

HR Polytechnote

October—November 2007

HR Online

Find the current and past issues of the HR Polytechnote online at www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/newsletter.html.

The PDF format makes them easy to print and easy to read.

New issues of the Polytechnote are available online bi-monthly. Printed copies are distributed to campus quarterly.

Inside this issue:

Comprehensive Benefits Statement	2
Limits on Supplemental Retirement Contributions	2
Enterprise Business Rental	2
Emergency Response Planning	3
Professional Development	3
Faculty/Staff Appreciation Event	3
Dependent Care Services	4
Work Permit Expiration Notification	4

2008 Benefits Update

The Division of Human Resources recently concluded a market review of several local, regional, and national healthcare companies to ensure that the plans and carriers offered to the Rensselaer community are comprehensive and competitive. **We are excited to report that they are competitive!**

As a result, Rensselaer will not be changing any vendors and will continue to provide health benefits through CDPHP and MVP; dental services through MetLife; and life and disability coverage through AIG. Next steps include evaluating the cost increases projected by each vendor for the 2008 plan year and assessing possible plan design changes where applicable to keep costs for these programs competitive and affordable.

Health care costs continue to climb at double-digit rates. It is predicted that 2008 will bring another increase of 11 percent—

nearly three times the rate of inflation. These costs will remain problematic for most employers, including Rensselaer which has experienced health plan cost increases at rates slightly higher than 11 percent over the past several years. However, the Institute has been successful in managing these escalating health and prescription drug costs by negotiating with vendors and making necessary plan design changes to keep costs below these double-digit increases. Dental plan members can expect annual trend factors to reflect cost increases in the range of 6-7 percent.

Human Resources continues to work diligently with Rensselaer's external benefits consultant and vendors to develop strategies for plan design changes, while offering comprehensive, competitive, and affordable benefit plans in 2008.

Stay tuned for more information regarding your

current plans, as well as new and exciting benefit programs. During the month of November, faculty, staff, and retirees will be informed of any plan changes, including cost information, plan design, co-payments and deductibles, and how the changes will affect individuals and their families.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Annual Benefits Fair scheduled for Friday November 16 in the Heffner Alumni House. We look forward to seeing you there!

REMINDER: The 2008 Annual Open Enrollment Period for benefit election changes will begin Friday, November 16 and end Friday, November 30.



Comprehensive Benefits Statements Expected Soon

During November, the Division of Human Resources will distribute via U.S. Mail, the Annual Comprehensive Benefits Statements to all benefits eligible faculty and staff. These personalized statements are prepared to help individuals better understand and appreciate Rensselaer's total rewards package, including compensation, benefits, and retirement planning options.

Rensselaer's benefits program continues to be recognized locally, regionally, and nationally as an extremely competitive benefits package.

The statements provide detailed informa-

tion on the benefits individuals were eligible to participate in, as well as the benefits' value during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007. In addition, the statements contain important information on Rensselaer's Wellness Program initiatives and various tools that allow online access to details on benefits, retirement, and pay information.

Please take the time to review carefully your Comprehensive Benefits Statement, when it arrives. This review will assist you in making decisions pertaining to changes that can be made during the 2008 Open Enrollment Period.

The Annual Benefits Fair, to be held on

Friday, November 16, kicks off the 2008 Annual Open Enrollment Period for benefit election changes. Open Enrollment begins on Friday, November 16 and ends on Friday, November 30.

Benefit election changes made during the Open Enrollment Period will become effective for the New Year starting January 1, 2008.

If you have questions about any of Rensselaer's benefits programs, please contact the Division of Human Resources at 518-276-4094 or visit our website at www.rpi.edu/dept/hr.

Limits on Supplemental Retirement Contributions Will Not Change in 2008

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that the amount you are able to save for retirement on a tax-deferred basis through Rensselaer's 403(b) Supplemental Retirement Program will be the same in 2008 as it was in 2007—**\$15,500 per year**. If you will attain age 50 by the end of 2008, your limit remains at \$20,500.

In addition, if you have been at Rensselaer for 15 years or longer, you may be eligible for a higher limit of as much as

\$3,000. To verify whether you are eligible for this additional "catch-up," please contact Jim Sinnock, Senior HR Specialist, Retirement, at 518-276-6369 or via email at sinnoj@rpi.edu.

To change the amount of your 403(b) deferrals, complete the Supplemental Retirement Program Enrollment, which is found on the Human Resources website under Online Forms, and return the completed form to HR. If you have already

elected the maximum contribution, your deferrals will automatically continue at the maximum rate.

Note that employee 1% contributions to the Defined Contribution Plan (the "new" plan) must be included in the limit.

All Rensselaer faculty and staff are eligible participate in the Supplemental Retirement Program.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car Business Rental Program It's a better way to go®

Rensselaer is happy to announce its Business Rental Membership with Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

Here are a few of the many benefits:

- Award Winning Customer Service
- More than 120 different makes and models, including trucks, minivans and cargo vans

- Free pick-up
- More than 7,500 locations nationwide, including airports
- 24 hr roadside assistance
- No wear and tear on personal vehicle

To rent, visit enterprise.com

Reference account # 24HJC0913 and Pin # RPI



Pick-up subject to geographic and other restrictions ©2007 Enterprise Rent-A-Car Company.

