ARC Monthly Bulletin – December 2011

Valuable information for ARC's customers

Article headlines appear below. Scroll down for full stories.

HEADLINES

Franchise Services
1. Holiday Greetings
2. Annual Test of ARC's Notification System
3. Oracle Release 12 Migration Project Update

Financial Management Services
4. Convenience Checks and PayPal Logs

Travel Services
5. Promoting Efficient Spending

Human Resources Services
6. HR Efficiency Review Initiative Update
7. FEGLI Premium Changes
8. Changes in Take Home Pay

Procurement Services
9. Contracting While Under Continuing Resolution Authority

Information Technology Services
10. TNet Virtual Routing and Forwarding Merge Completed

FULL STORIES

1. Holiday Greetings

Because the goodwill of those we serve is the foundation of our success, it's a real pleasure at this holiday time for the ARC team members to say "Thank You" and wish you a wonderful holiday season and the very best for the new year.

2. Annual Test of ARC's Notification System

In order to ensure that our customers are notified immediately in the event of an emergency impacting our ability to provide services, ARC implemented the Universal Communications System (UCS). The system initiates an automated phone notification informing our customers that we have activated our Business Continuity or Pandemic Plan, and that we will provide additional information regarding the event when possible. The third annual test of the system will be conducted on February 14, 2012. Designated points of contact at customer agencies should expect to receive an automated phone call on this day.

For additional information, contact Amy Miller at 304-480-7257 or amy.miller@bpd.treas.gov.

3. Oracle Release 12 Migration Project Update

The R12 Migration Project is progressing through the Testing Phase focusing on extensive testing of the application's functionality. The project will soon enter another phase and will continue to test the application while including custom code, interfaces, and feeder systems. Test scenarios will simulate everyday customer business processes. Later in this phase, Performance Load Testing and Security Assessment Testing will be performed with User Acceptance Testing occurring in the Spring of 2012.

If you have any questions on the Oracle R12 Project, contact the project team at R12communication@bpd.treas.gov.

4. Convenience Checks and PayPal Logs

Our accountants who manage the Suppliers lists recently sent email reminders to customer agencies who use convenience checks with specific instructions on submitting the 2011 Convenience Check logs. These logs are an integral part of the Form 1099 reporting process due to it being our only source of information for reporting these payments. We have requested purchase card holders submit their logs to ARC1099@bpd.treas.gov by December 31. Due to new IRS reporting requirements beginning calendar year 2011, credit card companies will report all other credit card purchases, including PayPal transactions. Reporting is to be completed in early 2012.

For additional information, contact Connie McCloy at 304-480-7097 or connie.mccloy@bpd.treas.gov.

5. Promoting Efficient Spending

The President's Executive Order entitled "Promoting Efficient Spending" dated November 9, 2011, asks agencies to review policies and procedures to find savings and efficiencies related to official travel, and in other areas such as fleet, IT, and printing. The Order calls for reductions of not less than 20% below fiscal year 2010 budget totals, effective by 2013. Travel Services is in the process of assessing the impact of this Order and may provide suggestions to agencies for compliance.

For additional information, contact Diana Bonnell at 304-480-5573 or diana.bonnell@bpd.treas.gov.

6. HR Efficiency Review Initiative Update

Our Human Resources service line continues its efficiency initiatives. Specifically, employment service teams continue to be successful in reducing the variation in work distribution among squads. We are continuing with our standardization improvements for staffing, classification, and assistant work. We have established action teams in the areas of quality control, job analysis, job announcement streamlining, the new Pathways program, and training. We are piloting new work space configurations and have already experienced improvements in communication and collaboration.

Employee benefits, new call center has managed nearly 700 calls since its implementation on November 7, 2011. With customers contacting the call center, specialists have experienced a reduction in calls enabling us to focus on preparing and meeting metrics for the year-end retirement packages. Estimates show 116 hours of productive time regained through the implementation of the call center.

