefits of the Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, and the changes in its net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2017, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Report on Supplemental Information

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The supplemental Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year), referred to as "supplemental information," is presented for the purpose of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplemental information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. Such information is the responsibility of the Plan's management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Beeson, Hoffman & Siddall, Inc.

ARETÉ ASSOCIATES
EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN
STATEMENTS OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS
DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

	December 31, 2017			December 31, 2016		
	Allocated	Unallocated	Total	Allocated	Unallocated	Total
Assets						
Investments at fair value:						
Areté Associates common stock	$ 27,066,306	$ 12,621,369	$ 39,687,675	$ 23,606,602	$ 13,219,051	$ 36,825,653
Cash	5	-	5	6,930	-	6,930
Total Assets	27,066,311	12,621,369	39,687,680	23,613,532	13,219,051	36,832,583
Liabilities						
Other payables	$ 5	$ -	$ 5	$ 6,930	$ -	$ 6,930
Note payable	-	8,277,762	8,277,762	-	9,634,889	9,634,889
Total Liabilities	5	8,277,762	8,277,767	6,930	9,634,889	9,641,819
Net assets available for benefits	$ 27,066,306	$ 4,343,607	$ 31,409,913	$ 23,606,602	$ 3,584,162	$ 27,190,764

- See Accompanying Notes -

ARETÉ ASSOCIATES
EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN
STATEMENTS OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	Allocated	Unallocated	Total
Additions to net assets attributed to:			
Employer contributions	$ 236,640	$ 1,634,148	$ 1,870,788
Unrealized gain	2,801,651	1,684,781	4,486,432
Allocation of company stock at fair value	2,282,462	(2,282,462)	-
Total additions	5,320,753	1,036,467	6,357,220
Deductions from net assets attributed to:			
Distributions	1,861,049	-	1,861,049
Interest expense	-	277,022	277,022
Total deductions	1,861,049	277,022	2,138,071
Net increase	3,459,704	759,445	4,219,149
Net assets available for benefits:			
Beginning of year	23,606,602	3,584,162	27,190,764
End of year	$ 27,066,306	$ 4,343,607	$ 31,409,913

- See Accompanying Notes -

1. Plan Description

The following description of the Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan provides general information. Participants should refer to the Plan agreement for complete information.

General

Areté Associates (Company) established the Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan (Plan) effective December 1, 2003. The Plan operates as a leveraged employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), and is designed to comply with Section 4975(e)(7) and the regulations thereunder of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (Code) and is subject to the applicable provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA). The Plan is administered by the administrative committee, with an independent third-party trustee serving as the Plan's trustee.

Eligibility

All full-time employees of the Company are eligible to participate in the Plan as of the date of hire or designation as a full-time employee, provided they have attained age 18.

Payment of Benefits

Except for distributions made pursuant to diversification elections (discussed below), distributions on account of death, disability, or retirement are made in a lump sum in the Plan year following the event. Distributions of benefits are paid in substantially equal periodic payments (not less frequently than annually) and generally distributed over a period of five years. The Plan document does not require distribution of any portion of a participant's account which consists of Company stock acquired with the proceeds of an exempt loan prior to the close of the Plan year in which such loan is repaid in full. During the year ended December 31, 2017, the Plan repurchased 63,702 shares from participants at prices determined from the independent appraisal. At December 31, 2017, terminated participants with balances valued at $2,239,912 elected to withdraw from the Plan, with the distribution of their accounts to occur in 2018.

Voting Rights

Company stock held in the Trust is voted by the Trustee on most issues; however, the Plan provides that currently employed participants are entitled to direct the Trustee as to the exercise of voting rights attributable to shares allocated to his or her account. The Trustee is required to vote any unallocated shares, and any allocated shares for which instructions have not been given by a participant, in the proportion of shares voted by participants.

Termination

The Company reserves the right to terminate the Plan at any time, subject to Plan provisions. Upon such termination of the Plan, the interest of each participant in the trust fund will be distributed to the participant or his or her beneficiary at the time prescribed by the Plan terms and the Code.

