

**DON'T MISS OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS!
AUGUST 15 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2005**



Chairperson
Susan Grimes Munsell

Benefits Information Was Mailed to Your Home

You should have received a package of materials announcing Open Enrollment for insurance. The Open Enrollment period is the time to make changes to your health, vision, dental, long-term disability, employee life, and dependent life coverage. You may also add qualified dependents at this time. Changes can only be made during open enrollment or within 31 days of a life event.



Commissioner
F. Thomas Lewand

This is your opportunity to ensure you have the coverage you want or need. Your benefits will remain the same for the 2005-2006 fiscal year if no changes are made. The next opportunity to make changes to your insurance will be during the 2006 Open Enrollment period.

MI HR Self-Service Must Be Used For All Open Enrollment Changes

All changes to your benefits must be entered in your MI HR Self-Service account. You can review benefits and other human resources information tailored to your specific employment situation at www.michigan.gov/selfserv. Click the "Log into MI HR Information" blue crayon (your employee ID and password are required to access your account.) Access to your account is available 7 days per week, 24 hours per day.



Commissioner
Sherry L. McMillan

If you do not have access to a computer or need assistance, please contact the MI HR Service Center at (877) 766-6447 to enroll by telephone. The Service Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and can assist you with any questions you might have.

Five Steps to Help Ensure Your Successful Completion of Open Enrollment

Everyone is encouraged to review their insurance coverage to ensure its accuracy. Log into your MI HR Self-Service account at www.michigan.gov/selfserv. Click the "Log in From Work" or "Log in From Home" link. At the Welcome Page, click the "Open Enrollment" button at the top of your screen.



Commissioner
James P. Pitz

1. Review your current benefits.
2. Review your benefit options for FY 2005-2006.
3. Review and change dependent information. If no updates are needed, you may stop here.
4. Make your benefit selections. Print your confirmation statement for your records. Please note: If you exit the system before receiving the "Your enrollment has been successful" message, your changes will NOT be recorded.

5. If you are adding dependents during this Open Enrollment period, mail or fax [dependent eligibility documentation](#) to the MI HR Service Center by October 3, 2005 at Department of Civil Service, MI HR Service Center, P.O. Box 30002, Lansing, MI 48909; fax (517) 241-5892.

Detailed instructions for completing your enrollment in Self-Service can be found on page 9 of the [2005-2006 Insurance Open Enrollment](#) brochure mailed to your home. The brochure can also be found on the Employee Benefits website.

WAGE INCREASES EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2005

General wage increases for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2005, have been determined for all employee groups, with the exception of the State Police Enlisted Unit where negotiations are currently taking place. The following chart provides details on the pay increases by employee group.

Group Employee	Unit	Pay Increase (10/1/05)	Pay Increase (4/9/06)
MSEA	Labor and Trades	1%	1%
	Safety and Regulatory	1%	1%
MCO	Security	1%	1%
SEIU 517M	Scientific and Engineering	1%	1%
	Human Services Support	1%	1%
	Technical	1%	1%
MSPTA	State Police Enlisted	n/a	n/a
UAW	Human Services	1%	1%
	Administrative Support	1%	1%
AFSCME	Institutional	1%	1%
NERE	Business and Administration	1%	1%
	Managerial	1%	1%
	Supervisory	1%	1%
	Confidential	1%	1%

The October pay increase will be reflected on your October 20, 2005 earnings statement. Compensation schedules can be found on the Department of Civil Service (DCS) website at: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs>. Click on "Rules and Regulations," then "[Compensation Plan](#)."

Eligible employees will receive their longevity payments on the November 3, 2005 pay date. If you would like to see the amount of your longevity payment or if you do not know if you are eligible to receive a longevity payment, please log into your MI HR Information account at <https://mihinfo.state.mi.us> and click "My Pay," "Compensation," then "Longevity Pay". You can also find information on the MDCS website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs> by clicking "Rules and Regulations", "Chapter 5", then "[Regulation 5.05](#)."

