

Years of Service Award Pins

Years of Service Award Pins are presented at the annual Staff Awards Day held in November. Pins are presented to OSU staff employees who have reached an employment milestone by being employed for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 or 40 years. Any employee completing the required service during the calendar year will receive the pin during the year the anniversary was established. OSU staff members who have been employed for 25 years or more also receive a clock.

If you were eligible for a pin in November 2005, and you have not picked up your pin yet, the pins are available in 106 Whitehurst at The Hub. You can check the SAC website, <http://fp.okstate.edu/sac/>, for Years of Service pin recipient names.

Training Opportunities

March 9	Diversity and OSU (Exclusive to ALP)
March 10	Payroll Processing
March 14	Purchasing Card Training
March 21	Disbursements
March 21	How to Conduct Performance Evaluations
March 21	Fixed Assets
March 24	HRS, Time Input and Confirmation
March 29	OSU Policies: Managing for Success
March 30	Sexual Harassment/Gender Discrimination Policy Training (Full)
March 31	Personal Values vs. Professional Expectation
April 4	Building Interpersonal Skills
April 6	Respect for Diversity
April 7	Gung Ho! (Part I)

For more information, or to register, refer to your 2006 *Faculty and Staff Development Opportunities* brochure, or go to www.okstate.edu/osu_per/hr/staff_dvpt06.htm, or call Training Services, (405) 744-5374.



News You Can Use!

**Important Information for Employees of
Oklahoma State University**

March 2006

OTRS Retirement Estimate

OSU is still awaiting a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service that hopefully would permit OSU employees enrolled in retirement prior to July 1, 2004, to make a one-time irrevocable election not to participate in Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System (OTRS). If such an election is approved by the IRS, employees would have a full year in which to make the election. The ruling from the IRS is not expected until at least April of this year.

In the meantime, and in anticipating such an election, OSU has worked with OTRS to download OTRS enrollment data into a format that would permit employees to better understand OTRS benefits. An individual calculation will be sent by campus mail to employees with an OTRS member date of earlier than July 1, 2005, later this month.

The calculation will estimate retirement income at normal OTRS retirement age (age 62 with 5 years of service) or Rule of 80/90, whichever occurs first. If the employee is already eligible for normal OTRS retirement, the calculation will estimate retirement at the end of this fiscal year. Annual and monthly

lifetime income estimates are based on the single life OTRS Maximum Retirement Plan option.

The total compensation data from OTRS reflects actual covered pay plus the cost of certain benefits paid by the employer. The benefits include the cost of health care insurance, life insurance, and retirement. For this reason, the total compensation may be higher than actual salary received. Applicable caps due to high and low base elections or the gradual uncapping of covered compensation from 1995 – 2007 may apply depending on the date the member entered the system.

While both OSU and OTRS have spent considerable effort in developing this calculator, it is only an estimate. OTRS alone is responsible for a final calculation at the time of retirement. You will want to carefully review your total years of service if you have ever bought back service time from OTRS.

New, Updated Information on the Web

Benefits and You

- **Pregnancy and Newborn Coverage**
- **Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, and Social Security/Medicare**

www.okstate.edu/osu_per/benefits/infosheets.html

Premium Conversion Amounts

www.okstate.edu/osu_per/benefits/emposuinsuranceamts.htm

OSU Human Resources developed this information for the convenience of OSU employees. It is a brief interpretation of more detailed and complex materials. If further clarification is needed, the actual law, policy and contract should be consulted as the authoritative source. OSU continually monitors benefits, policy and procedures and reserves the right to change, modify, amend, or terminate benefit programs at any time.

OTRS Retirement Estimator

The OTRS Retirement Estimator is an Excel spreadsheet that will be placed on the Human Resources website later this month. This interactive calculator is in addition to the paper retirement estimate that will be sent through campus mail.

The Excel file can be downloaded to a personal computer. As a spreadsheet application, you can enter your personal information from the paper estimate you receive and change retirement variables. This will allow you to consider alternate retirement scenarios.

