



November 2008

Pension Division Newsletter

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Fire State Aid Certification Deadline

The Office of the State Auditor is pleased to announce that 163 volunteer fire relief associations were certified as eligible for receipt of their 2008 fire state aid for the second round of aid disbursements. This brings the total number of relief associations and other pension plans that have been certified as eligible for 2008 state aid to 708. State aid was disbursed on or about November 15 for those relief associations certified as eligible for the second round. Listings of the fire and police state aid amounts are available on our website at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/list.aspx?type=frm&div=pen>.

Statements of Position

The Office of the State Auditor prepares Statements of Position as educational resources for local government officials, relief association trustees and auditors. Statements of Position are posted on our website and are reviewed and periodically revised. The Statement of Position on City Fire Department Accounts and Relief Association Accounts has been split into three updated and expanded statements. The new statements discuss 1) Fire Departments, Fire Relief Associations and Checking Accounts; 2) Fire Department and Fire Relief Association Fundraisers and Donations; and 3) Fire Relief Association Governance. We hope that these statements will provide helpful information to your relief association boards, and ask that you please take some time to review each of them. Statements of Position can be viewed at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=statements>.

Working Group Update

The Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, was cancelled due to a last-minute scheduling conflict with the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement. The next meeting will take place at its regularly scheduled time on Thursday, December 4. Meeting materials are available on our website at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=reliefworkinggroup>.

Reporting Reminder

State law requires forfeiture of fire state aid for volunteer fire relief associations that do not submit all required reporting information to the Office of the State Auditor by November 30. There are still about 15 relief associations that have yet to submit some or all of their 2007 reporting year forms.

If forms are not fully received by November 30, a relief association's 2008 fire state aid will be forfeited and the association will not be eligible for future fire state aid until the 2007 forms are received. The Office of the State Auditor does not have authority to grant filing extensions past the November 30 deadline. Our office will be closed on November 27 and 28 for the Thanksgiving holiday, so please fax reporting forms to (651) 282-5298 or email them to Gail.Richie@state.mn.us. We have been working diligently with relief associations that have not yet met all reporting requirements and are hopeful that outstanding forms will be submitted before the forfeiture deadline.

2007 Financial and Investment Report

We will begin work in December on the 2007 Financial and Investment Report of Volunteer Fire Relief Associations. The 2006 Report was the first to include rankings by criteria such as fire state aid, municipal contributions, benefit levels, rates of return, and funding ratios.

As we prepare the 2007 Report, we are interested in hearing from you which topics in previous reports were helpful, as well as suggestions for additional analysis or topics. Any comments or suggestions for the 2007 report can be forwarded to Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or Rose.Hennessy-Allen@state.mn.us.

Contact E-mail Addresses

We would like to remind you that the Office of the State Auditor is working on updates to the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES). SAFES is the web application for downloading and submitting electronic reporting forms. To access some of the new features, you will need to have a unique e-mail address. Currently, some relief association trustees use a general e-mail address for the relief association or the fire department. In preparation of these system changes, please provide unique e-mail addresses for your relief association officers to Gail Richie at Gail.Richie@state.mn.us. Please also remember to promptly notify us of changes to your relief association's contact information when new officers are elected.

Sign Up For the E-Update!

The Office of the State Auditor publishes weekly E-Updates that contain reminders, updates, and helpful information related to local government financial activities. The E-Updates are published on our website and e-mailed to those who sign up to receive the weekly notifications. The Pension Division usually has information for relief associations in each week's E-Update. If you would like to sign up for the E-Updates, you can subscribe at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/eupdate.aspx>.

If you have questions please contact us:

Aaron Dahl, Pension Analyst
(651) 297-2765 Aaron.Dahl@state.mn.us

Luke Hinz, Pension Analyst
(651) 296-6279 Lucas.Hinz@state.mn.us

Michael Johnson, Pension Analyst
(651) 282-5430 Michael.A.Johnson@state.mn.us

Kayla Trenkamp, Student Intern
(651) 284-3423 KTrenkamp@auditor.state.mn.us

Sara Toft, Student Intern
(651) 282-5376 SToft@auditor.state.mn.us

Gail Richie, Office & Administrative Specialist
(651) 282-6110 Gail.Richie@state.mn.us

Rose Hennessy Allen, Pension Director
(651) 296-5985 Rose.Hennessy-Allen@state.mn.us