RETIREMENT SERVICES REDESIGNS WEBSITE

The ORS website for state employees has been redesigned to help you find the retirement information you need quickly and easily. Whether you are in the Defined Benefit plan or the Defined Contribution plan, you can learn about your retirement benefits by checking out their website. ORS has added more information, useful links, and a glossary to the site. The clear navigation buttons and fresh design mirror the series of printed publications developed to deliver retirement information. You can view the publications in Adobe Acrobat format by clicking on the link for Publications and Forms.

One of the first visitors to the new site sent ORS this feedback: "Very informative and incredibly user friendly. Typically when one is traveling through a new website it is overwhelming. You have packaged a tremendous amount of information in a way that makes it accessible."

Check it out-and bookmark it!-at www.michigan.gov/ORSstateDB or www.michigan.gov/ORSstateDC . There is a Website Feedback link at the bottom of each web page, so take a look and let them know how you like it.

Note: This article prepared by the Office of Retirement Services, Department of Management and Budget.

BANKED LEAVE TIME IS COMING TO AN END

For approximately the last two years, state employees have participated in the Banked Leave Time (BLT) program where employees work their regular work schedule and bank a predetermined number or percent of hours. Employees then receive payment for hours in pay status, less the hours banked.

The BLT program is coming to an end in accordance with negotiated agreements for exclusively represented employees and Civil Service rules for non-exclusively represented employees (NEREs).

The following table outlines the scheduled end dates for BLT. Please note that some of the end dates differ because BLT starting dates for the respective bargaining units and non-exclusively represented employees (NEREs) may differ. Accrued BLT hours remain available for use in the same manner as annual leave. Unused BLT hours will be paid into your 401(k) account at separation.

The Office of the State Employer confirms that the Administration does not intend to seek to extend Banked Leave Time beyond these dates.

Questions regarding BLT should be directed to the Office of the State Employer at (517) 373-7400.

Unit	BLT End Date
Safety and Regulatory	10/22/05
Security	10/22/05
Human Services Support	10/22/05
Scientific and Engineering	10/22/05
Technical	10/22/05
State Police Enlisted	4/8/06
Institutional	12/17/05
Human Services	11/5/05
NEREs	10/22/05

DEPENDENT BENEFIT AUDIT INQUIRIES

We have received a number of inquiries regarding our requests for information substantiating dependent enrollments in the State of Michigan benefit plans.

Costs for employee benefits are continuously on the rise. This year's insurance costs total over \$1 billion for active and retired employees. In an effort to lessen the State's costs, we and the Office of the State Employer agreed that an audit of all state employees who carry dependents was necessary to ensure that only eligible dependents are claimed on the State's benefit plans.

The audit process is now well underway. To date, approximately 35% of state employees who claim dependents have been contacted regarding the dependent benefit audit. The overall response from employees has been very positive, and the majority of employees have timely provided documentation to substantiate the eligibility of dependents they have enrolled. We sincerely thank those employees for their cooperation.

To make this requirement as easy as possible, employees are provided a list of claimed dependents, contacts from which employees can obtain necessary documentation, clarification regarding dependent eligibility requirements, and self-addressed envelopes to return copies of the documents to the Department of Civil Service (DCS).

If you are unsure about the eligibility of who you can claim as a dependent, you can visit the DCS website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs>. The DCS Internal Audit staff is also available to answer any questions you might have regarding dependent eligibility and this audit. You can reach them by telephone at (517) 241-7860 or (517) 241-1861, e-mail MDCS-InternalAudit@michigan.gov or by fax at (517) 241-7655.

All employees with dependent benefit coverage must provide documentation (e.g., a copy of your marriage certificate, birth certificate(s), adoption or guardianship records, etc.) to validate the continued eligibility of enrolled dependents, even if you have previously provided this documentation. If you are unable to locate the required documentation, the State of Michigan Vital Records has records of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces that occurred in Michigan. Records may be ordered online at www.michigan.gov/mdch using a debit or credit card. You may print the on-line application and mail your request, or call the Vital Records Office directly at 517-335-8666. If the birth or other vital event occurred in another state, an online service for ordering documents is available at www.vitalchek.com.

We urge you to respond promptly when contacted to avoid potential termination of benefits for your dependents.

