

## EMPLOYER PORTAL OPERATIONAL

After several months of brainstorming, polling employers, gathering ideas from PERSI's Employer Service Center (ESC) staff, and completing the technological design, the Employer Portal is operational and ready for employers to use.

### What is the Employer Portal?

The Employer Portal is a restricted section of the Employer Information page on the PERSI Web site. It has customized views, features, and security outside the Web site and can only be accessed by employers. It was designed to increase efficient communication between ESC staff and employers, and provide additional tools to help employers administer their responsibilities for PERSI.

### Who Can Use the Portal?

The Employer Portal is restricted to authorized personnel. Only those who have registered on the PERSI Web site AND have been designated by their employer as "authorized PERSI contacts" can access the portal. Authorized contacts who have already registered on the PERSI Web site to view their personal account information, don't need to register again to use the Employer Portal. They will use their current email address, existing password, and employer ID number to log in to the Employer Portal.

### Training

Employers attending one of the upcoming employer

meetings will receive training on how to use the Employer Portal. Employers not attending the meetings are encouraged to have their authorized contacts familiarize themselves with the portal on their own. ESC staff is always available to answer questions. They can be reached by calling 287-9525 locally or toll-free 1(866) 887-9525 from elsewhere in Idaho.

### Portal Features

The Employer Portal home page is a main menu that includes links to:

- News To Use
- Employer Handbook
- Message Board
- PETRA
- PERSI Web site home page
- Retirement SSN Lookup

### The Future

The Employer Portal may change over time as PERSI identifies new ways to make this effective tool even better for employers, and as employers share their thoughts on how to maximize it to its fullest potential.

PERSI views the Employer Portal as a way to overcome communication barriers and as a tool for keeping employers constantly informed. Employer feedback is welcomed and encouraged.

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## HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS ONLINE

The newly updated member handbook is now available online. Previously, PERSI relied on employers to get handbooks to members. That process changed this year to ensure up-to-date information is always available and to reduce costs. PERSI is no longer mass mailing handbooks to employers for distribution; instead the current handbook is available on the PERSI Web site at [www.persi.idaho.gov](http://www.persi.idaho.gov). Members interested in receiving a handbook can simply request one by calling the PERSI Answer Center at (208) 334-3365 in the Boise area or 1(800) 451-8228 from other parts of the state.

In the next month or so, PERSI will begin mailing handbooks to new members, who will be identified from employer transmittals.

Although PERSI is no longer giving a supply of handbooks to employers, those who want something for new employee packets can always print the *Benefits At A Glance* flyer from the PERSI Web site.

# 2007 LEGISLATION UPDATE

The State legislature considered a number of bills affecting PERSI during its most recent session. The following is a brief overview of the PERSI-related bills going into effect on July 1, 2007. The PERSI web site has more information on all legislation impacting PERSI and its members.

**SB 1001: Technical Corrections.** This bill has three components:

(1) Brings PERSI law into compliance with the Federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law governing reemployment of veterans and the benefits provided.

(2) Corrects a bill passed during last year's session requiring disability applications to be filed within one year of the date of the disability. The bill clarifies that a disability application must actually be filed within one year of the date of the member's last contribution.

(3) Clarifies that a member who retires early cannot return to any employment, including temporary, contract, or leased employment, with the same employer within 90 days.

**SB 1002: Unused Sick Leave Program Assets Held in Trust.** The bill clarifies that the assets of the program shall be held in trust; the PERSI Retirement Board is the trustee and is indemnified; and the

assets may be commingled for investment purposes with other assets managed by the PERSI Board.

**SB 1003: Employers That Fail to Report Qualified Employment of a Retiree.** This bill specifies that it is the obligation of employers to report employment of all PERSI-eligible employees in a timely and accurate manner. If the eligible employment of a retiree is not reported timely and accurately, it can create a hardship on the retiree who must refund PERSI benefits and contributions plus interest. Under this law, if an employer fails to report reemployment of a retiree accurately, the employer will be required to pay PERSI all sums owed by the employee and employer. The employer may, at their discretion, recoup employee payment from the retiree.

**HB 0202: Retiree Return to Work – Teachers Retired Reemployment.** This bill amends existing law to allow for retirement-in-place for teachers and administrators who retired with an unreduced benefit and are at least age 62. This will allow teachers and administrators to return to work immediately after retiring as long as they meet the requirements. The bill includes a proposal for a sunset clause 5 years after enactment. The employer of a rehired retiree will pay employer contributions on the salary paid to the employee, which is estimated to fund the impact on PERSI.

## Notes

Retirement Board Chairman [Jody Olson](#) was re-elected to the Board of the Council of Institutional Investors, a nonprofit shareowner-rights organization that works to educate members and the public about corporate governance.

At the March 27, 2007 meeting of the PERSI Board, Executive Director Alan Winkle presented a work plan to review Sudan divestment. The plan calls for careful review of the law, PERSI's fiduciary duty to members, any investment ramifications, and the administrative impacts. Over the next several months, PERSI will continue to study and discuss the divestment issue before any final decision is made this summer.

PERSI welcomes two new Financial Technicians. Linda Whitney joined the Employer Service Center on March 19th and Steve Jones will be coming on board on April 17th. Both come to PERSI with a financial background.