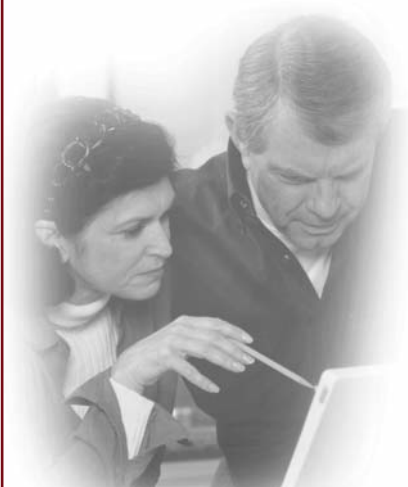


# Ohio PERS NEWS

YOUR BENEFIT CONNECTION

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

## Traditional Pension Plan



## The benefits of membership

### Members can now estimate service purchase costs using MBS

OPERS is introducing another exciting reason for members to register to use the Member Benefits System (MBS). Members can now use MBS to estimate the cost to purchase specific types of service. This new MBS feature is in addition to the ability to update addresses, designate beneficiaries, perform retirement benefit calculations and generate health care coverage cost estimates.

Members can use MBS to advise OPERS of changes they wish to make to the payoff date and/or payment amount. However, those members purchasing service via a pre-tax payroll deduction agreement will not be able to use these features.

If members are currently purchasing or decide to purchase service in the future, MBS will allow them to view their payment history, outstanding balance, monthly payment statement (if they make monthly payments) and quarterly statements (if they purchase service through payroll deduction). Members can elect to have their service purchase account summary sent via email.

Registering for MBS is quick and simple. Visit [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org) and use the pull-down menu under the MBS log-in box (top right corner of the homepage) to choose 'Register Now' and follow the on-screen instructions.

For more detailed information on the different types of service credit and the purchasing process, please read the *Service Credit & Contributing Months* leaflet available on the OPERS Web Site, [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org), or contact us at 1-800-222-7377.

The benefits of membership

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By registering for MBS, members can use a service purchase calculator to generate an estimated cost and payment options for purchasing the following types of service:

- Elective
- 35% additional service
- Exempt, leave of absence
- Out-of-state/federal
- Military
- Redeposit-OPERS
- School board

Also, members who are already purchasing service can use MBS to obtain an estimated payoff balance and determine how increases/decreases in their payments will affect the timeline for paying off the service purchase.



*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.*

## 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.



Eddie Parks

Lennie Wyatt

## 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](http://www.opers.org) to learn all the ways you can use your personal computer to learn about OPERS and stay informed on-the-go.

**ONLINE:** Together, [www.opers.org](http://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 e-mail to members of all three retirement plans. Members need to be a registered user of MBS to request an e-newsletter.

*(continued on page 4)*

## 2007 *Personal Statement of Estimated Benefits* mailed to members in March and April

OPERS members in the Traditional Pension and Combined Plans should receive their 2007 *Personal Statement of Estimated Benefits* by the end of April. OPERS began mailing statements during the first week of March and will continue to mail them through the month of April. We mail approximately 80,000 annual statements per week during these months. Statements are mailed in batches based on zip code to allow us to get the best postal rates. Please contact OPERS if you have not received your statement by April 30. All statements will have been mailed by that time.

While reviewing your statement, you may notice that your total contributions in 2007 (shown on page 5) may not be the same as the amount found on your W-2 form. There are two potential reasons for this difference.

First, your statement reflects the salary amount earned in 2007 while the W-2 reflects the amount paid in a given year. Second, your W-2 may include pay that is not subject to OPERS contributions.

If the beneficiary designation section (top of page 4) indicates that we do not have your beneficiary information, you can provide it via our Member Benefits System (MBS) or by completing a *Member Designation of Beneficiary for Traditional Pension Plan* form which is available to print from [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org). Having your beneficiary designation on file allows us to provide more complete estimates making your *Personal Statement of Estimated Benefits* a more useful retirement planning tool.

(continued on page 8)

## 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.

### Explore the OPERS Web site:

Our Web site, [www.opers.org](http://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. Members can also use

MBS to schedule an appointment with a benefit counselor and register for some seminars.