RECOGNIZING A STROKE

Strokes strike about 700,000 Americans each year, but the vast majority of people survive.

Identifying symptoms of a stroke can be difficult. However, the lack of awareness can mean disaster. If the symptoms of a stroke are not recognized, the stroke victim may suffer brain damage. Doctors report that a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- Ask the individual to SMILE.
- Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.
- Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE.

If the person has difficulty with any of the above requests, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

What Increases Your Risk?

Having certain diseases increases your risk for a stroke. If you can control the disease, you lower your risk.

Risk factors you can control include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension). High blood pressure is the second most important stroke risk factor after age.
- Diabetes. About one-quarter of people with diabetes die of stroke. Having diabetes doubles your risk for stroke because of the circulation problems associated with the disease.
- High cholesterol. High cholesterol can lead to coronary artery disease and heart attack, which can damage the heart muscle and increase your risk for stroke.
- Coronary artery disease, which can lead to heart attack and stroke and other heart conditions, such as atrial fibrillation, endocarditis, heart valve conditions, patent foramen ovale, or cardiomyopathy.
- Smoking, including second hand smoke.
- Physical inactivity.
- Being overweight.
- Use of some medications, such as birth control pills-especially by women who smoke or have a history of blood-clotting problems-and anticoagulants or steroids. In postmenopausal women, hormone replacement therapy has been shown to slightly increase the risk of stroke.

- Heavy use of alcohol. People who drink alcohol excessively, especially people who binge drink, are more likely to have a stroke. Binge drinking is defined as drinking more than 5 drinks in a short period of time.
- Use of cocaine and other illegal drugs.

WHY DOES MICHIGAN HAVE A CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION?

Before 1941, state employment operated under what is commonly known as a "spoils system." Under the spoils system, state employees in the executive branch were hired and fired based largely on their political affiliations. When a new governor was elected, many state employees (who had been hired by the previous administration) were fired and replaced by new employees loyal to the new governor. Also, state employees were expected to contribute a portion of their paycheck and time to support the governor's political party.

To address these problems, the legislature first created a statutory civil service system. However, the legislature quickly created so many exceptions that the spoils system continued to operate.

When the legislative civil service system failed, Michigan citizens voted in 1941 to amend the state Constitution to finally end the spoils system. That amendment created the Civil Service Commission and the civil service system for classified state employees in the executive branch.

The Michigan Constitution gives the following responsibilities to the Civil Service Commission:

1. Classify all positions in the classified service.
2. Fix pay rates for all classes of positions.
3. Approve or disapprove disbursements for all personal services.
4. Determine the qualifications of all candidates by competitive examination and performance, exclusively on the basis of merit, efficiency, and fitness. (The Constitution expressly forbids any appointments, promotions, demotions, or removals for racial, religious, or partisan reasons.)
5. Make rules and regulations covering all personnel transactions.
6. Regulate all conditions of employment in the classified service.

Although the Civil Service Commission is responsible for regulating all conditions of employment in the classified service, it works cooperatively with the Governor, the Office of the State Employer, and the individual departments to help make Michigan a great place to work. In addition, the Civil Service Commission authorized collective bargaining for most classified employees in 1980, and employees have since had an organized voice in their pay and conditions of employment.

