



# General Retirement System City of Detroit

## Pension Perspectives

FEBRUARY 2000

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

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### A smooth Y2K transition

The Board of Trustees and staff of the General Retirement System would like to take this time to assure our members that all is definitely well with the General Retirement system. Although much was made about the Y2K transition, we are happy to report that our systems came through the transition unscathed. All major operations are functioning normally as we enter the start of the year 2000. We do not anticipate any problems in the future but we are carefully monitoring the situation.

During the past few years, the Retirement System has implemented a comprehensive effort to effectively prepare for Y2K. As a result, we fully expect to continue to serve members and retirees on an ongoing and reliable basis. Should any major unanticipated problem arise, we will provide updates through our Web site ([www.rscd.org](http://www.rscd.org)).

In early 1998, the Retirement System began taking action to ensure that the data processing systems would properly process date and time data from, into and between the 19<sup>th</sup> (yes we have retirees born in the 1800's) and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. There were well over a million lines of code reviewed and over 700 programs were modified and/or replaced. Several work years of highly skilled effort went into this daunting task to bring a successful operation into the year 2000. **Was it all needed? YES! Could we have survived without it? In short, NO!** Our testing showed that our mission critical areas would not operate without modification or replacement, retirees would not be paid, retirement estimates could not be calculated, and supporting functions would be at a standstill. The continued operation of mission critical areas depended upon these changes being made successfully, and they were!

Although delivery of services, including electronic transfer of funds, is

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### Sorry for the delay

The staff of Pension Perspectives would like to apologize to the members for the delay in mailing this newsletter to you. We felt it would be best to delay the printing in order to get the most current information, regarding Y2K.

# Actively Speaking

## *(Y2K continued)*

dependent upon many external entities, according to the latest information available, the Retirement System has no indication of problems with the delivery of such services. However, because problems may still arise, despite everyone's best efforts, we developed contingency plans for key components, including January retirement payments, ensuring that retirees would be paid regardless of the possibility of problems.

RSCD will continue efforts to provide quality service now and into the 21st century.



## **What to bring to your retirement interview**

Ready to retire? Make your retirement interview a smooth event by being prepared. Your interviewer will need certain documentation from you. Listed below are the items you will need to bring with you at the time of your retirement interview.

- ⇒ Proof of Birth (yourself and your beneficiary) acceptable documents include:
  - \* Birth Certificate
  - \* Marriage License
  - \* Registration of Birth
  - \* Voter's Certification
  - \* School record
  - \* DD-214 form (Military discharge)
  
- ⇒ Letter from your department (intent to retire)
  
- ⇒ If it is a Disability Retirement, also bring:
  - \* Name & Address (including zip) of doctors you wish the Retirement Systems to contact

Having this information readily available can make the interviewing process flow smoothly.

## **Rule changes for Option beneficiary election after retirement**

On October 13, 1999 the General Retirement System Board of Trustees passed a resolution which changes the requirements for a retirant to change his/her option election after retirement.

The resolution allows a retiree to change their option election up until they cash any monthly pension check OR until 180 days after their retirement date, **whichever comes first.**

Prior to this resolution the only requirement was that the retirant could make a change at any time as long as they had not cashed any monthly pension check.



## **EMT's can retire after 25 years of service with full benefits**

Emergency medical technicians were granted a change in eligibility for service retirement from 30 years of service to eligibility after 25 years of service.

All members of the International Union of Operation Engineers (bargaining unit 3100) are effected by this change. This means that any member who on July 1, 1995 or later has 25 or more years of service are eligible to retire with full benefits.

In addition, effective July 1, 1995, emergency medical technicians that have retired with a duty-disability are eligible for a conversion after attaining 25 years of service.

Members also have the right to purchase Pre-Employment Military Service.

## Census 2000 is around the corner

On April 1, 2000, Census Day, the future of the City of Detroit will be in the hands of all Detroiters. For every man, woman and child missed in the 2000 Census, Detroit will lose \$3,000 in state and federal funds per person over a 10-year period.

It is important that every Detroit resident respond to the Census. Each completed form that is mailed in on April 1, 2000 will help to provide vital information that will affect the quality of life for all Detroiters. For example, federal, state and local funds for health care, police protection, senior advocacy, information and referral services. In addition, assistance to the needy and handicapped is made available from grants determined by Census information. Our responses determine the number of seats the state will have in the U. S. House of Representatives, plus maintain and increase vital services for our younger generation, including WIC and Headstart.

