

**In this issue:**

- [Jim Puckett named director of the Division of Retirement and Benefits](#)
  - [Benefit Fair comes to Ketchikan April 15-16](#)
  - [Employees can request verification of service](#)
  - [Probationary periods may affect PERS service](#)
  - [FY 2012 Health Reimbursement Arrangement \(HRA\) amounts available](#)
  - [Division seminars are educational](#)
  - [Alaska Retirement Management Board meets April 28-29](#)
  - [PERS and TRS Employer Manuals available online](#)
  - [Updated Forms and Brochures](#)
  - [Who to contact](#)
- 
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## Jim Puckett named director of the Division of Retirement and Benefits

In early February, the Commissioner of the Department of Administration named Pat Shier as acting director of the Division of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) to replace former director Anand Dubey. Jim Puckett, our deputy director, then became acting director of the Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRB).



In early April, the Commissioner of Administration announced that Pat Shier would be the permanent director of ETS. On April 13, the Commissioner announced that Jim Puckett will be the permanent director of DRB effective April 16.

“Jim is a true public servant and I look forward to our continued collaboration,” said Commissioner Becky Hultberg. “A priority for DRB, the department and the Parnell administration is to continue to improve both customer service and government efficiency. Jim is committed to that mission.”

## Benefit Fair comes to Ketchikan April 15-16

Remind your employees that the Ketchikan Benefit Fair begins today, Friday, April 15, and continues through Saturday, at the UAS Ketchikan

campus. Fair sessions begin at 8:30 a.m. on both days. There will be several evening sessions on Friday, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. A detailed [fair schedule and seminar descriptions](#) are posted on our web site.

- Ketchikan Fair Schedule
- Ketchikan Fair Seminar Descriptions

PERS and TRS members of *all* ages are invited to attend the fair. There will be educational workshops to help employees



plan now for their future retirement security. The fair will provide state employees covered under the AlaskaCare Employee Health Plan an opportunity to learn more about available benefits. There will also be sessions on *Optional Benefits* (formerly Supplemental Benefits), the *Supplemental Annuity* and *Deferred Compensation Plans*, and financial planning.

## Employees can request verification of service

If you receive a request for verification of service and/or salary directly from a member of one of the retirement systems, please honor that request. Any member may make such a request; it does not need to come from the Division of Retirement and Benefits.

The Division counselors suggest to members that they have their service verified for a number of reasons:

- to make sure they are vested for a benefit;
- to make sure they are vested for medical benefits (PERS Tier III);
- to make sure they have the years of service needed to be eligible to retire; 30 years for most PERS members (20 years for peace officers/firefighters) or 20 years for teachers;
- to check for any periods of leave without pay that have not been reported to the Division that would affect accrued service; and
- if the member disagrees with service reported to the Division by an employer.

Further information and Verification of Service forms for both the PERS and TRS may be found on the Division's website:

- [PERS Service Verification](#)
- [TRS Service Verification](#)

## Probationary periods may affect PERS service

Some employers have a probationary period that excludes employees from enrollment in the PERS until they have worked a certain period of time (e.g. 30 days, one year, etc.). Such a probationary period means the employee does not begin to accrue service until the period of time is complete.

If you have a *true* probationary period, which excludes employees from enrollment in the PERS, make sure you meet the following guidelines:

- When the employee is finally enrolled in the PERS, the enrollment date must be the date the employee became PERS eligible; it is not the date of hire if the person worked a probationary period.
- The probationary period needs to be defined in your Participation Agreement (not just in a policy manual). The Participation Agreement is a contract between the employer and the Division. If you have a probationary period and it is not in your contract, contact your [regional counselor at the Division](#) to get your Participation Agreement updated. The Division will work with employers who have probationary periods to formally amend their participation agreements to reflect this.
- Remember that excluded probationary time is not considered full-time temporary employment and a member cannot claim it for credit in the system.



## FY 2012 Health Reimbursement Arrangement amounts now available

Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) amounts have been updated on the [Employer Contribution Rates web page for fiscal year 2012](#). Once at the web page, click on the "HRA Amt - DBUL Calc" link in the box near the top of the page to see the amounts.

## Division seminars are educational

Throughout the year the Division offers seminars to help educate employees about their defined benefit plans, the retirement process, and financial planning. New employees entering PERS Tier IV or TRS Tier III can attend a seminar introducing them to the Defined Contribution Retirement Plan.

Encourage your employees to check our [Seminar web page](#) from time to time for topics of



interest. [State of Alaska policy](#) allows employees to attend a Retirement & Benefits sponsored seminar during their regularly scheduled work day and have the time counted as work time. Approval to be away from the work site must be secured from the supervisor in advance.

To navigate to our Seminar web page from the Division home page, click on the "**Counselors**" drop-down menu and then "**Seminars.**"



## **Alaska Retirement Management Board meets in Anchorage April 28-29**

The next regular meeting of the Alaska Retirement Management Board (ARMB) will be April 28-29 in Anchorage at the Dena'Ina Convention Center in the Tubughnenq' Room. The public is invited to attend.

[An agenda will be available before the meeting here](#) where you may also view minutes from past ARMB meetings. For questions about the ARMB, contact the board liaison, [Judy Hall](#), in the Treasury Division, Department of Revenue.

## **PERS and TRS Employer Manuals available online**

The PERS and TRS employer manuals are available on our web site.



The manuals are intended as a resource guide to help employers with questions they may have about the retirement systems. The manuals cover both the PERS and TRS Defined Benefit plans and the Defined Contribution Retirement Plan, which was established on July 1, 2006, and address participation agreements, payment of contributions, member plan education, beneficiary designations and much more.

Each manual has been posted as a PDF on the Division web site.

- [PERS and TRS Employer Manuals](#)

To navigate to the Employer Manuals from the [Employer Services web page](#), click on the "Resources" drop-down menu and then "Employer Manuals."

## PERS and TRS publications available online



The following PERS and TRS publications are available at the "[Publications](#)" link (under the "Resources" menu) on the [Division of Retirement and Benefits website](#):

### PERS Publications

- [PERS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#)
- [Actuarial Valuation Reports](#)
- [Financial Statements](#)

### TRS Publications

- [TRS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#)
- [Actuarial Valuation Reports](#)
- [Financial Statements](#)

**To navigate to any Division reports, follow these steps:**

1. Go to the Division's website at [alaska.gov/drb](http://alaska.gov/drb)
2. Under the "Resources" drop-down menu, click on "[Publications](#)"
3. Click on the appropriate system, plan or fund.

4. Select the report you want to view.

If you prefer a hard copy of these reports, please contact the Division of Retirement and Benefits at (907) 465-5711.

## Updated Forms and Brochures

The following forms and brochures have been updated since the last newsletter. Please be sure to use only the updated forms. Printing from the [Forms & Brochures page](#) on the Division website will assure you always have the most current version.

Form No.	Description
	No forms/brochures have been updated since the last issue.

## Who to Contact

[Contact the editor](#) with questions or suggestions about this newsletter. [Archives to 2008](#) are available.

- [Audit Section](#) (907) 465-5707
- [eReporting/Payroll Processing](#)
- [Financial Education and Advice Services](#) (800) 232-0859
- [Health and Optional Benefits Section](#) (907) 465-4460
- [Retirement Counseling Services](#) (907) 465-4460
- [Retirement Customer Service Center](#) (907) 465-4460
- [HealthSmart \(formerly Wells Fargo TPA\)](#) (877) 517-6370

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