

December 2008

**Editor's note:** Our first issue of Dateline in the new online format was well received. Current and archived issues can be found online at [www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/dateline/2000/index.html](http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/dateline/2000/index.html).

**TOP STORY**

## Benefit from using the Automated Partial Claims System (APS)



Currently telephone lines for filing claims for unemployment benefits are very busy due to record unemployment rates and extended benefits passed in Washington. For example, the number of claims filed during the first three weeks of November 2008 was up 146% over the number filed during the same period in 2007 – and that increase did not include those filing for the federally funded extended benefits, which are filed through the state system. The department is in the process of training additional claims takers and expanding the Internet application.

With the phone lines seeing this increased volume and claimants having difficulty getting through, the **Automated Partial Claims System (APS) is an attractive option for employers**. Anytime employers have a reduced amount of work for their employees due to holidays, inclement weather, or lack of work, they are encouraged to use the Automated Partial System. Under these circumstances, many employees qualify for unemployment benefits. In order to facilitate the filing of these claims, employers may file partial unemployment claims for any employee who is working less than his usual number of hours and the wages earned are less than their weekly benefit amount. The easiest way to file these partial claims is through the department's Automated Partial Claim System (APS).

In the past, partial claims were only accepted on paper, which resulted in more repetitive work for the employer and longer processing time for claimants. **The Automated Partial Claims program streamlines all aspects of processing these claims** by reducing both problems. Employers only enter information identifying their business one time instead of on each paper claim. Additionally, employers only enter each employee one time into the program's database and then add or delete employees as needed. This user-friendly program creates a file of all employees you select and applies wage information for the week of partial layoff. After all information is entered, the employer attaches the text file to an e-mail and sends it to us for prompt processing. Employers who have questions about the APS system should use the following e-mail address: [account.partials@state.tn.us](mailto:account.partials@state.tn.us).

The **free Automated Partial Claims System (APS)** can be downloaded through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Web site at <http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/aps/> and is **simple to set up and use**.

Filing partial claims for your employees also **helps to preserve your workforce during temporary periods when you have no work available**. Employees who are receiving partial unemployment benefits are not required to register for work while receiving these benefits because it is your intention to recall them to their jobs as soon as work is available. This results in less cost to employers having to retrain new employees. Using this Automated Partial Claims System helps the Department of Labor and Workforce Development provide efficient and timely service to both employers and claimants.

**Note:** There is even a **modified APS program called "Convert to Total"** that can be used by the employer when a permanent, mass separation occurs. It, too, keeps the laid off worker from having to file a claim over the telephone.

## MORE NEWS

### End-of-year reminders

**Employers:** you must pay **all unemployment insurance premiums** to the state unemployment insurance fund by the **due date of January 31, 2009**, in order to take the full 5.4 % credit on your federal unemployment (FUTA) tax return.

**Useful information for household employers:** Many of you pay your household employee's social security and Medicare taxes from your own funds. While the social security and Medicare taxes you pay to cover your employee's share of those taxes must be included in their wages for income tax purposes, those amounts do not count as social security, Medicare, or FUTA wages and are not reportable to our agency for state unemployment tax purposes; however, any income tax you pay for your household employee without withholding it from his wages must be included in his wages for income tax, social security, Medicare, and FUTA purposes and must also be included in the amount of wages you report to our agency.

### TNPAWS Update

The Tennessee Premium and Wage Reporting System (TNPAWS) recently underwent a **redesign**. The changes were necessitated by the incredible volume the Web site experiences each quarter.

Some **new features** are the ability to modify the Social Security Number without deleting the entire record, the ability to sort by clicking on the column header, and the addition of an optional employee number column. TNPAWS was redesigned to display 10 employee records at a time. Employers with more than 10 employees will have multiple pages to update and can change the page being viewed by selecting the page number. Users update the displayed records by clicking the 'EDIT' button on the screen. The data are checked for errors and saved before allowing the user to move to the next page. This new design provides a quicker response time for all users and allows for easier identification of errors.

Please remember that **you may file your report at any time and hold your payment until the due date**. If the payment is postmarked by the due date, it is considered timely. If you have questions or concerns about TNPAWS, please contact us at (615)741-2346.

## For employers navigating the Tennessee Career Center

The Tennessee Career Centers offer a **variety of human resource services for area employers at no charge** .

The resources include the availability to post open positions, detailed cross-matching of jobseekers to job orders, comprehensive labor market information, access to career center job fairs, and on-site employee recruitment.



There are several convenient ways an employer can **post an open position with the Career Center**. The employer may post by phone, fax, email, in-person, or online. To obtain a job order form to post your open position, simply contact your local career center or post online at <http://ecmats.state.tn.us/> and click on the employer's tab.

The Tennessee Career Center will process your posted job order using in-depth cross-matching software. The software searches the career center's vast database of job seekers to identify key factors qualifying the job seeker for the open position. Some of the key factors include work experience, education, and salary requirements. The job seeker will then be notified of a possible job match and will be instructed on how to further apply with the employer.