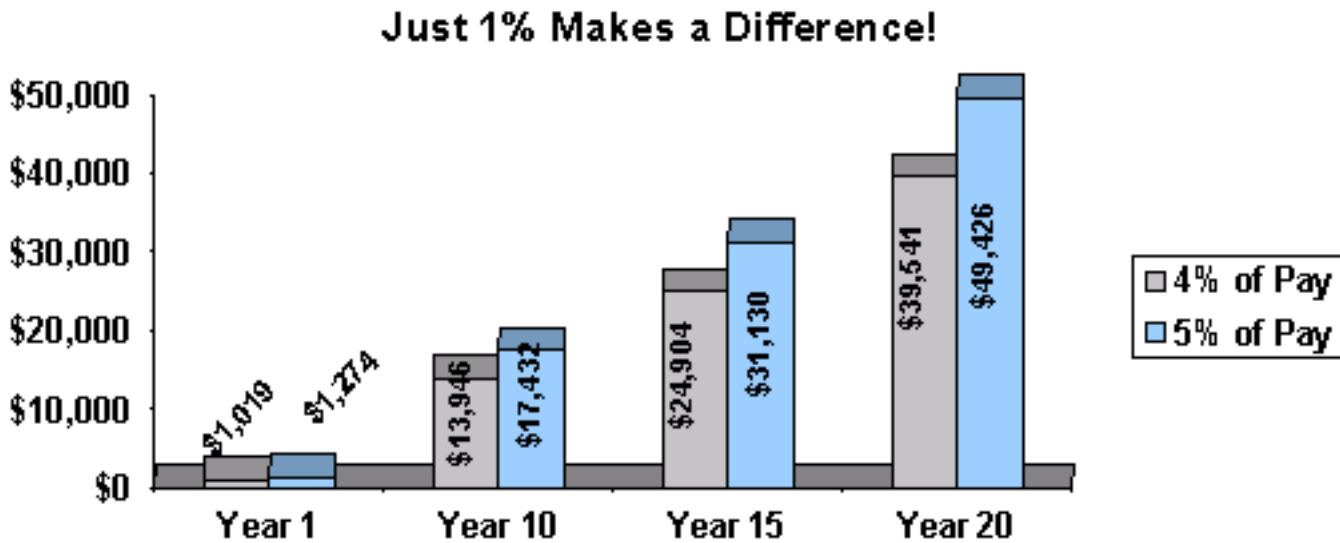
The world and state have changed considerably since the Civil Service Commission was created in 1941, yet the Commission continues its primary constitutional charge to ensure that state employment is based solely on merit, efficiency, and fitness.

Meetings of the Civil Service Commission are open to the public. The Commission's schedule is posted on the Department of Civil Service website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs>.

TAKE THE ONE PERCENT CHALLENGE

This fall, most state employees will enjoy both a pay raise and the end of Banked Leave Time (see related article). These two actions combine to increase paychecks by about 6%, making this the perfect time to review your contributions to the 401(k) Plan or the 457 Plan.

A small increase in contributions now can make a big difference at retirement. In the illustration below, 1% more contributed now means \$10,000 more in 20 years!



In this example, the employee has an annual salary of \$25,000 and currently defers 4% into the 401(k) Plan. This example assumes salary increases of about 3% each year and a 4% annual return on investment.

In addition to contributing more money for your future, the dollars you contribute to your 401(k)/457 Plans are tax-deferred. This means a lower tax bill for you now.

Can you afford to pass on this opportunity?

Before that increase hits your paycheck, talk with your family about both today's budget and your budget in retirement. Maximize your contributions and gain the peace of mind that comes from securing your financial future.

EVENTS

- 2005 Civil Service Commission Meeting Schedule

September 13

December 13

- 2006 Civil Service Commission Meeting Schedule

February 7

May 2

July 18

October 3

December 5

- 2005 State Employee Holidays

Monday, September 5 (Labor Day)

Friday, November 11 (Veteran's Day)

Thursday, November 24 (Thanksgiving)

Friday, November 25 (Thanksgiving)

Friday, December 23 (Christmas)

Monday, December 26 (Christmas)

Friday, December 30 (New Years)

- Open Enrollment for State-Sponsored Group Insurance Plans

August 15 through August 31, 2005

- State Employee's Contribution Campaign

September 19 through October 21, 2005

- Open Enrollment for Flexible Spending Accounts

November 7 through December 1, 2005

Please note: Anyone who wishes to participate in 2006, must enroll even if you are participating this year.

We hope you will find MI Civil Service News to be informative and useful. We appreciate and look forward to your comments or suggestions for topics or improvements to consider making MI Civil Service News even better. Please direct your comments or suggestions to MDCS-CivilServiceNews@michigan.gov or Michigan Department of Civil Service, MI CS News, P.O. Box 30002, 400 South Pine Street, Lansing, Michigan 48909.

Archived issues can be viewed on our website at www.michigan.gov/mdcs under Announcements.