



A newsletter for Retirement Systems employers

Volume VII

REVISED

January 2002

“Ready...Set...Go!”

It is time for another installment of “Ready...Set...Go!,” a two-part program designed to simplify the

retirement process. Part

One provides valuable information about Retirement Systems, Social

Security, deferred compensation, and state insurance benefits in an informal setting.

Attendees who sign up for Part Two receive individual consultations that include assistance with the retirement application process. Part Two sessions are held regionally so members may attend at a location near their home or work place. Please inform and encourage your employees who are eligible to retire in 2002 to attend one of these sessions. They won't regret it, and neither will you!

TERI Tidbits

Below are some interesting statistics about TERI participation after just one full year (all numbers are approximate).

- 8,000 of the 15,000 retirees for the year were TERI participants;
- Those 8,000 TERI retirees deferred \$140 million in benefits during the year;
- 860 of the 8,000 TERI retirees have already terminated their



participation and received distributions of their accounts amounting to more than \$8 million in payouts; and

- 45 percent of the TERI retirees were from school districts; 17 percent from colleges, universities, and technical schools; 6 percent from municipalities; and 32 percent from other employers (primarily state agencies).

Consolidated State ORP Is Coming

The State Optional Retirement Program (State ORP), a defined contribution plan, became an alternative to the South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS) traditional defined benefit plan for K-12 teachers and certain other eligible school district employees hired on or after July 1, 2000. Effective July 1, 2001, the State ORP was expanded to allow all new school district employees a choice between the two retirement plans.

Effective July 1, 2002, the State ORP will be offered to all new state employees (SCRS only) hired on or after July 1, 2002. Also effective July 1, 2002, the Higher Education ORP that has been in operation since 1987 will be consolidated with the State ORP, with eligibility for participation expanded to all new employees at state higher education institutions and technical colleges hired on or after July 1, 2002.

Since there are significant differences between the SCRS plan and the State ORP, the South Carolina

Retirement Systems will conduct State ORP presentations for employers in April 2002. We will review new reporting procedures, answer questions, and discuss training and education resources that will be provided prior to July 1, 2002. These resources will include professionally-prepared videos and pamphlets that will help employers and employees understand the plans, and provide the information necessary for eligible new employees to select the plan that best suits their needs.

We will mail time and place information for the State ORP

presentations to you soon. We can't stress enough the importance of making sure you attend one of these informative sessions.



Retirements and Personnel Changes Field Services

Brenda Hudson sailed into the sunset December 31, 2001, after more than 29 years with the SC Retirement Systems. She had become a TERI participant January 1, 2001. Brenda began her career with the Retirement Systems in September 1973 as a personnel specialist; however, she is best remembered for her role as executive assistant to former

Retirement Systems Director Purvis Collins from 1980 until his retirement in 1996. Brenda joined Field Services in 1996 and endeared herself to our employers and members through her professionalism, knowledge, and customer service skills. We salute Brenda Hudson for her service, dedication, and friendship. Brenda and her husband, Gordon, are now residents of Folly Beach, SC. Enjoy your retirement!



Other Departments

Retirement Systems Director Robert C. Toomey announced his retirement to become effective no later than the end of FY 2002.

Wayne Pruitt, executive manager of Financial Services, retired December 31, 2001. Effective January 7, 2002, Joy Gunter, director of accounting, has assumed Mr. Pruitt's duties. Carol Zimmerman, an employer representative in Financial Services, has also retired.

Other Retirement Systems retirees include: Alan Pollack, deputy director; Meta Whitlock, executive manager for policy; and Ed Haynsworth, internal auditor. We wish all of our friends, bosses, and colleagues a successful and healthy retirement.

"Planning for the Future"

Now is the time to schedule your "Planning for the Future" preretirement seminar. In a sluggish economy, employees need more than ever to understand their retirement benefits and plan for

their retirement accordingly. Please contact Bob Martin at 803-737-7581 or George Hazin at 803-737-6882.

Tip of the Quarter

It is important to return Certification of Final Retirement Deductions (Forms 6202 and 6203) to the Retirement Systems as soon as possible so a member's finalized benefit payment or TERI benefit can be calculated. If these documents are not completed and returned, the member will receive only an estimated benefit that will not include annual and/or sick leave credit toward their retirement benefit. Plus, any overpaid amounts will be due retroactive to the date of retirement, so please be sure to complete and return these forms as soon as possible after a member's date of retirement.

"Best of Employer Training"

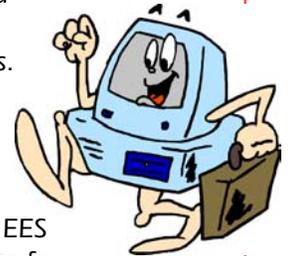
You asked for it, so now you have it! Many of you have requested employer training for your new benefits and/or payroll employees, or asked that employer training be held more than once a year. In 2002, Field Services staff will begin conducting employer training twice a year. The normal three-session employer training program will be conducted each July and



August, and the "Best of Employer Training" will be held in February each year. This rotation will provide two training opportunities each year for your newly hired benefits and/or payroll employees. It also gives you two chances to attend and catch up on any changes that occurred during the legislative session.

Electronic Employer Services Enhancements

Our popular Electronic Employer Services (EES) website now allows you to look up your TERI participants on-line and check their TERI account balances. Plus, more and more on-line features are coming soon.



Employers using EES are accessing data for more than 80 percent of our members. Is your agency still not on the bandwagon? Then sign up now. It is free and easy to use. Call Glenn King at 803-737-6919.

Systems Update Delay, Changes

The **Systems Update** newsletter has been delayed until late spring 2002. The newsletter is being retooled and redesigned, and we hope to announce our new director as well. Check it out this spring!

Need another copy of FYI, or just want to see it in color? Look for FYI, and other publications, on our website at www.scrs.state.sc.us!

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FYI is published periodically by the South Carolina Retirement Systems, a division of the South Carolina State Budget and Control Board, PO Box 11960, Columbia, SC 29211-1960.