The spreadsheet has four sections. The first tab (Information) explains how to enter data so the estimator works properly. The second tab (Benefit Calc) is the workbook that performs the actual calculations. With the exception of the items at the top right hand of the workbook under "Variable Assumptions," you will not enter data directly on this sheet. The third tab (Calc Data) has various tables that are used in the calculation. While this section provides information about the low and high base amounts, you should not change any information. The fourth tab (Member Data) is the workbook in which you will enter the member data that appeared on your Estimate.

We recommend that after you download the OTRS Retirement Estimator, you enter information and match the retirement projection for the estimate you received in the mail before making changes.

If after working with the web-based estimator you have any questions, please contact Employee Services, (405) 744-5449.

OSU Confidentiality Agreement

OSU accepts its ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy of students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and others, including obligations to protect and safeguard confidential information. In order to emphasize and remind employees of the need and ways of keeping information confidential, OSU has developed a new, more comprehensive Confidentiality Agreement. Employees seeking access to University systems or information will be asked to complete the Agreement before access is granted.

The Confidentiality Agreement can be found at www.okstate.edu/osu_per/docfiles/docfiles.htm. Once signed, the Agreement is forwarded to OSU Human Resources where it becomes a part of the individual's personnel file. The fact and date that an individual has signed an Agreement is maintained on the Human Resources System. This information is viewable to all who have HRS access on screen L40 and the "OSU Conf Agreements" report in the e-Print HRS Repository.

While some positions have more access to confidential information than others, every employee may come in contact with or hear information that is private. We all have a responsibility to understand applicable rules and safeguard facilities, equipment, and information. While it does require us to be proactive, such action will result in a safe, secure atmosphere for the entire OSU community.

Retirement Information Meetings

It's never too early to plan for your retirement! Throughout the year, OSU Human Resources works with TIAA-CREF to present information opportunities for you to learn more about OSU's Retirement Plan. The next meeting is as follows:

**April 18, 2006 Getting Started with TIAA-CREF
2:00-3:00pm, 106B Whitehurst**

Emphasizes the importance of maximizing retirement plan contributions. Explores how a sound understanding of asset allocation principles can play a significant role in the success of individual financial objectives. (For new employees).

James Baird, TIAA-CREF Representative, is available on the Stillwater Campus for one-on-one counseling each Tuesday. Sessions are held in 106M Whitehurst.

To check James' schedule and make an appointment for an individual meeting, schedule online at www.tiaa-cref.org/moc or call TIAA-CREF at 1-800-842-2006.

You can review your TIAA-CREF accounts selections and make changes by contacting TIAA-CREF at www.tiaa-cref.org/okstate or by calling 1-800-842-2776. The website allows you full access to your account.

Questions? Call Employee Services at (405) 744-5449.

Staff Appreciation Day Picnic

The annual Staff Appreciation Day Picnic is scheduled to take place Thursday, April 6, 2006, on Willard Lawn, north of Theta Pond. All staff members will receive an admission ticket for the lunch. Door-prizes will be awarded to staff during the picnic. Staff Advisory Council (SAC) looks forward to seeing you there!

Win \$200 in Free Gas!

Staff Advisory Council holds an annual scholarship fund raiser and this year's prize is a certificate (one prize) worth \$200.00 for gas from the OnCue offices (ConocoPhillips)! The certificate can be redeemed at any ConocoPhillips gas location, and is not limited only to Stillwater. Tickets will be sold up to and including the day of the Staff Appreciation Day Picnic, Thursday, April 6, 2006. The winner will be announced at the picnic.

You need not be present to win and all faculty, staff, students and townspeople are encouraged to purchase chances for this great prize. Tickets are \$1.00 each, or six tickets for \$5.00. See any Staff Advisory Council member for tickets.

**Remember:
You have until March 30, 2005,
to file Flexible Benefits claims
with American Fidelity for
reimbursement for the plan
year ending December 31, 2005.**