

Fiscal Year 2008 E-Government Act Report

Section 1 – Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has been implementing the E-Government Act by creating electronic service options for its mission-critical, high value, and high volume transactions. The RRB has successfully implemented a number of important electronic initiatives despite budgetary constraints and reduced staffing levels.

In addition to electronic service delivery options, active and retired railroad employees will retain options to file RRB applications in person, by telephone, and through the mail. Likewise, railroad employers will retain paper, CD-ROM, cartridge and specialized electronic transmission filing options.

To date, the RRB has implemented the following initiatives:

- **Government-to-Business** – Covered railroad employers can exchange information with, and report securely to, the RRB through Employer Reporting System (See the summary below for further information). In 2008 the RRB also implemented a PC-based system enabling employers to file encrypted reports of service and compensation over the internet. In 2008 the RRB implemented an internet based system enabling our Medicare contractor, Palmetto GBA, to report changes of address for beneficiaries, notices of death, and requests for replacement Medicare cards to the agency.
- **Government-to-Citizen** – Railroad employees can establish an on-line account on the RRB web site and (1) change their password; (2) file an application and claims for unemployment benefits; (3) view an account statement of recent unemployment and sickness benefit forms filed and payments issued; and (4) request and receive a statement of service and compensation, an annuity estimate, a replacement Medicare card, and duplicate tax statements.
- **Government-to-Government** – The RRB has real-time access to limited data in the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) systems for use in determining eligibility and payment amounts for RRB benefits. We also interface with SSA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and State governments using anti-fraud computer matching programs.

In 2009, we plan to allow customers to file claims for sickness benefits via the Internet.

Summary of the Employer Reporting Initiative (ERI) A Railroad Retirement Board E-Government Initiative

The purpose of the Employer Reporting Initiative (ERI) is to provide rail industry employers with electronic options for all data exchanges with our agency. To accomplish this, the RRB is using a combination of existing Internet applications such as PAY.GOV and an Internet-based Employer Reporting System (ERS), which we are building to accomplish this goal. Rail industry employers can use the Electronic Federal Tax Filing System (EFTPS) to pay Tier 1 and Tier 2

taxes. Payments under Section 12(o) and 2(f) may be submitted through PAY.GOV. In March 2008, Rail employers began using PAY.GOV to make payments and file a return of contributions under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (Form DC-1). Using ERS, employers can (1) report compensation adjustments (Form BA-4); (2) provide address information for newly hired employees (Form BA-6); and (3) receive and submit determinations on employee protests of service and compensation (Forms GL-129 and GL-129a). In addition, railroad employers can send secure e-mail requests (in lieu of facsimiles) for information about the amounts to be deducted from guarantee payments (ID-3U, Request for Section 2(f) Information) or injury settlements for reimbursement (ID-3S, Request for Lien Information) to the Railroad Retirement Board's Sickness and Unemployment Benefits Section e-mail address. In fiscal year 2008, rail employers are able to send service and compensation reports through secure e-mail in addition to the Form BA-6a, Address Report, which they currently submit through this process.

During fiscal year 2008, we developed automated handling of two claim verification forms (ID-4e and ID-4k). Rail employers will begin their testing in early FY 2009. We also implemented the use of file transfer protocols (FTP) and encryption to enable safe, secure transmission of large files using media other than magnetic tape, cassettes and CD-ROM.

ERI has transformed agency operations by streamlining manual processes, pre-filling data, and permitting on-line edits. It affords rail industry employers an opportunity for real-time processing and instant processing feedback, and allows users to have more control over the reporting process. The ERI has stimulated creative problem solving and improved partnerships with our rail industry employers. Our ERI partners also include the Department of the Treasury.

We maintain an ongoing dialogue with our external partner, the rail industry, to ensure that we are using information technology effectively to address mutual needs. Two to three times a year, we have hosted conferences with the largest rail employers in order to discuss program and technology issues, including the automation of the reporting of service and compensation for employees. We have also obtained input from small employers to meet their distinct needs for on-line systems. These industry partners have provided valuable input for the design of our reporting systems and have taken an active role in testing them. This collaboration has paid off in the increased usage measured in our performance goals.

The agency's strategic plan includes Performance Goal I-D: Ensure efficient and effective business interactions with covered railroad employers. There is a specific performance objective to enable employers to use the Internet to conduct business with the RRB. We measure performance against this goal by reviewing the percentage of employers using the on-line processes and the number of services available through electronic media. According to Annual Performance Report for FY 2008 as of mid-year, 67 percent of the employers were using one or more of the seven Internet-based services: ERS (3), Pay.Gov for employer lien payments and for employer quarterly reports of unemployment contributions (2); secure e-mail for lien information (1) and secure email for Employer Reporting Forms (1).

