

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-134

To: All OR/WA Employees

From: Chief, Branch of Human Resources

Subject: Thrift Savings Plan Open Season, April 15, 2003 to June 30, 2003

A new open season for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) began on April 15 and will end on June 30, 2003.

The theme for this open season is "Think Big." The TSP is a retirement savings plan available to employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). During the open season, employees may start, stop, increase or decrease their TSP contributions.

If you are a FERS employee, you may contribute up to 13% of your basic pay that you earn each pay period. Employees of the CSRS may contribute up to 8%. ***Employees who wish to make changes to the amount they are contributing to TSP should do so by using www.employeeexpress.gov.***

Contributions to the TSP are tax deferred. Taxes are not paid on your contributions or earnings until you withdraw your account. **The TSP is an integral part of a FERS employee retirement package **along with the FERS Basic Annuity and Social Security.** The **TSP is a supplement to the CSRS** retirement package.**

All FERS and CSRS employees may elect to participate in TSP this open season. Employees hired between July 1, 2002 and November 30, 2002 will begin to receive agency contributions the first full pay period in June, 2003. Those employees hired between December 1, 2002 and May 31, 2003 will receive agency contributions effective the first full pay period in December, 2003. Those employees hired between June 1, 2003 and November 30, 2003 will be eligible for agency contributions the first pay period in June 2004.

If you previously contributed to TSP and stopped your contributions prior to November 30, 2002, you may re-enroll this open season. If you stopped your contributions on or after December 1, 2002, you may not begin contributing again until the next open season which begins the first pay period of December, 2003.

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Employees may invest all or any portion of their TSP contributions in any of five TSP investment funds: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund, the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

The **I** Fund tracks the performance of large companies in Europe and Asia and mirrors the Morgan Stanley Capital

EAFE (Europe, Australasia and Far East) index. The **S** Fund is a stock fund that follows the returns of smaller companies of the Wilshire 4500 index. The **C** Fund tracks the S&P index.

FERS employees may contribute up to 13 percent of basic pay per pay period. CSRS employees may contribute up to 8 percent of basic pay. Contributions may be either a whole dollar amount or a whole percentage amount. The percentages you wish to be invested in the five available funds must be in whole numbers. For example, 1%, 34%, 82%, etc. You are not required to invest in increments of 5%. The total of the percentages must equal 100%. All contributions must be made through payroll deduction. The maximum allowable amount in 2003 is \$12,000.

FERS employees who are receiving Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions but are not contributing funds of their own, may elect to invest all or any portion of the Agency Automatic (1%) contribution in any of the five funds. FERS and CSRS participants may also choose to invest all or any portion of their existing account balances in any of the five investment funds.

Employees must file an election to redirect future payroll contributions directly with the TSP record-keeper. Funds may be **allocated** among the different funds at any time by using the TSP Web site <http://www.tsp.gov/> or the Thriftline (504-255-8777), or by mailing Form TSP-50, Investment Allocation to the TSP record-keeper. This form is designed to be read by an optical scanner and should be obtained from your human resources staff. The TDD number for the Thriftline is 504-255-5113.

To change the investment of **future contributions** to your TSP account, you must request a **contribution allocation**. To change the investment of **money already in your account**, you must request an **interfund transfer**. Under the current record keeping system, contribution allocations are processed daily. Your contribution allocation request will generally be effective no later than two business days after it is received. They will become effective with the next payroll contribution that TSP receives. Interfund transfer requests are processed monthly after accounts have been valued. An interfund transfer must be received by the fifteenth of the month for the transfer to be effective at the end of the month.

To make a contribution allocation or an interfund transfer, you should use the TSP Web site, <http://www.tsp.gov>, the Thriftline (504) 255-8777, or Form TSP-50, Investment Allocation.

You must have your Personal Identification Number (PIN) to use the website or the Thriftline. To obtain a PIN, contact the TSP Thriftline or the TSP website. You select the Account Access section of the website to request a new PIN. It takes about ten working days to receive a new PIN number. The Thriftline is a user-friendly automated telephone system. A card is available from your human resources specialist on using the Thriftline, if you do not have one.

