



# Employees' Retirement System Communicator

July 2012

No. 7

## Contact Information Employees' Retirement System

Please contact the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) at **414-278-4207** in Milwaukee or **toll-free at 877-652-6377** outside of Milwaukee for all Pension questions, including Retirement calculations. You can also contact ERS via email at [ers@milwcnty.com](mailto:ers@milwcnty.com).

## Life & Health Benefits

Please contact the Benefit Division with Life and Health Benefits related questions at: **414-278-4198**. You can contact Benefits via email at [benefits@milwcnty.com](mailto:benefits@milwcnty.com)

## Newly Retired Members

*Kyle Dulan  
Robert Forecki  
Richard Graber  
Lee Holloway  
David Jonas  
Jeanette Krukarc  
Kathleen Kyles  
Barbara Lamb  
Yvonne Makowski  
David McMahon  
Judith Miller  
Lori Mueller  
Lynne Nelson  
Robert Shupe  
Linda Skira  
John Skocir  
Ruby Smith*

## From the Desk of the ERS Manager

Greetings from ERS!

I am happy to announce that the Pension Board will have a new retiree representative at the September meeting. D.A. Leonard will complete the remainder of Guy Stuller's term. Mr. Leonard was the sole candidate so he was awarded the seat, and no election is necessary.

Mr. Leonard has over 28 years of total Milwaukee County experience with 18 of those years as a Budget Analyst. He decided to run for the retiree seat on the Pension Board to provide stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities to his fellow retirees while utilizing his fiscal expertise in serving Milwaukee County. Welcome D.A.

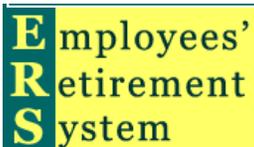
We've certainly had a stretch of hot and humid weather this month. While many enjoy this type of weather, I prefer it a tad cooler, and have to admit my air conditioning has been going constantly — until it stopped. I panicked and started my search for someone to call. I was very pleased when I went to a vendor's website and found a tab marked "Before you call for service". When I clicked on the tab, a trouble-shooting checklist popped up, and I was able to quite easily (and with only the cost of a new filter) resolve the problem. I would say that is great customer service. You'll find other tips in the article below.

We take your comments to heart. ERS received a call from a retiree concerned with the envelopes we use to send your monthly direct deposit notifications. We are happy to let you know that in the next month or two, we will begin using security envelopes. Keep your comments coming — they are important to us.

If you have dependents covered under our health plan, please read the information on Dependent Eligibility Verification on Page 4.

Please call our office at any of the numbers listed in the shaded box to the left if you have questions regarding the election, your pension or healthcare benefits. We are here to help!

*Marian Ninneman*  
ERS Manager



# *Employees' Retirement System Communicator*

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## **HOW TO GET GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE**

There are few things as annoying as a bad experience with a product or service, followed by an even worse experience when trying to make things right. This month, *The Communicator* offers some ideas on how to get good customer service.

It is usually better to deal with customer service issues at the local level when possible. But increasingly we must communicate by telephone with unseen representatives in large call centers. In either case, there are basic steps to follow for a successful business transaction.

### **DON'T BE CONFRONTATIONAL**

Even if your issue is very frustrating, don't become abusive or belligerent. Customer service reps should not have to deal with somebody on the phone yelling and swearing at them; they are not usually the cause of your problem. You will not communicate as well when you're out of control. This is a business matter, so be businesslike. Be persistent but polite. Take advantage of your status as a customer. The more you have patronized that business, the more receptive that business should be to your dilemma. Put simply, would you rather help someone who has just told you that your organization stinks or someone who is businesslike, articulates the problem clearly, and allows you to propose a workable solution?

### **KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS YOU WANT**

Decide beforehand what will make you happy. Think about the problem and what would be the best-case resolution for you. Be prepared to explain fully what you are asking for before you start the call. If you are just calling to rant, you are wasting your time. It may feel good but it achieves little. Better to decide on a reasonable position that can work for both parties. For example, if you think you were sold a defective product, do you want a replacement or a refund?