Children are a major focus in the 2000 Census, especially in Detroit. Nationally, children accounted for more than half of the undercount in the 1990 Census. Sadly, Detroit was among one of the nation's largest cities with a devastating undercount of children: 6.2 percent. The U. S. Census Bureau is hoping to alleviate the problem of overlooking children by adding a new question on the aimed at grandparents and adult who act as caregivers. Remember, Census 2000 is your chance to make sure that the new century begins with an accurate and complete picture of your community.

Responding to the Census is safe and completely confidential. The information collected in the Census is protected by law and the Census Bureau, by law, cannot give anyone answers to Census questions. The Census does not ask for Social Security Numbers, Driver's License Numbers, or for any citizenship documents. It is important to remember that your support can lead to

Census continued

a more accurate count in our community. Start by setting the record straight by helping dispel myths about the confidentiality and uses of the census. Reassure others about Census confidentiality.

As April 1, 2000 approaches, the City of Detroit is continuing to work inform all citizens about the Census process listed below. Help will be available in filling out the form at neighborhood Questionnaire Assistance Centers throughout the City.

In early March, 2000, the Bureau will send out an advance letter to all Detroit residents. The actual questionnaire will be mailed-out to households between March 20<sup>th</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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## Benefits Division Offices Moved

The Benefits Division of the Human Resources Department has moved their office to 1300 Rosa Parks Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48216. The toll free number for the Benefits Division remains 888-288-2684. The local phone number will be changed, but was unknown when this newsletter was sent to the printer.



### Reminder:

Annuity refund applications and Change of Nomination of Beneficiary forms are available for download at the Retirement System web site located at [www.rscd.org](http://www.rscd.org). So if you have internet access and need these forms, visit the web site.

**PENSION PERSPECTIVES**

**Retirement Systems Directory**

**Main Number:  
(313)224-3362  
Toll Free 800 339-8344**

**Administration**

Nick Degel Ext. 204  
Walter Stampor Ext. 206  
Joe Glanton Ext. 203  
Thomas Berriman Ext. 202  
Terry Sobczak Ext. 209  
Rick Huddleston Ext. 201

**Administration Support**

JoAnn Harrison Ext. 217  
Kenneth Howard Ext. 256  
Terrie Lawrence Ext. 258  
Janet Lenear Ext. 255  
Juanita Waller Ext. 257

**Interviewers**

Shirley Hill Ext. 218  
Betty Lowe Ext. 219

**Computations**

Deborah Wilkerson Ext. 235  
Cheneta Campbell Ext. 236

**Re-Exams**

Joanne Williams Ext. 238

**Pension Payroll**

Myron Terrell Ext. 240  
Tasha Cowan Death Notices Ext. 239  
Glorecia Russell Estimates Ext. 237  
Veronica Thomas Direct Deposit Ext. 221

**Annuity**

Cynthia Thomas Ext. 244  
David Cetlinski Ext. 242  
Latisha Moon Ext. 241  
Tenecia Stockton Ext. 243

**Accounting**

Marilyn Roc Berdijo Ext. 230  
Beverly Scruggs Ext. 225  
Angela Keeler Ext. 223  
Eddie Park Ext. 228  
Elaine Poznanski Ext. 231  
Rena Presbitero Ext. 229  
Tek-Sin The Ext. 232  
Denise Miller Ext. 224

**Editor: Pension Perspectives**

Bridgett Hardy Ext. 213

***Important Numbers:***

Blue Cross/Blue Shield Traditional  
(800) 951-BLUE

Blue Care Network  
(800) 662-6667

Blue Cross Preferred Plan  
(313) 225-0843

Health Alliance Plan  
(800) 422-4641

Omni Care  
(800) 925-4550

The Wellness Plan  
(800) 875-WELL

Total Health Care  
(313) 871-7812

Co-Op Optical  
(800) 368-5160

Heritage Eye Care  
(800) 252-2053

Golden Dental Plan  
(810) 573-8118

Social Security  
Administration  
(800) 772-1213

Detroit Retired City Employees  
Association  
(313) 927-0491

\*\* All fringe benefit questions should now be referred to the Benefits Division of the Human Resources Department. **Toll Free (888) 288-2684** \*\*

# Retiree Corner

## Death benefit coverage....

As a retired City employee you are covered (if enrolled) by the City Death Benefit (\$1,680 + \$84 for each year beyond 10 years of service). If your pension check stub shows a \$.09 deduction for "BenPln" you are covered by the Death Benefit.

If you are enrolled, be sure to keep your beneficiary information up to date. Retirement Systems staff has seen many instances where the wrong person is named as the beneficiary on retirees records. It is important, for your beneficiaries sake, that you keep your retirement System record current.