In addition to this Information Bulletin, you will also receive the flyer, "Open Season April 15 to June 30, 2003 - "Think Big." The flyer provides basic information about participation in the current open season and presents historical rates of return of the TSP investment funds.

If you wish more information about the TSP, you may request a copy of the booklet, "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees" from your human resource staff. This booklet describes the TSP in detail and contains more information about contribution elections, contribution allocations, and interfund transfers. It is also available on the TSP web site.

To use EMPLOYEE EXPRESS, you must have your Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you do not have your PIN available, you may call the EMPLOYEE EXPRESS helpdesk to request a new PIN. The telephone number is 478-757-3030. You may also request a PIN at www.employeeexpress.gov.

The EMPLOYEE EXPRESS numbers for making this, and other TSP changes, are:

- From work - (478) 757-3080
- From any touch-tone telephone - 1-800-827-6254

- TDD Service - (912) 757-3117 for TDD Calls
- InTERnet:<http://www.employeeexpress.gov>
- InTRANet:<http://web.or.blm.gov/OR953>

Employees who are eligible to use EMPLOYEE EXPRESS this open season are: (1) employees who are currently participating in TSP; (2) employees under FERS who are receiving the basic one percent (1%) but have not previously contributed their own money; and (3) employees who terminated their contributions during a prior open season.

Employees who terminated their contributions outside an open season may not resume their contributions until the second open season after termination. You may determine your current TSP status by referring to the TSP employee information provided in the Basic Information section of your Leave and Earnings Statement. FERS employees who receive the government basic one percent (1%) contribution may find this information in the Agency Contributions section of the Leave and Earnings Statement.

An employee's initial eligibility determination is currently being done by the servicing human resources office. If you are not currently participating in TSP and wish to begin contributions June 1, 2003, you must complete a TSP-1 Election form and submit it to your servicing human resources office for verification of eligibility. **If you wish to increase the dollar amount or percentage that you are currently contributing, you should use EMPLOYEE EXPRESS** or complete a TSP-1.

EMPLOYEE EXPRESS requires that you provide the same information you would normally provide on the paper TSP enrollment form, TSP-1. If you wish to contribute to the "F", "C", "S" or "I" funds and have not done so previously, you will be asked to confirm that you understand the possibility of loss of investment.

All other regular TSP open season changes may be accomplished through EMPLOYEE EXPRESS. Terminating your own contributions ("Stop") may be done at anytime during the year. "Stop" transactions are effective at the end of the pay period in which you enter them. You will be asked to

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confirm you understand when you will be allowed to begin contributing your own money again. FERS employees who stop their own contributions will be asked to provide how they wish to divide their government basic one percent (1%) contribution between the available funds.

If you are unable to use Employee Express and find it necessary to use the TSP-1 election form, you are required to use the May, 2001 edition to enroll, change the amount or percentage contributed, or to terminate contributions. All previous editions of the Form TSP-1 are obsolete.

Interested district office employees should request the election form from their human resources staff. Oregon State Office employees may obtain an election form from the Branch of Human Resources.

The effective date of open season enrollments or changes will be no earlier than June 1, 2003. Election forms received after June 1, 2003, will become effective the first day of the first pay period following the one in which the election form is received by your servicing human resources office. Changes made by using EMPLOYEE EXPRESS must be completed by midnight eastern standard time June 30, 2003.

If you are in need of assistance with an EMPLOYEE EXPRESS transaction, you should call the EMPLOYEE EXPRESS Help Desk at (478) 757-3030. Questions concerning this bulletin should be directed to Marcia Butenschoen at (503) 808-6239, or your district human resource staff.

Districts with Unions are reminded to notify their unions of this IB and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your Servicing Personnel Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you assistance in this matter.

Signed by

Authenticated by

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Distribution

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