### **HAVE YOUR INFORMATION READY IN ADVANCE**

Be prepared with any information that might be needed to make the process go more smoothly. Companies often require their representatives to ask questions that ensure you are the owner of the account or the purchaser of the product of service. This will include account number, customer number, date and location of purchase, etc.

### **KEEP A RECORD OF THE PROCESS**

You want to be able to document everything you've done to get your problem resolved. That includes the date and time of your call, whom you spoke to and what they told you. If you need to call again, having this information will be helpful. And you will have more credibility if you have the name of an actual person rather than just saying you spoke to "someone".

### **TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Customer service representatives have to live within policies and procedures established for them by their employer. If you are unable to get what you want from the person you speak to, ask to speak to their su-

# *Employees' Retirement System*

## *Communicator*

*July 2012*

*No. 7*

ervisor. At the store level, ask for the manager. Higher-ups are able to be more flexible and have more authority than a first-tier representative. Again, don't threaten, get nasty or rude. This gets you nowhere.

### **IF ALL ELSE FAILS, COMPLAIN TO A THIRD PARTY**

You've given the business every opportunity to live up to your expectations and make things right but they have not resolved it to your satisfaction. Now what? File a complaint with the Better Business Bureau, Office of Consumer Affairs or other appropriate governmental agency. If a business is taking advantage of you as a consumer, stand up and be counted. You owe it to both yourself and to other consumers who may be in the same situation.

### **IF YOU RECEIVE EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE, ACKNOWLEDGE IT**

If the company makes things right for you and meets or exceeds your expectations in customer service, let them know. Ask for an email address you can use to send a kudos email or ask to speak to the representative's supervisor. You might even consider writing a letter to the company regarding your positive experience. Also reward the business by referring potential customers. Word of mouth referrals are the bread and butter of any business. By rewarding businesses that provide exceptional customer service, you reinforce the importance to ownership of the power of good customer relations.

### **OTHER HELPFUL TIPS:**

- Give the call your full attention; don't call while driving or otherwise distracted.
- Have a pen or pencil and paper handy for note taking.
- If you are calling a call center you will be in a queue with many other callers. Although frustrating, expect a long phone menu and expect to be on hold for awhile.
- Don't give the customer service rep your life story; stick to the relevant facts.
- Remember that your call is probably monitored and the representative usually has a specific script they are required to read to you. Be patient.
- If you don't get what you want the first time you call, try again later. It is not unusual for a different representative to fix the problem the first one was unable to resolve.

Businesses spend millions of dollars annually on upgrading their level of customer service (staffing, training, focus groups, marketing, etc.). Even so, you won't always have the best customer experience. But if you persevere and keep these ideas in mind, you should end up with the result you want.

# *Employees' Retirement System Communicator*

*July 2012*

*No. 7*

## **FROM THE BENEFITS DEPARTMENT**

### **Dependent Eligibility Verification Coming in August**

As part of Milwaukee County's ongoing efforts to control cost increases under the health plan provided to employees and retirees, we have partnered with ACS HR Solutions (ACS) to conduct a dependent eligibility verification in August. Dependent eligibility verification is a process that verifies the eligibility status of dependents currently participating in Milwaukee County's health benefit plan. This step will assist in our obligation to administer our benefit plan accurately by ensuring that plan participants are covering only those individuals who meet the plans' definition of eligible dependents.

Please watch your mailbox in the coming weeks for additional information regarding the dependent eligibility verification process.

#### **Newly Retired Members (con't) (Continued from Pg 1)**

*Jack Takerian  
Bonita Ubl  
Diana Weber*

*Kenneth Wilk  
Robert Wojczulis*

#### **In Memoriam**

*Please keep the families of these recently deceased retirees and spouses in your thoughts:*

*Dorris Collins  
Hubert Griffin  
Lorraine Kinski  
Theresa Moriarty  
Russell Moudry*

*Dennis Randall  
Walter Rapp  
Emanuela Rappa  
Jean Seder (Alex)  
Creasia White*