1. Plan Description (continued)

Participant Accounts and Forfeitures

The Plan is a defined contribution plan under which a separate individual account is established for each participant. Each participant's account is credited as of the last day of each plan year with an allocation of shares of the Company's common stock released by the Trustee from the unallocated account, and forfeitures of terminated participants' nonvested accounts. Allocations are made for any participant who was an employee on any day of the plan year, and are based on a participant's eligible compensation, relative to total eligible compensation. Forfeitures of terminated nonvested account balances allocated to remaining participants at December 31, 2017 and 2016 totaled $41,955 and $36,508, respectively. Plan earnings are allocated to each participant's account based on the ratio of the participant's beginning of the year account balance to all participants' beginning of the year account balances.

Vesting

Employees earn one year of service for each plan year in which 1,000 or more hours are worked. Benefits become 100% vested after two years of service. If service terminates due to retirement, death or full disability, benefits become 100% vested regardless of years of service.

Put Option

Under federal income tax regulations, the employer stock that is held by the Plan and its participants and is not readily tradable on an established market, or is subject to trading limitations includes a put option. The put option is a right to demand that the Company buy any shares of its stock distributed to participants for which there is no market. The put price is the fair market value of the stock. The purpose of the put option is to ensure that the participant has the ability to ultimately obtain cash.

Diversification

Diversification is offered to participants close to retirement so that they may have the opportunity to move part of the value of their investment in Company stock into investments which are more diversified. Participants who are at least age 55 with at least 10 years of participation in the Plan may elect to diversify a portion of their account. Diversification is offered to each eligible participant over a six-year period. In each of the first five years, a participant may diversify up to 25% of the number of shares allocated to his or her account, less any shares previously diversified. In the sixth year, the percentage changes to 50%.

2. Significant Accounting Policies and Nature of Business

Nature of Business of Plan Sponsor

Areté Associates is a California corporation that performs applied research as a contractor and subcontractor under primarily fixed price and cost-plus-fee contracts with the U.S. Government.

2. Significant Accounting Policies and Nature of Business (continued)

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements of the Plan are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires the Plan administrator to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates. The Areté Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan relies significantly on the use of estimates and forecasts in determining the valuation of the Areté Associates common stock.

Valuation of Investments

The shares of Areté Associates common stock are valued at estimated fair value as determined by the Trustee with the assistance of an independent appraisal company. See Note 6 for a discussion of fair value measurements.

Operating Expenses

All significant expenses of maintaining the Plan are paid by the Company.

Date of Management's Review

The plan administrator has evaluated subsequent events through July 30, 2018, the date the financial statements were available to be issued and has determined that there are no subsequent events requiring recognition or disclosure in the financial statements.

3. Administration of Plan Assets

The Plan's assets are held by the Trustee of the Plan. Company contributions are held and managed by the Trustee, which invests cash received, interest and dividend income and makes distributions to participants. Certain administrative functions are performed by officers or employees of the Company. No such officer or employee receives compensation from the Plan. Administrative expenses for the Trustee's fees are paid directly by the Company.

4. Employer Contributions

Annual employer contributions to the Plan are determined by the Company's Board of Directors, up to a maximum of the lesser of 100% of gross compensation or $54,000 from this Plan and any other defined contribution plan of the Company. Employee contributions to the Plan are not permitted. Contributions are made in cash and/or common stock of the Company, in an amount necessary to enable the Plan to make its regularly scheduled payments of principal and interest on its term loan.

5. Income Tax Status

The IRS has determined and informed the plan sponsor by a letter dated June 21, 2012, that the Plan and related trust are designed in accordance with applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Although the Plan has been amended since receiving the determination letter, the Plan administrator and the Plan's tax counsel believe that the Plan is designed, and is currently being operated, in compliance with the applicable requirements of the IRC and, therefore, believe that the Plan is qualified, and the related trust is tax-exempt.

6. Fair Value Measurements

The Plan's investments are reported at estimated fair value in the accompanying statements of net assets available for benefits. The methods used to measure fair value may produce an amount that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, although the Plan believes its valuation methods are appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different methodologies or assumptions to measure the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in different fair value measurements at the reporting date.

The following table presents fair value measurement information for the Plan's investment in Company common stock.

