



THE BRIDGE: Connecting Civil Service and You

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The DSCS Mission:

To provide human resource services and programs that enable state government to attract, develop and retain a productive and diverse workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana.

Seeking Answers?

Have a question about Civil Service? Let us know! This publication is intended to provide for increased communication between the Department of State Civil Service and all stakeholders within our system. E-mail your questions to us, and we'll do our best to respond promptly. Some questions will be chosen for publication as part of this feature! Participants will remain anonymous if requested. Please note that not all questions will be published and that only fact-based questions will receive a response.

[Ask your question](#)

STAYING CONNECTED

From the Desk of Shannon S. Templet, DSCS Director



As we begin the new calendar year of 2011, state agencies are continuing to look for ways to prepare for the new fiscal year. With an unprecedented budget shortfall looming, pay issues for state employees are coming to the forefront of agency, legislative, and public discussion. These issues will be considered by our State Civil Service Commission, so it is especially important now more than ever that state employees participate in the upcoming election for the classified Employee-Member for the Civil Service Commission.

Inside this issue, you will find information pertaining to the election as well as the new gubernatorial appointed members of the State Civil Service Commission. We have also included articles about the retirement process, the new testing exemption rule for veterans of the armed forces, and an employee spotlight on DSCS General Counsel, Robert Boland. Although Mr. Boland has recently retired from state service, we wish him all the best and sincerely thank him for his years of dedicated service. We welcome our new DSCS General Counsel, Ms. Adrienne Bordelon, to our team and look forward to the year to come.

2010 Dunbar Award Winners

Civil Service congratulates the 2010 Charles E. Dunbar Career Service Award winners, all of which are State of Louisiana employees. This honor is awarded annually to employees in a classified merit system who have distinguished themselves by outstanding service. Read more about the 2010 honorees on your [Web Exclusive](#) page.

Betty Burroughs – SELU

Peter Calamari – DHH

Leslie Dupont Sr. – Corrections

Robbie Endris – DCFS

Kaye Fournet – LWC

Larry Smith – Corrections

Raina Futrell – LSU Monroe

Gary Gremillion - Corrections

Jean Jones - DSCS

Richard Peabody - Corrections

Denny Silvio - DOTD

Janice Williams - DOTD

The Bridge is produced quarterly by a committee of [Civil Service staff members](#).

Understanding the Retirement Process

By Aeli Poydras
Staffing Consultant

Are you a state employee considering retirement? Like any major life change, retirement requires careful planning. Prior to retirement, an eligible candidate will need to complete the retirement process with the Louisiana State Employees Retirement System (LASERS), which can take a number of months and involves many decisions about retirement planning. LASERS cannot pay retirement benefits until the retirement process is completed.

Twelve to eighteen months prior to retirement, employees should register with LASERS to attend the Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) workshop to become familiar with the retirement process. They should also schedule a counseling appointment with a LASERS representative and finalize any purchases or transfers of service credit that they wish to have included in their retirement benefit calculation. An estimate of retirement benefits should be obtained from LASERS at this time.

When employees are six months away from retirement, an application for retirement should be filed with their agency's Human Resources office. Employees will need to have certain documents available, such as their birth certificates, Social Security cards, birth certificates of beneficiaries, etc. Additional forms, such as an Authorization for Direct Deposit, will also need to be completed. Missing or incomplete retirement documents can delay payment of retirement benefits.

Employees will receive notification from LASERS when their applications are received.



LASERS consultant, Autumn Sullivan, discusses retirement options with state employee, Sheri Harrell

Initial benefits are paid by check mailed to the employee's home address usually within 45 days of the effective date of retirement; subsequent benefits are directly deposited. Newly retired employees must be prepared to pay their insurance premiums to their agency's Human Resources office for one to two months, or until the premiums can be deducted from their retirement benefits by LASERS.

The retirement process requires considerable planning, counseling, forms to be completed, and information to be gathered, so it is important for employees considering retirement to seek pre-retirement education early on in the process and to contact a LASERS representative for guidance. An early start will ensure a comfortable transition to retirement after your years of state service. For more information or to contact LASERS with a question pertaining to retirement, go to www.lasersonline.org.

Quick Tips

Did you know that a state employee can request his address to be listed confidentially within a public record? [RS 44:11](#) defines the confidential nature of certain personnel records and provides that employees may request their addresses to remain confidential. Read more about how to update your privacy indicator in LEO by clicking [HERE](#). Employees may also make a request to their agency's Human Resources office to complete this action.