### 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:

Our quarterly newsletters provide valuable, timely information and reminders. We recommend you not only keep the most recent issue, 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](http://www.opers.org) for your reference.

## 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](http://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.mcnulty@mail.house.gov](mailto:mike.mcnulty@mail.house.gov) and urge the committee members to move forward on measures to modify or repeal both the GPO and WEP.

## OPERS NEW MEDIA: Everywhere. Now. *(continued from page 2)*



**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.



## The Ohio Tobacco Quit Line is now OhioQuits

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.

Once a call is received at the 24-hour call center, an OhioQuits representative will recommend the program that is best suited to the caller's lifestyle. Telephone or online coaching can be utilized by people with a busy lifestyle who prefer the convenience of appointments to fit their schedule. However, if the caller prefers face-to-face coaching, he or she can visit one of five treatment centers for in-person meetings. These tailored offerings satisfy personal preferences to ensure an increased rate of successful quitters.

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. OPERS has partnered with OhioQuits and, as a result, retirees and their dependents covered under the OPERS health care plan are currently eligible for eight weeks of FREE nicotine patches. With this additional help, we are providing our retirees with a better opportunity to be successful in their quit attempt. Check with your employer to see if they have arranged for additional smoking cessation help through OhioQuits.

Commit to a healthier you and let OhioQuits help. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** today.

## OPERS' pharmacy benefit manager is now Express Scripts

OPERS changed the pharmacy benefit manager for the OPERS health care plan from Medco to Express Scripts effective April 1, 2008. OPERS chose Express Scripts after conducting a thorough evaluation of several pharmacy administrators. Express Scripts was determined to be the best choice for OPERS based on their ratings in the areas of operations/customer service, strategy and financial performance.

If you are planning for retirement and would like to learn more about Express Scripts, please visit the OPERS Web site, [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org) or contact Express Scripts at 1-866-727-5873.



## The big three benefits of quitting

### **Greatly reduced risk of premature death:**

Quitting the use of tobacco products lowers your risk of dying early by 50 percent within five years of quitting. After 15 years the risk is the same as if you had never smoked.

### **Reduced risk of lung cancer, emphysema and bronchitis:**

Your risk of lung cancer drops by 30-50 percent after 10 years of being smoke-free. The longer you stay a non-smoker, the lower the risk. If you've begun to develop emphysema and/or chronic bronchitis, quitting could essentially stop the progression of the disease and allow your respiratory system to compensate for damaged tissue.

### **Reduced risk of coronary heart disease:**

The potential for smoking-related heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting. Within 15 years the risk of smoking related heart disease is the same as that of someone who has never smoked.

*Resource: OhioQuits*



## 2008 calendar of educational seminars

**We offer a wide variety of educational seminars.** To register please call 1-800-222-7377 or register online by logging into the Member Benefits System (MBS).

**How to Select your Ohio PERS Retirement Plan** – a seminar for new Ohio PERS members who are trying to select the Ohio PERS retirement plan that is best for them. The *How To Select Your Ohio PERS Retirement Plan* seminar provides details about the benefits and features of the three plans and a summary of basic investment education.

**Providing Long-term Awareness Now (PLAN)** – a seminar for members who have at least five years of service credit and are generally mid-career public employees. Topics discussed include Ohio PERS benefits, Social Security, financial and estate planning and other issues. A total cost of \$5 covers the one-day seminar, a non-member guest, lunch and reference materials.

**Health care plan seminar** – a seminar for active and retired Traditional Pension and Combined Plan members who are planning for retirement and want to know more about the OPERS health care plan. All seminars begin at 11 a.m. and are free of charge.

**Retirement Awareness Program (RAP)** – a seminar for members who are within five years of retirement and have at least five years of service credit. Topics discussed include Ohio PERS benefits, financial planning, deferred compensation, Social Security, estate planning, and more. A total cost of \$5 covers the one-day seminar, one non-member guest, lunch and reference materials.

**Retirement Readiness** – a seminar for members who are within 12 to 18 months of retirement. Your Ohio PERS benefits are discussed, along with the various documentation and paperwork needed for processing your pension benefits. This seminar lasts three and one-half hours and there is no charge.