	Fair Value Measurements at Reporting Date Using:	
	Fair Value	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
December 31, 2017		
Areté Associates common stock	$ 39,687,675	$ 39,687,675
December 31, 2016		
Areté Associates common stock	$ 36,825,653	$ 36,825,653

The fair value measurements accounting literature establishes a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy consists of three broad levels: Level 1 inputs consist of unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets and have the highest priority, Level 2 inputs consist of observable inputs other that quoted prices for identical assets, and Level 3 inputs are unobservable and have the lowest priority. The Plan uses appropriate valuation techniques based on the available inputs to measure the fair value of its investments. Level 3 inputs were only used when Level 1 or Level 2 inputs were not available.

6. Fair Value Measurements (continued)

Level 3 Fair Value Measurements

The fair value of the Areté Associates common stock is determined by an annual independent appraisal. This appraisal was based on a combination of the market and income valuation methods consistent with prior years. The appraiser took into account historical and projected cash flow and net earnings, weighted average cost of capital, return on equity, market comparables and the estimated fair value of company assets and liabilities, and applicable discounts and premiums. The following table provides further detail of Level 3 measurements:

Areté Associates common stock at December 31,	2017	2016
Beginning balance	$ 36,825,653	$ 38,630,832
Settlements	(1,624,410)	(76)
Total gains or losses (realized and unrealized) included in changes in net assets available for benefits	4,486,432	(1,805,103)
Ending balance	$ 39,687,675	$ 36,825,653
Total gains or losses for the year included in changes in net assets available for benefits attributable to the change in unrealized gains or losses relating to investments still held at the reporting date	$ 4,486,432	$ (1,805,103)

Gains and losses (realized and unrealized) included in the changes in net assets available for benefits are reported in net unrealized depreciation in fair value of investments.

7. Investment in Employer Securities

The Plan's investment in Areté Associates common stock is presented in the following table:

	December 31, 2017		December 31, 2016	
	Allocated	Unallocated	Allocated	Unallocated
Number of shares	941,437	439,004	925,749	518,394
Cost	$ 7,007,097	$ 1,267,696	$ 6,041,070	$ 2,615,575
Fair Value	$ 27,066,306	$ 12,621,369	$ 23,606,602	$ 13,219,051

8. Note Payable

The Plan has a note payable to the Company as follows:

	2017	2016
Note payable to the Company, with monthly principal payments of $84,760 plus variable interest at the federal reserve rate plus 2.0% through December 31, 2020, and monthly principal payments of $122,000 plus variable interest at the federal reserve rate plus 2.0% beginning January 1, 2021 and a final payment of $102,387, plus interst, maturing July 31, 2024.	$ 8,277,762	$ 9,634,889

The scheduled amortization of the note for the next five years is as follows, for the Plan year ending December 31:

2018	$ 1,017,126
2019	1,017,126
2020	1,017,126
2021	1,464,000
2022	1,464,000
Thereafter	2,298,384
	$ 8,277,762

The borrowing is collateralized by the unallocated shares of common stock. Each year, shares are released from the collateral as the note is repaid, according to the following formula: the total number of shares held as collateral (immediately before the release) multiplied by the ratio of total interest and principal payments for the year to total interest and principal payments remaining on the note. For the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, approximately 63,702 and 36,448 shares, respectively, were released from the collateral.

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULE

NAME OF PLAN:
ARETÉ ASSOCIATES
EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN

EMPLOYEE ID# 95-2954108
YEAR ENDED 12/31/2017
PLAN # 003

SCHEDULE H, LINE 4i - SCHEDULE OF ASSETS (HELD AT END OF YEAR)

(a)	(b) ISSUER	(c) DESCRIPTION	(d) COST	(e) CURRENT VALUE
*	Areté Associates	1,380,441 shares common stock	$ 8,274,793	$ 39,687,675

* Identifies related party

- See Accompanying Notes -

Schedule H, Line 4i
Schedule of Assets (Held At End of Year)

Name of Plan:

► Arete Associates Employee Stock Ownership Plan

Employer Identification Number:► 95-2954108

For plan year (beginning/ending):► 01/01/2017-12/31/2017 Plan number:► 3

(a)	(b) Identity of issue, borrower, lessor, or similar party	(c) Description of investment including maturity date, rate of interest, collateral, par or maturity value	(d) Cost	(e) Current value
	Arete Associates, Inc.	1,380,440.8939 shares of common stock	8,274,793	39,687,675