Pilots in the processing teams are complete and we are continuing to improve, particularly in the areas of standardization, automated tools, systems, and workload balancing. The processing call center has exceeded its first contact resolution target of 60% with 73% of calls resulting in resolution during the first contact.

HR service line kicked-off a process mapping project on December 1, 2011. The project results will be invaluable in identifying best practices and streamlining activities. Plans are being made to use the project results in the implementation of business process management software. We are starting a division-wide inventory of processes. The first "family" of processes to be mapped is related to separation activities.

For additional information, contact Mike Cundiff at 304-480-7130 or mike.cundiff@bpd.treas.gov.

7. FEGLI Premium Changes

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has announced changes in premiums for certain Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) categories. Changes in premiums will impact only those with Option B (multiples of salary) and/or Option C (family) coverage. The premium changes will be effective January 1, 2012.

Changes to the FEGLI premiums include the following:

- All **Option B** age bands (except ages 75+) will **DECREASE**.
- Premiums for **Option C** age bands under age 45 will also **DECREASE**.
- Premiums for **Option C** age bands 45 and over will **INCREASE**.

The Benefits Administration Letter (BAL) announcing the FEGLI premium changes is located at http://www.opm.gov/retire/pubs/bals/2011/11-205.pdf. The new FEGLI premium rates can be viewed at http://www.opm.gov/retire/pubs/bals/2011/11-205attachment.pdf.

The new premiums will be posted on your agency's ARC Customer Access Page at https://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/customer_access_pages.htm by January 1, 2012.

For additional information, contact the Benefits Service Center at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

8. Upcoming Changes in Take Home Pay

Employees may notice changes in their net pay during the upcoming months for a variety of reasons. Changes in Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) contributions could impact the amount of take home pay in the coming weeks. In addition, Federal, state, and local tax changes could impact net pay. A more detailed description of changes in take home pay will be posted in early January on your agency's ARC Customer Access Page at https://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/customer_access_pages.htm.

For additional information, contact the Benefits Service Center at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

9. Contracting While Under Continuing Resolution

Absent specific authority, funding under a Continuing Resolution (CR) generally limits expenditures to ongoing programs and prior year funding levels, not new initiatives. This requires procurement personnel to devote additional effort to acquisition planning and ensuring compliance with the Anti-Deficiency Act to avoid disruptions to essential services. During the CR period, contracts are written with a "subject to availability of funds" statement. Additional instructions are provided in the contract describing how contractors can track funds availability via Public Debt's website at: http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/vendorinfo/vendor_info.htm.
As CR's are extended or upon receipt of fiscal year 2012 appropriations, entries are updated on this site to reflect the status of contract funding. These updates are also available for customer use in keeping abreast of contract funding status.

All customers are encouraged to submit new fiscal year 2012 requirements during the CR period to allow procurement personnel to begin the solicitation process immediately. This will allow the requirement to be taken to the point of award saving time to implement the initiative. Upon passage of the appropriation an award will be made. For more information on this topic contact your procurement team leader.

10. TNet Virtual Routing and Forwarding Merge Completed

The TNET Virtual Routing and Forwarding (VRF) merge was completed in November 2011. This key milestone in the fiscal IT project will facilitate expanded shared Fiscal IT services between FMS and Public Debt. For example, completion of work that allows FMS and Public Debt employees to access each other's respective Active Directory resources (printers, file shares) and other systems resources, such as administrative access to devices.

The VRF will ensure more stability to the infrastructure, giving us the ability to failover Data Center TNet connectivity between KC and 3rd St. Now, if there is a TNet disruption to KROC or 3rd St, all connectivity will fail over to the other location. During testing we experienced an approximate 3 minute outage with a complete failover. After that period, we regained normal access without intervention. This represents a significant improvement in service to the Fiscal IT organization, as well as our customer network.

For additional information, contact Steve Swarr at 304-480-6460, or steve.swarr@bpd.treas.gov.

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