Pandemic Planning and Emergency Response

The Institute-wide Comprehensive Emergency Planning Committee (CEMP), appointed by Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, President, recently conducted a table-top exercise to identify opportunities for improvement in the Institute's planned response to a pandemic event. Faculty and staff representatives from across campus met to review and discuss issues vital to the plan, such as the communications methods used to determine personnel health/employment status, the identification of essential personnel and activities, and the creation of processes and policies used in determining the long-term suspension of campus activities.

Departments are encouraged to develop individual emergency preparedness

measures of their own and representatives from the Division of Human Resources are available to assist managers in developing department-specific operations continuity plans. Please contact Pete Collopy, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, at 518-276-6114 or via email at collop@rpi.edu for guidance in putting your plan together.

As individuals, the University encourages everyone to include the following in your own individual preparedness plans:

- Recognize the alarms in the buildings you occupy and always identify at least two possible exit paths from the building.

- Ensure your department has a "phone tree" and know who to contact to obtain information on department operating status and to report your work status.
- Stay abreast of the Public Safety emergency response tips and instructions on their web site



WANTED: Best Practice Partners

Does your Portfolio have critical Institute policies or practices that should be communicated with campus? Would it benefit your work group if the campus community better understood your processes?

The Division of Human Resources is seeking to partner with each Portfolio to identify portfolio-specific and Institute-wide operational best practices and develop related training modules to incorporate into the Professional Development Program. This process allows your group

to take advantage of pre-existing development tools such as *Traincaster* (Rensselaer's online Learning Management System), automated classroom scheduling functionality, and content creation. Let us help you deliver your message in a professional, cost efficient manner. For more information contact Will Fahey, Training and Program Development Specialist, at 518-276-2318 or via email at faheyw@rpi.edu.



Join the Fun: 2007 Faculty/Staff Appreciation Event!

Join in the fun at the Houston Field House on Saturday, November 3 for this year's Faculty/Staff Appreciation event. Rensselaer's Engineers will be taking on the Bears of Brown University at 7pm. Each Faculty/Staff member is eligible to receive up to four (4) free tickets to the game (which can be obtained at the Houston Field House Box Office with a valid Rensselaer Identification Card

through October 31st). Free food, prizes, and giveaways will be available at the game. There will be events for the kids as well, so bring the entire family for a great night of Rensselaer hockey and fun with your co-workers. For additional information contact the Division of Human Resources at 518-276-6008. See you on November 3rd!



**PUBLISHED BY THE
DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Historic Gurley
Building
21 Union Street
Troy, New York 12180

(PH) 518-276-6302
(FX) 518-276-6370
[www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/
index.html](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/index.html)



Division of Human Resources' Contacts:

Benefits & Retirement	518-276-4094
Employment	518-276-6994
Employee Relations	518-276-3980
Salary Administration	518-276-6335
Professional Development	518-276-2318
HR Information Systems	518-276-6035
Environmental Health & Safety	518-276-6427
Operations & Administration	518-276-6008
Office of the Vice President	518-276-2888

New Employee Benefit

Have you ever found yourself in a last minute child or elder care crisis? An emergency arises and your regularly scheduled child/elder care arrangement is temporary unavailable...An overnight business trip has suddenly been scheduled...Your child has a contagious illness which would prevent attendance at his/her regular child care arrangement...Your child's school is closed due to holiday or snow emergency?

Rensselaer is happy to introduce its **newest benefit** for faculty and staff; Pinch Hitter Backup Dependent Care Services. Pinch Hitter, a service provided by *A New England Nanny*, a GTM Work-Life Company that provides high-quality, in-home, back-up dependent care on days when regular care is not available. Caregivers have been recruited from the Capital District area, and have been screened and trained in CPR, First Aid, Child and Elder Development, Health of the Young Child, Age Appropriate Activities and Elder Care Safety.

All Rensselaer faculty and staff have access to this benefit for the minimum cost of \$3.00 per hour, beginning November 1, 2008. Rensselaer will host a "Meet the Nanny Day" on campus on November 8, 2007 in the Student Union room 3606. Watch for additional information regarding this great new benefit during the 2008 Open Enrollment Period kicking off November 16, 2007.



A WORK-FAMILY INITIATIVE FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DEPENDENTS

Coming Soon: Automated Work Permit Expiration Notification

Efforts are underway to automate the process by which the Division of Human Resources tracks and notifies foreign employees of impending work permit expirations in accordance with Department of Homeland Security regulations. An early 2008 implementation is planned.

An automated system of email notifications will replace the current system of manually tracking expired work permits. When fully implemented, a series of emails will automatically be sent to the affected employee, informing her/him of the expiration date of the work authorization and advising contact with the Division of Human Resources. Copies of the email will go to the Portfolio Business Manager.

For more information, please contact Kathy McNamara, Manager of Employment Operations, at 518-276-8426 or via email at mcnamk@rpi.edu.

