



Pension Newsletter

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

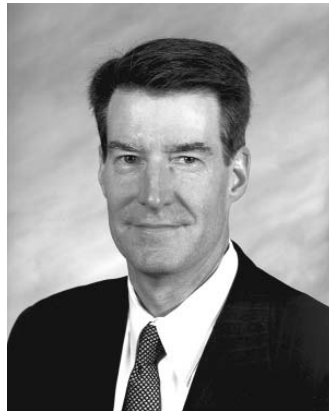
Fall/Winter 2004

Protecting America's Pensions for 30 Years

by Executive Director Bradley D. Belt

As Executive Director, one of my priorities is to ensure that PBGC consistently provides top-quality service to you, our customers. After 30 years in operation, we believe that PBGC's customer service ranks among the best in the government. We are proud of our service, both for its quality and for the difference it makes in people's lives. At the same time, your comments help us to improve our service, and we appreciate your honest feedback as it shows us how we might serve you better.

Our mission is to protect American workers' hard-earned pensions, and it's as important to us as it is to you. With \$280 million in monthly pension payments to more than 500,000 retirees and an equal number of people who will receive payments from us after they retire, we understand what our protection means to you. We also understand the meaning of good service, and we want to make it easier and simpler for you to work with us. MyPBA (www.pbgc.gov/myPBA_intro.htm), our new online service for participants in trustee plans, is one way we are doing that. We just opened MyPBA to everyone in the pension plans that we administer. With this around-the-clock service, you can quickly sign up and update your PBGC account for address and phone changes. Additional features will become available to you when you start receiving payments from PBGC and we plan to add others in coming months.



Bradley D. Belt

Recently, you may have read news reports about the financial challenges facing the PBGC. At the mid-point of our 2004 fiscal year, the assets we had on hand fell considerably short of the total benefits we owe to participants. This is a cause for concern. Over the near term PBGC can safely pay benefits to retirees in trustee plans. Over the longer term PBGC faces a financial challenge that Congress must take action to fix, and the Administration is committed to strengthening the insurance program so that PBGC can continue to protect pension benefits.

We always welcome hearing from you. Please feel free to call our toll-free telephone numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter, or send us an e-mail at mypension@pbgc.gov. We also encourage you to visit our Web site at www.pbgc.gov for the latest news, developments, useful publications and other information about the pension insurance program.

Customer Contact Hours Extended

PBGC extended the hours of operation for our Customer Contact Center as of October 1, 2004. You may now reach the Contact Center (by calling the appropriate number on the back page of this newsletter) between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

When to Call the Problem Resolution Officer

If you are not satisfied with PBGC's response to your request after your first contact with the agency, we recommend that you contact us a second time to resolve your situation. If you continue to be dissatisfied after your second contact, you should then call our problem resolution officer.

The problem resolution officer provides an additional avenue to have pensions concerns addressed. For example, you may contact this office regarding difficulties with your pension benefits, with problems starting or receiving your benefits timely, or with the type of service you received from PBGC.

The problem resolution officer should not your first contact for service, nor should she be contacted to file an appeal after a final benefit determination has been issued by PBGC. The problem resolution officer can be reached at 1-800-400-7242 ext. 4014.

Divorce Orders and PBGC

Pensions are often one of the most valuable assets owned by a married couple. When a plan participant and spouse divorce, they may agree to divide the participant's pension between them. PBGC can divide the participant's benefit only if we receive a domestic relations order that meets certain legal requirements.

The booklet *Divorce Orders & PBGC* provides information on domestic relations orders to be submitted to PBGC in order to divide benefits between a participant and a spouse. The booklet is available online at www.pbgc.gov/forms/divorce.htm.

Take Advantage of My PBA, Our Online Service

PBGC's around-the-clock online service, My Pension Benefit Account (My PBA), is now available to everyone due a guaranteed benefit from PBGC. My PBA allows you to change your contact information such as address or telephone number. Routine transactions with the agency on My PBA may be initiated from any Internet-connected computer at any location at any time of day or night.

My PBA may be accessed via our Web site at www.pbgc.gov/mypba. Follow the on-screen information to set up a personal account linked to your pension plan information.

Once registered and logged into your account, all of your transactions will be recorded into PBGC's computer system for future reference. PBGC plans to improve My PBA in the future to allow users to retrieve the agency's most frequently used forms. My PBA offers a convenient, speedy and confidential way for you to provide information to PBGC, without the need for phone calls, paper forms or postage fees.

Help with Health Insurance Costs

Persons who are receiving a PBGC benefit, are age 55 or older, and are not eligible for Medicare Part A or receiving either Medicare Part B or Medicaid, may be eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). HCTC is administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and provides a tax credit equal to 65 percent of an eligible individual's "qualified health insurance" premium.

