



The Highway Employee Association Newsletter

January, 2003

Lobby Day

March 11 & 12, Capital Plaza

There will be one on one discussion with Senators and Representatives that help to influence the passage of your bills. In showing our numbers as well as our concerns, we are building confidence for the State employees and the great job we do and we deserve the benefits that we lobby for. We want to see over 300 highway employees in attendance. For the Central Chapter we will provide any member a free Association t-shirt for attending our Lobby Day. The t-shirts will be orange with our Association logo printed on it. We believe that if everyone would wear these t-shirts for Lobby Day, we will be noticed. So take a stand for your future and join us for Lobby Day! For more information, you may call any of the Board Members, Delegates or Steve Cox, the State President.

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Employees Benefit From D.R.O.P.

121 employees averaged an extra \$113,687.09 at retirement

Senate Bill 371, signed into legislation in 2001 and became effective January 1, 2002, has been another benefit for the employees of MoDOT. 121 MoDOT employees utilized this benefit and took an extra \$13,756,137.79 for an average of \$113,687.09 per retired employee home.

D.R.O.P. stands for "Deferred Retirement Option Plan". DROP is an optional payment form which allows a member to receive a partial lump sum payment of his/her retirement account in addition to a reduced monthly retirement benefit. BackDROP is, at the time of the actual retirement, an option available to eligible members to "make believe" that retirement actually occurred at an earlier date. For example, at retirement the member could elect to have their retirement date DROP back to a date in the range of one to five years before actual retirement. By electing this option, the member would be eligible for a lump sum payment of 90% of the total benefits which would have been paid between the BackDROP date and the actual retirement date if retirement had occurred at the beginning of the BackDROP period.

All members who continue working for at least two (2) years beyond their earliest eligibility for normal retirement are eligible for this benefit. There are options in receiving the BackDROP distribution: 1. Cash; 2. Rollover; or 3. A combination of cash and rollover.

As this benefit has many more details and each members' options vary, it is recommended that you contact the Highway and Transportation Employee's and Highway Patrol Retirement System for more information at 573-751-4640.

Information in this article was reprinted from Norm Robinson's letter dated August 10, 2001. Retirement data submitted by Norm Robinson.

Membership Drive

Any member that signs the most new members up for the Highway Employee Association, will receive a \$24.00 reimbursement on their one year membership. We are 618 members strong, however more members show a greater strength. This drive ends February 28, 2003 4 p.m. Please use the enclosed form and send it to Missouri State Employee Highway Association, P.O. Box 601, % Lance Tipton-B&B, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Benefits of Your Association

The State Highway and Transportation Employees Association was organized in 1950 as a service organization to promote the general welfare of all employees, encourage the highest standards of employee conduct and render the most effective service to the people of Missouri.

Today the Association still stands for the employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation. The association has a strong record of initiating benefits and bills that are not only benefits to the employee, but also in

implementing bills that protect the employee as in the Work Zone Safety Bill, Senate Bill 244 passed in 2001. For a complete list of what the Association has accomplished in 53 years, log onto the website, www.moshea.org. The Association also carries a \$1,000 accidental loss of life benefit on members made payable to your designated beneficiary.

If you know of someone interested in becoming a member, you may contact any of the Board Members, Delegates, or Steve Cox the State President for an enrollment form. For \$2.00 a month, the Association continues to support all employees of MoDOT.

Legislation for 2003

With the new year, we must find new legislative support as the November election brought in several new faces. Here are the proposed 2003 Legislative items:

1. **Salaries and Cost of Living**—First introduced in 2002 by Rep. Dan Ward (D) HB 1620.
 - ◆The Department would be required to complete a comprehensive job study of all salaried job titles at a maximum interval of five years.
 - ◆A maximum of three salary brackets would be established for each salary grade with a 8% salary range within each pay grade with the mid-step bracket of each pay grade being market value for that pay bracket. Overlapping of salary grades would be eliminated.
 - ◆At the beginning of each new Fiscal Year, the previous years Consumer Price Index (CPI), not to exceed 5%, would be applied to each salaried step.
2. **Eighty and Out**—First introduced in 2002 by Rep D.J. Davis (D) HB 1426.
 - ◆Completely eliminate all age requirements for reaching the 80 and out rule.
 - ◆Allow the flexibility of accrued sick leave to count towards reaching the 80 and out rule
3. **Increased Contribution to Deferred Comp**—Three year mailings to both the House and Senate.
 - ◆Asking for additional appropriations for individual employee accounts.
 - ◆Employee option of using future pay increases to fund the un-funded portion of the States share in Deferred Compensation.
4. **Public Services Act**—Looking at amending onto other proposed legislation. Outsourcing services and/or commodities would not be approved unless it could be done for at least 10% less than what Mo-DOT can do it for.
5. **Flexible Benefit**—Last years' sponsors were Senator Sidney Johnson (D) and Senator Steve Stoll (D) SB 1049.
 - ◆Allow employees the option to use a portion of their accrued vacation time as;
 1. Share Leave Contributions.
 2. Retirement Credits.
 3. Deferred Compensation.
 4. Cash.
6. **Increase Vacation Rate**—New item for 2003.
 - ◆Increase vacation rate of accrual to 16 hours after 25 years of service.
7. **Health Insurance Paid after 30 Years**—First introduced in 2002 by Rep. Dan Hegeman ® HB 1560.
 - ◆Employer would pay the monthly Medical Insurance Premiums for all retirees that have retired with a minimum of 30 years of creditable service, at the same rate that would be paid for active employees.
 - ◆Once established, any future rate increases could not be more than 80% of the previous years' COLA for any given retiree.
8. **COLA Increase to 100% of CPI**—First introduced in 2002 by Rep. Dan Hegeman ® HB 1529
 - ◆Increase the COLA percentage that is applied to all Retirement Benefits from 80% of the CPI to 100%, however in no case shall a yearly increase exceed 5%.
9. **Sick Leave Compensation**—First introduced in 2002 by Rep. Bill Skaggs (D) HB 1572.
 - ◆Change from the current formula of 1/12 of a calendar year of creditable service for each 168 hour, to a day of creditable service for every eight hours of accrued sick leave.
10. **PEHP Plan**—New item for 2003.
 - ◆Establish a new optional benefit package that would allow all State Employees to redirect their existing \$10/month into an approved Post Employment Health Care Plan.

Additional Item:

- ◆Resetting the Clock: We would like to see the date changed when employee's vacation time is expunged from October 31 to January 1 of each calendar year.

Grievance Procedure

As a reminder, the Missouri Department of Transportation has continuously updated the procedures for filling a grievance. An employee who feels unfairly penalized by an action or omitted by the department should file a grievance. A grievance should be filed no later that 30 calendar days after the act or occurrence leading to the grievance unless a determination is made that the act or occurrence could not reasonably be detected until a later date.

For the complete policy, see Grievance Procedure Policy 2100, effective 11/01/02. It can be found on the Department website under the Personnel Policy Manual.