If you have a change in your circumstance (I. e. marriage or death) you should contact the Retirement System for a change of beneficiary form (or download from our website at [www.rscd.org](http://www.rscd.org)) . If you are unsure about who you have as your beneficiary, contact the Retirement System as (313)224-3362, ext. 200. Beneficiary information cannot be given out over the phone, but can be mailed or obtained in person.

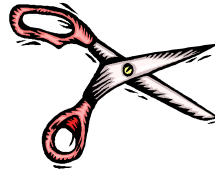


## Reporting process for disability earnings has changed

Effective on September 1, 1999 the reporting process for disability earnings was changed from a monthly notification to a quarterly one. This now means that you will receive a report of disability beneficiary earnings form every three (3) months. You should receive these forms on or about the first of January, April, July and October. On these forms you will report any outside earnings for the past three months. (NOTE: outside earnings are defined as income earned from working another job).

## The Check is in the mail...

Here is a year 2000 schedule of the dates your monthly retirement benefits will be mailed to you. You may want to clip this schedule and keep it in a handy location.



Year 2000 Pension Check Mailing Dates		
<b>Jan</b>	Monday	<b>Jan 31</b>
<b>Feb</b>	Tuesday	Feb 29
<b>Mar</b>	Friday	Mar 31
<b>Apr</b>	Friday	Apr 28
<b>May</b>	Wednesday	May 31
<b>Jun</b>	Friday	Jun 30
<b>Jul</b>	Monday	Jul 31
<b>Aug</b>	Thursday	Aug 31
<b>Sep</b>	Friday	Sep 29
<b>Oct</b>	Tuesday	Oct 31
<b>Nov</b>	Thursday	Nov 30
<b>Dec</b>	Friday	Dec 29

## Direct depositors....

If you have your retirement check direct deposited to your bank account it is important that you keep the Retirement System informed of any change in your correspondence (mailing) address.

The correspondence address is used to mail your monthly check stub, annual tax statement, this newsletter and any other mailing from the Retirement

Year 2000 Pension Direct Deposit Dates		
<b>Jan</b>	Tuesday	Feb 1
<b>Feb</b>	Wednesday	Mar 1
<b>Mar</b>	Monday	Apr 3
<b>Apr</b>	Monday	May 1
<b>May</b>	Thursday	Jun 1
<b>Jun</b>	Monday	Jul 3
<b>Jul</b>	Tuesday	Aug 1
<b>Aug</b>	Friday	Sep 1
<b>Sep</b>	Monday	Oct 2
<b>Oct</b>	Wednesday	Nov 1
<b>Nov</b>	Friday	Dec 1
<b>Dec</b>	Tuesday	Jan 2

System or the City Benefits Division. Changes to your correspondence address must be submitted in writing including your social security number and **must clearly state that the requested change is for your correspondence address only.**

# *Pension Perspectives*

Retirement Systems City of Detroit  
2 Woodward Ave. Room 908  
Detroit, MI 48226-3413

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U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO.  
788

PENSION PERSPECTIVES

## Census 2000 continued

By April 1, 2000 all questionnaire forms should be filled out and mailed back in.

The City is also encouraging everyone to become a "Knowledgeable Neighbor" This program, developed by the City of Detroit, is calling for volunteers from every City block to volunteer to help count the households that do not return their Census forms. A "Knowledgeable Neighbor" only has to report the number of people living on their block. No names or personal information is required. To volunteer, call the Detroit Census 2000 Operation Center at (313) 967-2000.

The Census Bureau also has full and part-time positions available as Census Takers and Crew Leader. Starting pay is \$10.50 per hour for office work, \$13.75 for enumerators and \$16.75 for supervisor. Call 1-888-325-7733 (toll free) to apply.

Remember Detroit, the future of our City is in our hands. For more information on how you may help, contact the Detroit Census 2000 Operation Office at 567-2000, or visit the City of Detroit Census website at [www.ci.detroit.mi.us](http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us).

## City cancels contract with Universal Standard Health Care

Universal Standard Health Care has provided lab test coverage for all Blue Cross/Blue Shield Traditional covered employees and non-Medicare retirees since November, 1992. During 1999, Universal Standard was placed in bankruptcy.

The City's contract with Universal Standard was cancelled and Blue Cross/Blue Shield began providing lab services on November 1, 1999. All affected employees and retirees should have received a mailing from the City Benefits Division detailing this change.

If you are covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield Traditional insurance and have not received a mailing, contact the City Benefits Division at 1-888-288-2684.

## Reminder:

For questions regarding health insurance claims or services rendered, contact your insurance carrier and not the City Benefits Division. Telephone numbers for health care providers can be found on page 4.