The tax credit is not available to everyone. You may obtain information about this program, including what is considered qualified health insurance, by calling the HCTC Customer Contact Center's toll-free telephone number at 1-866-628-4282 (for TTY/TDD users, call 1-866- 626-4282) or by going to the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov — IRS Keyword: HCTC.

Surveys Show Improved Satisfaction with PBGC Service

Recent callers to our toll-free number showed a high level of satisfaction with PBGC services. Our survey score by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) was 78, up one point from last year and well above the federal government average of 71.

Our highest scores were for customer care, especially respect shown by our staff and their knowledge of the issue called about, and written communication, particularly in helpfulness with correspondence. Significantly, we reduced complaints by

more than half, from 17 percent to 8 percent.

The handling of requests for benefit estimates scored less well than other areas. Recognizing that benefit estimates are of primary importance to people like you who have yet to retire, we are focusing on a number of efforts to provide more accurate and timely estimates.

Among those already receiving benefits, we scored especially well with an ACSI score of 84, higher than any other federal agency paying benefits.

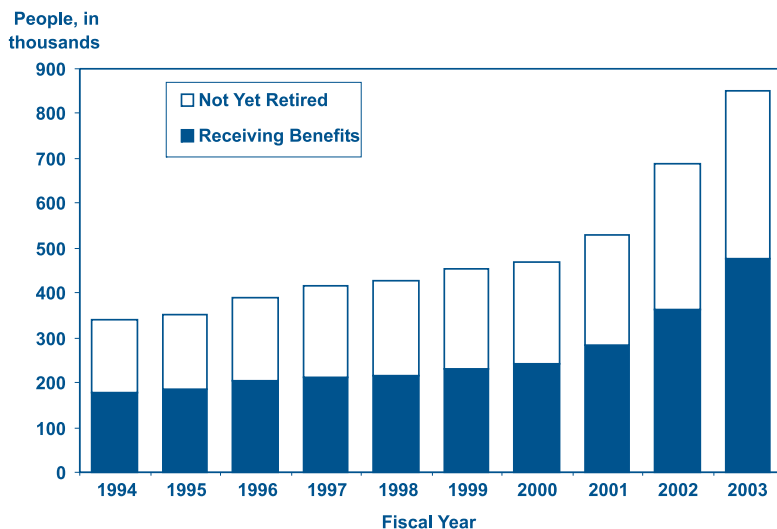
Información en Español

¡El compromiso de la PBGC es brindar el mejor servicio a nuestros clientes de habla hispana!

- Para recibir información en español, llame al Centro de Contacto al 1-800-400-7242, y apriete el número 2 en su teléfono. Representantes de la PBGC que hablan español estarán listos para responder a sus preguntas.
- Toda las cartas y formas que explican los beneficios garantizados por la PBGC están disponibles en español.
- Las personas que deseen apelar una decisión de la PBGC pueden hacerlo en español. Además, si el cliente lo desea, la PBGC puede responder en español.
- La PBGC puede organizar reuniones para explicar los beneficios en español.
- Hay tres publicaciones de la PBGC en español, y todas están disponibles en nuestro sitio de la Internet, www.pbgc.gov.
- La coordinadora de servicios en español para la PBGC es **Orfanny Vanegas**. Si Ud. necesita ayuda, llame al 1-800-400-7242, o escriba a: PBGC, Contacto de Habla Hispana, 1200 K St. NW, Room 9109, Washington, DC 20005-4026.

Who We Owe

The number of people due benefits from PBGC increased sharply in recent years. PBGC assumed responsibility for the benefits of nearly 400,000 people in 2002 and 2003, equal to the number the agency took in during its first 21 years of operation, and this level of activity appears to have continued in 2004. By the end of 2003, PBGC was responsible for the current and future benefits of 834,000 participants in failed pension plans.



Keep Us Informed...But Use My PBA or Call Before Writing

If you move or change your name or telephone number, PBGC needs this new information to stay in touch with you.

Our online service, My PBA, is now available for you to use to quickly inform us of changes to your address or other contact information.

You can also get fast, efficient service by calling our Customer Contact Center at the numbers listed below.

Calling can save you the time and effort of writing and may provide immediate answers to your questions or needs.

In order to avoid a wait, it is best to call after the 10th of

each month before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m. Eastern Time (the contact center's hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday). If calling is not convenient, you can write to us at: PBGC, P.O. Box 151750, Alexandria, VA 22315-1750.

Contact Center Phone Numbers

Bethlehem Steel plan participants 1-800-453-9584
LTV Steel plan participants 1-800-707-7242
National Steel plan participants 1-800-707-7242
All other pension plan participants 1-800-400-7242

TTY/TDD users may call the Federal Relay Service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to the toll-free number listed above for your plan.

Address Service Requested

PRESORT STANDARD
POSTAGE AND FEES
PAID
Permit No. 62
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
P.O. Box 151750, Alexandria, VA 22315-1750

