

Ohio PERS NEWS

YOUR BENEFIT CONNECTION

News and information for active members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

Member-Directed Plan



The benefits of membership

OPERS NEW MEDIA: Everywhere. Now.

New Media at OPERS means employing cutting edge technology to make sure you always have instant online access to a wealth of OPERS information, your own personal account and the latest OPERS news. Visit the New Media page at www.opers.org to learn all the ways you can use your personal computer to learn about OPERS and stay informed on-the-go.

e-mail to members of all three retirement plans as well as our retirees.

PODCASTS: It's OPERS on the go.

To hear the latest headlines for members or retirees, simply download the latest, fully narrated Podcast.



WEB SEMINARS: Now, you can attend select OPERS seminars right at your PC.

VIDEO SEMINARS: Throughout the year, OPERS will be offering various seminars in streaming video. Currently, a *Welcome to Express Scripts* video seminar is available for retirees.

RSS FEEDS: What's new at OPERS? Find out by adding OPERS RSS Feeds – covering forms, publications and more – to your Intranet or RSS reader.

ONLINE: Together, www.opers.org and the Member Benefits System (MBS) enable members and retirees to have instant access to online resources.

E-NEWSLETTERS: Tired of paper? OPERS' quarterly newsletters are now offered via

The benefits of membership

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The Ohio Tobacco Quit Line is now OhioQuits

The Ohio Tobacco QUIT LINE is now OhioQuits and with the change in name comes some exciting, expanded offerings. With the introduction of OhioQuits, all Ohioans who call 1-800-QUIT-NOW are able to receive the tobacco cessation help they need by telephone, online or face-to-face coaching at one of five Ohio Tobacco Treatment Centers.

OhioQuits now offers any Ohioan a starter kit with two weeks of free nicotine patches for enrolling in the program. This will benefit those without insurance or those whose insurance plan or employer has not arranged a partnership with OhioQuits. Commit to a healthier you and let OhioQuits help. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW today.



New members of OPERS Board of Trustees take office

Lennie Wyatt and Eddie Parks were officially sworn in as members of the Ohio PERS Board of Trustees prior to the January meeting. Wyatt, who has served as president of the UFCW Local 1099, is the Governor's appointee. Parks, coordinator-economic development of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), is the representative of state employees, filling the seat recently vacated by Ron Alexander. Wyatt's term runs through September of this year while Parks' is up Dec. 31, 2010.

Wyatt has a Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies from Antioch University and a Master of Science, Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts. Parks has a Bachelor of Science in Education from The Ohio State University and also holds a Master of Arts from The Ohio State University.



You can help us provide excellent service

The volume of phone calls received by OPERS has been higher than normal in the last few months. If you have called us recently, you may have experienced a longer than average wait time before being able to speak to a member services representative. In order to provide the best possible service while managing an increasing call volume, we have maximized the number of representatives available during peak call times. We also continue to provide our representatives with extensive training to help them assist callers efficiently and, in many cases, resolve issues in just one phone call.

It is a priority for OPERS to answer all calls in a timely manner. The high number of calls has made that difficult in recent months. Below are some suggestions that may reduce the time you spend waiting for an answer and decrease the number of calls we receive. Before you pick up the phone, consider one of the following alternatives. There may be a quicker, easier way to find the information you need.

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Ohio PERS NEWS – Your Benefit Connection is a quarterly newsletter providing news and information to more than 381,000 active members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. An active member is anyone currently contributing toward an Ohio PERS retirement benefit. This publication allows us to communicate vital information concerning retirement benefits to our active members and also educate them on the services we provide.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

www.opers.org
1-800-222-7377
newsfeedback@opers.org

It is your responsibility to be certain that OPERS has your current address on file. If OPERS is not made aware of address changes, we cannot guarantee that you will receive important information pertaining to your OPERS account.

This newsletter is written in plain language for use by members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. It is not intended as a substitute for the federal or state law, namely the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, or the Internal Revenue Code, nor will its interpretation prevail should a conflict arise between it and the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Administrative Code, or Internal Revenue Code. Rules governing the retirement system are subject to change periodically either by statute of the Ohio General Assembly, regulation of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement Board, or regulation of the Internal Revenue Code. If you have questions about this material, please contact our office or seek legal advice from your attorney.

Legislative update

Iran and Sudan Divestment Policy Update

The OPERS Board and staff have expended considerable time and effort over the past nine months to develop a divestiture policy and process that achieves the goals of HB 151 without violating the system's fiduciary responsibility to act solely in the best interests of our 900,000 members and retirees. The new policy requires each affected portfolio manager to make the divestment decision based on its own investment research as to whether a replacement company can be identified that offers similar quality, return and safety. This will ensure that the System continues to meet its fiduciary responsibility to our members when making investment decisions. While it is too early to see the results of the new policy, we will provide further updates on our Web site at www.opers.org and newsletters when new information is available.

