

## Encourage Employees to Purchase Early

Did you know three times the amount of service credit purchased in 2001 was bought in 2002? That's right; Colorado PERA members purchased \$362 million in service credit in 2002, compared to \$127 million in 2001.

October 31, 2003, is the deadline to purchase service at the current rates. On November 1, 2003, the cost to purchase service will increase to the rates listed in the box to the right.

Also on November 1, 2003, if pending legislation is passed, members will be limited to purchasing a total of 10 years regardless of when their PERA membership began.\* This limit does not include reinstatements.

Due to the unprecedented demand for service credit purchases, 20 temporary employees have been hired to reduce the amount of time it takes for agreements to be issued. The PERA Web site has a link to what day's requests we are working on and is updated daily. Ask your employees to check this information before calling the Customer Service Center to ask if we've received their requests.

We've developed a helpful tool to assist members in the purchasing process. See the attached Purchasing Service Credit Fact Sheet, and feel free to distribute it to your employees. If employees are considering a service credit purchase, encourage them to act today.

*\* Municipal Division members may purchase service credit for employment with their employer, without limit, if the purchase is completed before the member terminates employment with their Municipal Division employer. In addition, any such purchase for years employed with their employer in excess of 10 years must be completed or installment payments initiated within three years after the date the employer affiliates with Colorado PERA or November 1, 2006, whichever is later.*

### Information for Employers Considering Furloughs

We know that the economy is impacting our employers and tough budget times are here. To assist you with questions your employees might have related to possible furloughs and the impact on PERA benefits, we've developed a fact sheet. See the attached Furlough Fact Sheet and feel free to distribute it to employees who might have questions about furloughs and Colorado PERA.

#### Purchasing Service Credit Rates

	Current Rate	11/1/03 Under Age 50	11/1/03 Age 50+
Judges	20.0%	21.75%	25.75%
State Troopers/CBI Agents	20.4	22.85	26.85
All Other Members	15.5	18.10	22.10

### Make Sure You Get PERA Information From Us!

Complaints about vendors who claim to be able to tell employees about their PERA benefits continue to roll in. There are companies out there using the PERA name, or something very similar, to encourage PERA members to come to meetings to learn about their PERA benefits. These vendors then try to sell investment and insurance products to members. The best way to identify a PERA-sponsored meeting is by looking for our logo on any meeting notice.

### On the Horizon

Proposed legislation in the Colorado General Assembly (Senate Bill 101), if passed, will require employers to submit their contributions to PERA five business days after the date employees were paid. The Secure Transfer and Reporting System (STARS) will use secure technology so that employer contributions can be posted to employee accounts more quickly than in the past. Employers may use ACH or wire transfer to send their contributions to PERA. Checks will no longer be accepted after July 1, 2003. Look for more information on STARS from the PERA Accounting Division.

### Legislative Update

We are half way through the session and budget issues have dominated the action at the Legislature. See the attached Legislative Update for a review of bills that are of interest to PERA.

#### Attachments:

*Colorado PERA and Furlough Days Fact Sheet*

*Colorado PERA Law*

*Colorado PERA Rules*

*Frequently Asked Questions About Colorado PERA*

*Legislative Update (April 2003)*

*Purchasing Service Credit Fact Sheet*

## PERACare—We're Managing Health Care For You

The PERACare Health Benefits program, extended to affiliated employers in 2001, is adding more employers to its growing list. A total of 38 employers now provide PERACare to their employees. Selection of the PERACare program may occur at any time. Employers with more than 250 benefit-eligible employees should request a premium quote. For details about the coverage, to request a premium quote, or to set a meeting time for a PERA representative to talk to your organization's decision makers, contact Dennis Gatlin at 303-832-9550, ext. 6188, or e-mail [dgatlin@copera.org](mailto:dgatlin@copera.org).

### Colorado PERA welcomed the following employers to PERACare since November 2002:

- Arkansas Valley Regional Library Service System—Pueblo
- Limon School District
- Meeker Cemetery District
- Meeker Regional Library
- Plains & Peaks Regional Library Service System—Colorado Springs
- Pueblo City-County Library

### January 1 Renewals:

- Brush Housing Authority
- Douglas Library District—Castle Rock
- Housing Authority of Limon
- San Miguel Library—Telluride
- Tutmose Academy—Colorado Springs
- Western Rio Blanco Metro Recreation District—Rangely
- Windsor-Severance Library District

## Colorado PERA Welcomes New Employers

- Pathfinder Regional Library Service System, Grand Junction—December 1, 2002
- Adams & Jefferson County Hazardous Response Authority, Westminster—December 1, 2002
- City of Las Animas—January 1, 2003
- Meeker Cemetery District, Meeker—January 1, 2003\*

\*Also selected PERACare



## New on the Colorado PERA Web Site

If you are looking for a Colorado PERA meeting or would like to schedule an individual appointment, attend a group workshop or videoconference session, you can now do that on the Web site.

Reservations are required for individual appointments, group workshops and videoconference sessions, but not for regular PERA information meetings. Go to [www.copera.org](http://www.copera.org), click on Winter/Spring Meeting Schedules and you will find a list of meetings and will be able to log into the Appointment Scheduler. Once in the Appointment Scheduler, you may search by type of meeting, location or date. Reservations for appointments, workshops and videoconferences will be accepted until the day before the event.

## Salary Cap Contribution Limits

Under the Internal Revenue Code, Section 401(a)17 contribution limits rule, employees hired after December 31, 1995, are subject to a salary limit of \$200,000. There is no limit for employees hired before January 1, 1996. If you have questions about this rule, please contact Scott Jelsma at 303-837-6213.

## Field Education Liaisons

Remember that the best information about PERA benefits comes from PERA representatives. We are starting a new outreach program in our Field Education Division to assist employers in delivering information to PERA members. Each Field Education Representative has been assigned a group of employers to work with in scheduling meetings and answering questions about PERA benefits. Field Education will be working closely with PERA's Accounting Division to make sure that employers have all the information they need to help employees understand their PERA benefits.

Dennis Gatlin, Field Education Manager, is overseeing this project in addition to his work with affiliation inquiries and new affiliates. Please contact your Field Education Liaison if you should have any questions.

**Employer Training Via Videoconference Now Available**  
If you and other employers in your area would like to schedule employer training, please contact your Field Education Representative to set up a videoconference.

FE Liaison	Accounting ER	Departments
Gordon Steuck (ext. 6185)	Rynee Helmig	1-250; 990
Vacant	Barbara Crosman	251-500
Patty Haas (ext. 6192)	Rose Montano	501-750
Aubre Schneider (ext. 6415)	Annette Cote	751-989
Vacant		

*This newsletter provides general information to PERA-affiliated employers. Rights, benefits, and obligations as a PERA member are governed by Title 24, Article 51 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, and the Rules of the Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association, which take precedence over any interpretations in this newsletter.*