



April 2007

Pension Division Newsletter

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March 31 Reporting Deadline Has Passed

The 2006 reporting year forms were due by March 31, 2007 for volunteer fire relief associations with assets and liabilities of less than \$200,000. If you have not yet submitted your 2006 forms, please do so as soon as possible. Reporting forms are reviewed in the order received. Late forms are reviewed after all timely filed forms, which means that relief associations that submit forms late have less time to address any questions before the fall certification deadlines for fire state aid. Late forms therefore can result in a delay in receipt of your fire state aid. Copies of the reporting forms are available in the Forms section of the State Auditor's website at www.auditor.state.mn.us. Relief association trustees can choose the online automated Excel forms or manually complete PDF copies of the forms.

If you have questions regarding your reporting requirements or have not received a username and password to access the online forms, please contact Gail Richie at (651) 282-6110 or Gail.Richie@state.mn.us. Reporting forms for relief associations with assets or liabilities of at least \$200,000 are due by June 30, 2007.

Audit and Attestation Requirements

Relief associations with assets or liabilities of at least \$200,000 must have an audit report completed each year. Once your relief association exceeds the \$200,000 threshold, your association must continue to have an audit performed, even if the assets or liabilities fall below the threshold in a subsequent year. The audit report becomes required the year after your relief association exceeds the threshold. So, if your relief association exceeds the \$200,000 threshold during 2007, an audit report will be required beginning with the 2008 reporting year.

For relief associations with assets and liabilities below \$200,000 an attestation is required rather than a full audit report. Having an attestation performed means that your Reporting Form (RF) is reviewed by an accountant or auditor and the accountant or auditor certifies that certain financial information is accurate. The accountant or auditor can certify the financial information by either signing the last page of the RF or by attaching a separate attestation letter to the form.

Please be advised that your relief association must submit either the attestation or the audit report even if your forms are submitted online or completed using the FRPAS program.

Online Reporting Form Helpful Hints

Following are several helpful hints to assist you when using the online forms:

- **Enable Macros** – The online reporting forms contain macros that allow you to unhide rows to provide additional reporting detail. The instructions for the forms and comments within the forms explain where these macros can be used. Remember to select the “Enable Macros” option when opening the online forms. If you do not receive a message box prompting you to enable the macros when you open a form, your version of Excel is probably set to automatically disable all macros. To change this security setting, open Excel and choose Tools from your menu bar, scroll down to Macro, and select Security. On the Security Level tab select Medium. Save the setting, close Excel, and then re-open the online form. If you are still unable to unhide rows in the forms, please contact your pension analyst for assistance.
- **Entering Phone Numbers** – Phone number fields on the online reporting forms are formatted. To enter phone numbers, just type in the 10 digits, without parentheses, spaces or dashes. The phone number will display in its conventional format once entered.

If you have questions regarding the online reporting forms, please contact your pension analyst at the phone number or email address provided at the bottom of this newsletter.

Survivor Benefits and Authorized Beneficiaries

The Pension Division has received several inquiries regarding survivor benefits and authorized beneficiaries. State law allows for the payment of survivor benefits to surviving spouses and surviving children, or if none, to designated beneficiaries. If there are survivors but no designated beneficiary, relief associations are authorized to pay a death benefit to the estate of the deceased active firefighter. This means that if a relief association pays a survivor benefit, the relief association cannot recognize a designated beneficiary if that person is different from the member’s surviving spouse or surviving children.

Training Thank You!

The Office of the State Auditor would like to thank all of the relief association officers and trustees that attended one of our training sessions this spring. We had the chance to connect face-to-face with almost 400 relief association trustees. We appreciate having the opportunity to discuss your questions and concerns, and encourage you to contact our Office anytime questions arise. If you have suggestions for future training sessions please contact Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or Rose.Hennessy-Allen@state.mn.us.

If you have questions please contact us:

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