House committee holds hearing on GPO and WEP

On Jan. 16, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing entitled *Social Security Benefits for Economically Vulnerable Beneficiaries* that included a panel discussion on the impact of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

Testifying on GPO and WEP at the House hearing was the state president of the Association of Texas Professional Educators, a teacher from Los Angeles representing the NEA, the secretary treasurer of the Texas American

Federation of Teachers and Joe Rugola who is an International Vice-President of AFSCME and the President of the Ohio AFL-CIO.

Witnesses advocating for the repeal of GPO and WEP did an excellent job presenting many case studies illustrating the harmful impact that GPO and WEP have on government employees. There were a number of questions from committee members directed towards the impact of GPO on lower income workers, especially women. The \$80 billion cost over 10 years of repealing the GPO and WEP was also a subject of considerable discussion.

Ohio PERS supports the repeal or modification of the GPO and WEP on the basis that it unfairly penalizes many OPERS retirees. In the past, mandatory Social Security coverage has been suggested as a way to cover the costs of repealing the GPO and WEP. We remain opposed to mandatory Social Security coverage for public sector employees because it would undermine our ability to provide current benefits and impose an additional financial burden on our employers.

Interested parties should contact the Chairman of the House Subcommittee, Michael McNulty (D-NY) at mike.mculty@mail.house.gov and urge the committee members to move forward on measures to modify or repeal both the GPO and WEP.

You can help us provide excellent service (continued from page 2)

Explore the OPERS Web site:

Our Web site, www.opers.org, is a great source of information and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Besides general OPERS benefit information, our publications and many of our forms are available to read, download and print. The Web site also features the Member Benefits System (MBS). MBS offers secure access to your personal account information and the opportunity to update your personal

information and ask questions via e-mail in a secure environment.

Call with non-urgent questions on low volume days:

Currently, our phone call volume is the lowest on Wednesdays and Thursdays. If you need to speak with a representative regarding a non-urgent matter, please call on one of these days.

Refer to past newsletters:

This quarterly newsletter and *The Ohio PERSONal Investor* provide valuable, timely information and reminders. We recommend you not only keep recent issues, but past issues as well. You may find the answer to a question is already at your fingertips. Past issues are also archived at www.opers.org for your reference.



You can choose from two ways to participate in the *Managing Your Individual OPERS Account* Workshop

In-Person Workshop

OPERS staff provides investment education and discusses the tools and resources available to help Member-Directed and Combined Plan participants manage their OPERS accounts. During the one-hour workshop participants will learn different ways to help manage risk in their individual account. Participants will also complete and evaluate their specific Investor Profile and receive additional information regarding the nine OPERS Investment Options.

Columbus — Wednesday, May 21, 2008, 4:30 p.m.
OPERS, 277 East Town Street, Columbus
Call the OPERS Member Services Center at

1-800-222-7377 and ask for extension 8-3993 to reserve your spot at this informative workshop.

Web Workshop — July 23, 2008, 12:00 p.m.

You will receive the same information as those attending the live event, but you can do it through the convenience of your own computer at lunchtime. You will need high-speed Internet access and a phone. The web workshop is interactive, so you can ask questions and learn from what others ask.

Log on to
<https://www.opers.org/seminars/members/manage.shtml>
to register to participate in this workshop.

Ohio PERS retirement board

The 11-member Ohio PERS Retirement Board is responsible for the administration and management of Ohio PERS. Seven of the 11 members are elected by the groups that they represent (i.e., college and university non-teaching employees, state, county, municipal, and miscellaneous employees, and retired members); the Director of the Department of Administrative Services for the state of Ohio is a statutory member, and three members are investment experts appointed by the Governor, the Treasurer of State, and jointly by the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and the President of the Ohio Senate.

Elected

Board Members

Eddie Parks

State Employees

Sharon M. Downs

Retired members

John W. Maurer

Retired members

Kimberly Russell

State College and
University Employees

Cynthia Sledz

Vice Chair

Miscellaneous
Employees

Ken Thomas

Chair

Municipal Employees

Helen Youngblood

County Employees

Statutory

Board Member

Hugh Quill

Director, Department
of Administrative
Services

Appointed

Board Members

Lennie Wyatt

Investment Expert
Governor Appointee

Vacant

Investment Expert
Treasurer of State
Appointee

James R. Tilling

Investment Expert
General Assembly
Appointee

Chris DeRose

Chief Executive Officer