Our customers are pleased with ERI and have suggested additional opportunities for future enhancements. We obtain feedback from our customers in the following ways:

- The website includes e-mail for sending comments about the site to a site administrator.

- The RRB has ongoing personal contact with our customers through various seminars, conferences, and training sessions several times a year.
- Telephone comments are received in a customer service section, which is dedicated to serving industry employers.

Benefits garnered from the development of ERI include:

- Increased security in transmission of sensitive financial and personal data, which is a primary benefit;
- Improved timeliness in receiving data, which has, in turn, reduced the need to trace for data;
- Improved accuracy of compensation data and, thus, the accuracy of benefits using that data by identifying and correcting errors in a more timely manner;
- Increased options available to employers for meeting their reporting requirements;
- Reduced printing and mailing costs and labor costs associated with manual handling of paper forms; and
- Reduced error handling and the associated costs of reconciling errors.

While employers retain the option to file using paper, magnetic media, and CD-ROM, the Board is promoting the use of secure e-mail, secure FTP, and secure on-line form submission to enable employers to transition away from physically mailing discs and tapes containing sensitive financial and personal data.

The Information Technology Steering Committee (ITSC) provides an ongoing assessment of its progress along with critical issues identified from management and technical perspectives. One of the functions of the ITSC is to provide Capital Planning and Investment Control. The ITSC meets, as needed, in the capacity of the agency's Information Technology Investment Review Board (ITIRB) to coordinate a sound investment process through a comprehensive, enterprise-wide approach to technology investment. The ITIRB recommends new information technology investments to the Chief Information Officer and evaluates existing projects and operational systems to create an IT investment portfolio that best supports the agency's missions and program delivery processes.

The RRB's continuing interaction with rail industry and labor through various conferences and seminars identifies potential information technology initiatives. These potential initiatives are formally researched, detailed, structured and vetted by analyst staff in several organizations and presented to the ITSC for consideration in view of the RRB's business priorities, enterprise architecture and capital plan.

Section 2 – Agency Information Management Activities

See below for links to RRB's website where the following information is located.

A. RRB's current Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan:

<http://www.rrb.gov/pdf/archdocs/IRMpln00-05.webcopy.PDF>.

RRB will update the IRM Strategic Plan in FY 2009. An EA Transition Plan will be developed in FY 2009.

B. Final determinations, priorities, and schedules:

<http://www.rrb.gov/general/inventory.asp>.

C. RRB's FOIA handbook: http://www.rrb.gov/blaw/foia/foia_guide.asp.

RRB's primary FOIA website: http://www.rrb.gov/blaw/foia/foia_guide.asp.

Website for frequent requests for records that are made available to the public:

<http://www.rrb.gov/blaw/foia/foia.asp#frequently>.

D. List of RRB's public websites disseminating research and development (R&D) information to the public:

The RRB has no websites that disseminate research and development information to the public.

E. An inventory describing formal agency agreements (e.g., contracts, memorandum of understanding) with external entities (e.g., partnerships with State and local governments public libraries, industry and commercial search engines) complementing RRB's information dissemination program, briefly explaining how each agreement improves the access to and dissemination of government information to the public:

The RRB has no formal agency agreements with external entities that complement our information dissemination program.

F. We have included a file containing the current NARA-approved RRB records disposition schedules.

In accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Bulletin 2006-02, we have identified approximately 260 systems/databases/ associated applications related to the RRB six major application systems:

- Railroad Retirement Act (RRA) Benefit Payments
- Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) Benefit Payments
- Maintenance of railroad employee Compensation and Service Records
- Administration of Medicare Entitlement
- Financial Management
- Financial Interchange (FI)

and two general support systems.

A comprehensive records schedule for RUIA Benefit Payment records and the RRB Imaging System were submitted to NARA for approval in FY 2008. A records schedule for FI records has been drafted and will be submitted to NARA in early FY 2009. Data collection is currently ongoing for Administration of Medicare Entitlement records and portions of the RRA Benefit Payments system.

The RRB will conduct a comprehensive review of all of its remaining program and administrative records, including system and system related records during FY 2009. The RRB added records management staff in early FY 2008 to assist in this effort. As part of that effort, the RRB will enter into a targeted assistance initiative with NARA to inventory and develop a records schedule for the remaining RRA Benefit Payment records. We anticipate that during the review, it will be determined that a sizable portion of the remaining identified systems/databases/related applications are already scheduled, or disposable under NARA's General Records Schedule. It is the RRB's intent to submit all required disposition schedules required by NARA bulletin 2006-02 to NARA by or before July 30, 2009.