**Counseling sessions** – personalized retirement counseling is available at the OPERS office in Columbus, over the phone or in cities listed on page 7. Call 1-800-222-7377 to make an appointment.

### HOW TO SELECT YOUR Ohio PERS RETIREMENT PLAN

<b>Athens</b> June 18	<b>Elyria</b> July 18	<b>Sandusky</b> July 8
<b>Batavia</b> July 9	<b>Findlay</b> June 18	<b>Seaman</b> May 20 July 29
<b>Bowling Green</b> June 12	<b>Hamilton</b> July 9	<b>Sharon Woods</b> May 8
<b>Canton</b> May 7	<b>Lancaster</b> May 7	<b>Woodsfield</b> June 11
<b>Circleville</b> July 10	<b>Lebanon</b> May 7	<b>Wooster</b> May 12
<b>Columbus</b> May 15 June 11 July 9	<b>Medina</b> May 7	<b>Web Seminars</b> (Register at <a href="http://www.opers.org">www.opers.org</a> ) Noon – 1 p.m. on:
<b>Coshocton</b> June 11	<b>Newark</b> May 2	April 28 June 2
<b>Dayton</b> July 31	<b>Port Clinton</b> May 14	

### 2008 OPERS HEALTH CARE PLAN SEMINARS

<b>Akron</b> August 22	<b>Columbus</b> August 8 November 7	<b>Marietta</b> June 13
<b>Chillicothe</b> December 12	<b>Huron</b> June 20	<b>Mentor</b> December 5
<b>Cincinnati</b> September 19	<b>Lima</b> September 26	<b>Portsmouth</b> May 8
<b>Cleveland</b> September 12 November 21	<b>Mansfield</b> July 25	<b>Steubenville</b> July 11
		<b>Toledo</b> November 12

### OHIO DEFERRED COMPENSATION AT OPERS

During the entire month of April representatives from the Ohio Deferred Compensation Program will be at OPERS during business hours. These representatives will be available to meet with members regarding any aspect of the program. Representatives can provide estimates, discuss disbursement at retirement, and assist with completing paperwork. Those not currently participating in the program can learn how to set up an account. Please contact OPERS at 1-800-222-7377 to make an appointment.

## 2008 calendar of educational seminars

### 2008 PROVIDING LONG-TERM AWARENESS NOW

**Perrysburg**  
October 16

**Strongsville**  
June 18

### 2008 RETIREMENT AWARENESS PROGRAM

**Cincinnati (East)**  
August 27

**Mansfield**  
August 28

**Sharonville**  
December 3

**Independence**  
October 22

**Perrysburg**  
October 15

**Strongsville**  
September 25

### 2008 RETIREMENT READINESS

**Cincinnati (North)**  
December 4

**Independence**  
October 23

**Perrysburg**  
October 17

**Eastlake**  
August 14

**Mansfield**  
September 3

**Sharonville**  
December 4

### 2008 REMOTE COUNSELING SESSIONS

**Cincinnati Eastgate**  
Nov. 17 - 20

**Elyria/ Lorain**  
Aug. 4 - 7

**Wickliffe**  
July 21 -24

**Cuyahoga Falls**  
Oct. 6 - 9

**Perrysburg**  
Oct. 27 - 30

**Wooster**  
July 7 - 10

**Dover/New Philadelphia**  
Sept. 29 - Oct. 2

**Strongsville**  
Nov. 3 - 6

**Youngstown**  
Sept. 8 - 11

## 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*



Ohio Public Employees  
Retirement System

277 East Town Street Columbus, OH 43215-4642

# Ohio PERS

NEWS

YOUR BENEFIT CONNECTION

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*Printed in Ohio on paper with a 10% post-consumer content*

## **2007 personal statement of estimated benefits** **mailed to members in March and April** *(continued from page 3)*

Your statement contains valuable, personalized information. Please keep it with your important financial records so you can refer to it as needed. If you misplace your statement or require a duplicate for any reason throughout the year, you can view and print a full color

copy of your 2007 statement via MBS at [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org). You will need to register for MBS. Registration is a simple process and instructions can be found by clicking on the MBS log-in button on our Web site home page.