

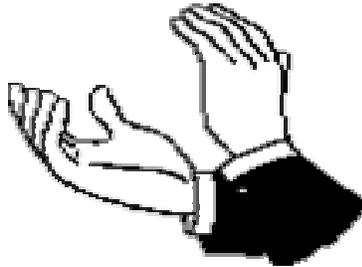
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TFFR News Briefs for Employers from the ND Retirement and Investment Office
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Phone: 701-328-9885 or 1-800-952-2970 www.discovernd.com/rio

January 2004

Welcome Back Curt!

Some of you might have heard an unfamiliar voice at the other end of the phone when you contacted TFFR recently. Curt? Curt who? Ohhh! Curt. On January 5, 2004, Curtis Richter, Retirement Accountant, returned to work after serving our country on active military duty.



At this time, we would like to update you on the employer reporting duties assigned to Curt and Durene. Curt will be working on salary, service credit, and other reporting problems, internet reporting, model change analysis, and employer education. Durene will continue working with you on a day-to-day basis on monthly reporting issues.

Negotiations

Salary negotiations may have come and gone for your district, however, other districts may just be starting the process. If changing your employer payment model is being discussed, please note that TFFR is available to answer questions concerning the methods an employer may use to pay member retirement contributions. We can provide an analysis on how changing models impacts the district and teachers. An example of an employer analysis has been included with this mailing. If you would like an analysis, please contact Curt at the administrative office.

Report Card Enclosed

Enclosed is the recent issue of the Report Card newsletter. This newsletter is sent twice a year to the non-retired membership. I hope you find the information helpful. Here are a few highlights from this issue:

- Actuarial valuation report
- Annual report summary and financial statements
- Remaining outreach schedule for 2003-04
- Pension software update
- Retirement process Q & A

2003 Annual Financial Report Available

The Retirement and Investment Office Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) may be viewed from our website, www.discovernd.com/rio, or a copy may be requested by contacting the administrative office. This report is a complete review of the financial, investment, and actuarial conditions of the State Investment Board and the Teachers' Fund for Retirement.

Internet Reporting



In the upcoming months, TFFR will be adding districts to internet reporting. If your district is on the waiting list, start watching the mail for your set up and testing information. If you are not sure your district is on the waiting list or would like to be added to this list, contact our office. If you have any questions about internet reporting, please give Curt a call.

Email Use

Isn't technology a wonderful thing? Over the past several months, we have worked hard to gather email addresses for all TFFR employers. TFFR will start using email to inform employers of reporting issues and reminders. If your email address changes, please send the new address to curichter@state.nd.us.



Retirement Education

In April, the Retirement Services Division will be scheduling its outreach programs for the 2004-05 school year. If your school would like to host a program, please contact the administrative office before March 15. The outreach programs are available free of charge and personalized information will be made available to participants in most of the programs. If you plan to host a program, a staff member must be available at all times to assist the TFFR representative. The following programs are available:

- **Group presentation**

A TFFR representative presents a one-hour overview of TFFR. This presentation can be provided as part of an in-service or done after school.

Minimum participation – 20.

- **Individual benefits counseling**

A TFFR representative requires a private location in your school to visit with teachers and provide them with personalized retirement information. The teachers will contact our office and schedule a 30-minute session. The sessions are generally scheduled from 2 - 8 pm.

Minimum participation – 8.

- **Pre-retirement seminar**

This six-hour seminar includes presentations on TFFR, Social Security, PERS health insurance, financial planning, and estate planning. The program can be scheduled as a full day program or two after school sessions.

Minimum participation – 20.

- **Retirement 101**

A TFFR representative provides a 60-minute presentation on TFFR basics for new teachers. This program can be utilized with a mentoring program already established in your school.

Minimum participation – 20.

- **Teachers in transition**

This 60-minute program covers TFFR basics and options for teachers faced with loss or change in employment occurring from a school closing or consolidation.

Minimum participation – 5.

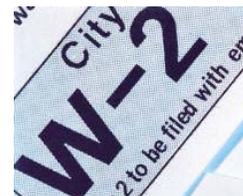
Returning Reservists

Employees returning from a military leave of absence must complete a Member Action Form. Once we are aware they have returned to covered employment, TFFR will determine if the member is eligible to purchase any lost service credit and/or salary under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Tax Treatment of TFFR Contributions

The following information, as noted on page 19 of the *TFFR Employer Guide*, is to serve as a reminder regarding accurate reporting of salary deferrals on the W-2 form.

TFFR is a 401(a) defined benefit plan and its contributions are mandatory, not elective. Under all models, the amount of TFFR contributions withheld or paid by the district is not required on the W-2 form. However, if the district wishes to place this information on the W-2, it belongs in Box 14.



School districts and participating employers are responsible for accurately preparing and reporting employee tax information.