Employers will also find **useful information to aid in their search for new employees** through the Labor Market Information, Research, and Statistics section. This section is the official source for all employment related data for the state. This information may be accessed online at <http://www.sourcetn.org/>.

Employers can also take advantage of the many **job fairs held at local career centers** throughout the year. Some fairs may focus specifically on specialized employment sectors. Space may also be available at certain locations for employers to conduct on-site recruiting. Check your [local career center](#) for availability of services.

## Dateline Q&A

### 1. How are unemployment insurance premium rates calculated?

The rate for most “new” employers is 2.7%, but there are exceptions for employers classified within the construction industry, certain manufacturing sectors, and mining and extraction operations. The “new” employer rate continues for three full calendar years, and then the rate is recalculated based on the employer’s history of premiums paid, benefits charged, and average annual taxable wages reported. The premium rate of an experience-rated employer is based on their reserve ratio.

### 2. What is a *reserve ratio*?

The reserve ratio is calculated by subtracting the cumulative amount of benefits charged to the employer’s unemployment insurance account from the cumulative amount of premiums the employer has paid into the system, and then dividing that amount by the employer’s average taxable payroll over the last three calendar years. The reserve ratio percent is compared to the current Premium Rate Table ranges, and the new premium rate will become effective in the third quarter of the *following* year.

### 3. What is a *premium rate table*?

The Tennessee Employment Security Law provides for six premium rate tables that are set up in trust fund balance increments of \$75 million (see table below). The effective premium table is determined by the level of Tennessee’s Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund on June 30th and again on December 31st of each year. Premium Table 1 contains the highest premium rates, and Table 6 has the lowest premium rates.

Table 1 Trust Fund = Below \$450 million

Table 2 Trust Fund = \$450 million but < \$525 million

Table 3 Trust Fund = \$525 million but < \$600 million

Table 4 Trust Fund = \$600 million but < \$675 million

Table 5 Trust Fund = \$675 million but < \$750 million

Table 6 Trust Fund over \$750 million

**If you have business related questions, e-mail those to us and we’ll do our best to answer them in a future issue!**

## Business quick fact

**Severance pay** is considered wages, and employers pay premiums on severance pay when it is paid; however, former employees can receive unemployment benefits while receiving severance pay, since severance pay is considered pay for prior services. (*From TDLWD Handbook for Employers – December 2005*)

## Green jobs could aid recovery



With unemployment and interest in saving money on energy both increasing, now is a good time to think about green job investment in Tennessee.

Green jobs have been defined as family-supporting jobs that contribute significantly to preserving or enhancing environmental quality. They are found in sectors that compose the clean energy economy- efficiency, renewables, alternative transportation, and fuels.

In March 2008, **Governor Phil Bredesen** signed an Executive Order establishing the Governor's Task Force on Energy Policy. Tennessee is at the forefront of investment in key areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency technology, including alternative fuels, energy conservation, and electric and hybrid vehicles. Investment in energy technology is viewed as a key to the state's economic development and job creation.

Investment in green jobs could be a part of an economic stimulus package under consideration for January. New estimates for Tennessee are that more than 40,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs could be created from \$1.9 billion invested in energy efficiency building retrofits; mass transit and freight rail; smart grid; and renewables. Jobs could be created most rapidly by building retrofits and by expanding existing mass transit.

## Workforce Employer Outreach Committee meetings schedule

The department's Workforce Employer Outreach Committees provide two-way communication between the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Tennessee's employer community. For more information about topics to be discussed at upcoming employer committee meetings in your area, call 615.741.7374 or e-mail [danna.douglas@tn.gov](mailto:danna.douglas@tn.gov)



<b>County</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>
Lauderdale	12/11/09	Houston/Humphreys	02/11/09
White	12/15/08	Hardin/McNairy/Hardeman	02/11/09
Wayne	12/16/08	Loudon/Monroe	02/11/09
Benton/Dickson/Houston/Humphreys	12/17/08	Washington/Unicoi	02/12/09
Pickett	01/13/09	Benton	02/12/09
Smith	01/15/09	Henry	02/12/09
Cumberland	01/21/09	Van Buren	02/17/09
Shelby	01/21/09	Putnam	02/17/09
Wilson	01/27/09	Tipton	02/17/09
Macon/Trousdale	01/27/09	Carter/Johnson	02/17/09
DeKalb	01/28/09	Claiborne/Union/Campbell	02/17/09
Henderson/Decatur	01/28/09	Cocke/Jefferson	02/18/09
Fayette	01/29/09	Sevier	02/24/09
Madison/Chester	02/03/09	Stewart	02/26/09
Haywood	02/04/09	Knox	03/11/09
Sullivan	02/04/09	Carroll	03/11/09
Jackson	02/05/09	Lauderdale	03/12/09
Anderson/Roane	02/05/09	Scott/Morgan	03/17/09
Fentress	02/06/09	Dyer/Lake	03/17/09
Davidson/Cheatham	02/06/09	Obion	03/24/09
Hamblen/Grainger	02/10/09	Weakley	03/25/09
Cannon	02/10/09	Gibson/Crockett	03/26/09

Comments or Questions? Contact [Martha Deacon](#)

The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to persons with disabilities.