# THE LATEST WORD

June 2003

**Official IPERS Information ▲ Retain For Your Records**
Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System ▲ PO Box 9117 ▲ Des Moines IA 50306-9117
1-800-622-3849 or 515-281-0020 ▲ Benefits Fax Number 515-281-0053 ▲ Accounting Fax Number 515-281-0055
E-mail: info@ipers.org          Web site: www.ipers.org

# ICON: IPERS Connection Online

As this article goes to press, twenty-four employers are in the midst of testing and evaluating the new employers' web site functions contained in our ICON system. They are providing us with feedback on the functions of:

- reporting wages by electronic file transfer or by completing a spreadsheet-like screen;
- adding new employees to the system;
- updating an already-enrolled employee's demographic information;
- updating the employer's information;
- retrieving historical reporting data; and
- using an e-mail function to contact IPERS.

The ICON project staff is eagerly anticipating the feedback and ready to move on to the phased-in deployment of the system for general use. Further information as to its availability will be communicated through *The Latest Word* and other sources.

# Reporting Wages on Diskette

A significant number of wage reporting diskettes arrive with incorrect file names. The file name on the diskette must be IPERS.DAT. Our computer system cannot open the file unless it is so named. Please check your file name to see if it complies.

How can you tell if your file is named correctly? Find the file you downloaded to your diskette using Windows Explorer. If it isn't named IPERS.DAT, right-mouse click on the file name, choose Rename option and type in the appropriate name, and then hit enter. It does not matter if it is capitalized or not.

Some computers have Windows Explorer configured to hide file extensions for known file types. In this case you are running into the risk of having a double file name extension (i.e. ipers.dat.txt.). To avoid this problem, open Windows Explorer and choose Tools → Folder Options. In the popped-up pane go to second tab (View) and uncheck the "Hide file extensions for known file types" option.

If you try to open the IPERS.DAT file to make sure it looks good, you might be prompted with a window asking you to select an application to associate this file with for opening. Select Notepad and choose "Always open with."

# Reserve Peace Officers

The commencement of warmer weather welcomes the beginning of Iowa's outdoor activities. Events such as parades, celebrations, and fairs may require hiring reserve peace officers to assist with traffic and security. Please note that wages paid to reserve peace officers are excluded from IPERS coverage.

If you have concerns about the appropriateness of designating an employee as a reserve peace officer, you should contact the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). In addition to other law enforcement officer certifications, the ILEA maintains records on reserve peace officer certifications.

If you discover that you have covered the wages of reserve peace officers, please contact the IPERS Employer Relations Team for assistance with corrections.

# Refunds Processing

Employers -- we need your help. IPERS experiences many situations in which our members do not follow the bona fide refund rules. Consequently, as a part of our fiduciary responsibility to all of our members, we must collect the refund monies which were paid out to those members. This becomes especially problematic when some of the money is rolled over into another plan.

Since employers help execute members' refund applications and are IPERS' eyes and ears in the field, we are asking for your assistance. You are only required by law to certify the facts of the member's employment with you. The following advice is suggested only as a "friendly reminder" to them.

1) Members are not eligible for a refund unless they have terminated all IPERS covered employment. If the member works for more than one IPERS covered employer, the member must terminate employment with **all** public employers and have **each** employer complete the employer page included with the refund application.

2) Members must stay out of all IPERS covered employment for a period of 30 days from the date of their last check in order to meet the bona fide refund requirements. Therefore, it is very important for their last check to be issued as close to their resignation date as possible and for the member to understand that the 30-day period does not begin until the date of their last check.

3) If the member indicates to you in any way that they have not terminated from all IPERS covered positions or will have new IPERS covered employment within 30 days of their last paycheck from you, please advise them that they are not eligible to receive the refund because they will be unable to meet the bona fide refund period required by the law.

4) Keep good records of the dates of all employees' employment within your organization. Without this information, it can become very difficult to collect monies that were paid out even though IPERS later learns the employee may have violated the bona fide refund rule.

You are the primary contact with our members--please help them understand the refund process. It will save you time in the long run because IPERS will not need to verify the facts of the member's employment to insure that the law and regulations are being followed.

It may also save our members from the burdens imposed by the necessity to collect refunds improperly paid due to a bona fide refund rule violation. This is particularly true for your part-time employees. Thank you very much for your assistance in this very important matter.

# REMINDERS:

❖ *Annual Statements of IPERS Benefits* were mailed to members in May 2003. If any of your employees did not receive a statement, please have them contact IPERS by phone, mail, or e-mail at one of the addresses or numbers listed on the front.

# IPERS 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Celebration And Conference
"Serving our Members and Iowa since 1953"

The agenda for the IPERS 50th Anniversary Celebration and Conference scheduled for July 30 and 31 has been finalized, and other activities are moving along on schedule. The program has something to offer for active members, retirees, and employers, and all are encouraged to register early for the event. You are reminded that the cost for registration before the conference is $20.00 and registration at the door (if space is available) is $25.00. Below are the agenda and the registration form:

**July 30, 2003**

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| 5:00–6:00 PM | "Get Acquainted" Reception at Four Points Sheraton Hotel – Registration |
| 6:00 PM | Dinner and Attractions Around Des Moines on Your Own |

Information will be available on Des Moines restaurants and information on events will be posted on the web site within a few weeks of the conference.

**July 31, 2003**

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| 08:00–09:00 AM | Registration and Networking |
| 09:00–09:30 AM | Welcome and Introductions – Donna Mueller, IPERS Chief Executive Officer |
| 09:30–10:00 AM | IPERS' Investments:  Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow – Kathy Comito, Chief Investment Officer |
| 10:15–11:00 AM | Keynote Address:  Defined Benefits vs Defined Contribution Plans – Anna Sullivan, Executive Director, Nebraska PERS |
| 11:00–11:30 AM | The Road Ahead:  Challenges Facing IPERS – Donna Mueller, CEO |
| 11:45–01:00 PM | Recognition Luncheon:  Remarks by Governor Thomas Vilsack (Invited) |
| 01:00–01:30 PM | Legislative Update – Lowell Dauenbaugh, Chair, IPERS Benefits Advisory Committee (Associate Executive Director, ISEA) |
| 01:45–02:30 PM | Workshops (Tour of IPERS Headquarters will run concurrently with workshops) |
| | • Preretirement Planning (Active Members) |
| | • Stretching Scarce Financial Resources in Retirement (Retirees) |
| | • Employer Compliance Review (Employers) |
| 02:45–03:30 PM | Workshops Repeated (Tour of IPERS Headquarters) |

IPERS 50th Anniversary Celebration Registration Form
Name:_____
Street Address:_____
City: _____ State:____ Zip:_____
____Registration fee of $20.00 per person is enclosed*.
      Return no later than July 7, 2003
____I will attend Reception
Send to:  IPERS 50th Anniversary
            Attention:  Kim Pinegar
            P.O. Box  9117
            Des Moines, IA  50306-9117
*For groups, provide list of participants with above information.