Coming Soon: Election for the Classified Employee - Member of the State Civil Service Commission

By Paul St. Dizier
Chief Referee

If you are a state classified employee who had permanent status as of December 4, 2010, you will shortly be receiving a letter by mail from a company called Voice Retrieval and Information Services, Inc. Do not throw it away – it's your ballot for the 2011 election for the classified employee-member of the State Civil Service Commission!

Ballots will be mailed no later than February 7, 2011, to your mailing address as reported by your agency to DSCS. The ballots will list the candidates vying for the office, along with a biographical sketch of each candidate. Eleven candidates have qualified to run in the election. You may vote for the candidate of your choice by telephone, by the internet, or by returning the paper ballot by mail, as set forth in the instructions accompanying the ballots. Completed paper ballots must be received by the close of business on February 24, 2011; telephone and internet voting ends at 5:00 p.m. on that date. Late votes do not count, so be sure to vote timely!

Although classified state employees are usually prohibited from engaging in political activity, those restrictions do not apply to this election. You are therefore free to engage in campaign activities for your candidate. However, if you do so during your work hours, you must obtain approved leave. Additionally, access to state employees on state premises must be with the permission of the proper state official.

After the votes are counted, the results of the

election will be certified to DSCS Director Shannon S. Templet no later than March 1, 2011. If no candidate receives at least 35% of the votes cast in the election, a runoff election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes will be held to determine the winner.

This election is important, as the work of the Commission directly affects classified state employees, so make your voice heard! Read more information about the Civil Service Commission election on the [Civil Service website](#).

DSCS Welcomes the New Appointees to the Civil Service Commission

G. Lee Griffin, nominated by Tulane University
Scott Hughes, nominated by Centenary College
Kenneth Polite, Jr., nominated by Xavier University
Helen Jones, Employee-Member (Interim)

Read more about the Civil Service Commission on the [Civil Service website](#).

Employee Spotlight: DSCS General Counsel, Robert Boland

By Janelle Haynsworth
Compensation Consultant

Since 1981, Robert Boland has served as the General Counsel for the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS). In the last 29 years, Mr. Boland has worked under five Civil Service Directors and has provided guidance on various situations relating to the Civil Service Rules, as well as state and federal law. He states that the most fun and rewarding part of his job is being able to provide quick answers for the numerous questions from the DSCS staff and state agencies on a broad range of topics.

In Mr. Boland's opinion, the biggest challenge for Civil Service has been meeting the needs of the public without abandoning the principles of the merit system. In the "old days" where there was rampant

political involvement in the workplace, working relationships between state agencies and Civil Service were strained. During those years, Mr. Boland spent much of his time on employee appeals and lawsuits, which concerned claims ranging from perceived inequities on issues such as pay to the constitutionality of the Civil Service Rules. He reports that he won all of these cases because DSCS has always considered the concept of fairness when drafting the Civil Service Rules and setting policies. Mr. Boland states, “The law defines relationships between and among people that requires government to treat people fairly and for a good rational basis, and these early legal cases established important principles that we [DSCS] still go by today.”



Mr. Boland addresses the Civil Service Commission

During his tenure, DSCS has given state agencies more discretion in applying the Civil Service Rules and has evolved to serve in more of a consultant role by partnering with state agencies for human resources management. By working with state agencies and providing training to agency staff on merit system principles, Mr. Boland states that DSCS effectively meets the needs of the public by enabling state government to attract, develop, and retain a productive and diverse workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana. Read more from Robert Boland on our [Web Exclusives page](#).

New Testing Exemption Rule for Veterans

By Max Reichert
Staffing Assistant Administrator

On November 10, 2010, the State Civil Service Commission adopted Rule 22.8(d). This rule allows a temporary exemption from testing requirements for active members and recently discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces who seek employment with the State of Louisiana. Under this rule, military personnel may apply for state jobs while still on active duty, even if they are outside of Louisiana. Additionally, they may be appointed to positions for up to twelve months after they are honorably discharged without taking a test. Removing the test requirement facilitates the reentry of military personnel into the workforce. Because the purpose of the rule is to provide for rapid reintegration of recently-serving veterans into the workforce rather than to provide a perpetual entitlement, the rule places a time limit on the test exemption of twelve months from the date of honorable discharge from active duty. The appointment effective date cannot be prior to the veteran's discharge date, although an offer of employment may be made earlier.



Rule 22.8(d) states:

An appointing authority may fill a vacancy by probational appointment or job appointment of a veteran of the armed forces who has been honorably discharged from active duty within the previous twelve months without the appointee's attainment of any Civil Service test scores normally required, provided the appointee meets the Minimum Qualifications of the job. The veteran must have been honorably discharged and have served at least 90 days of active service for purposes other than training. An appointing authority may make an offer to an active member of the armed forces but the effective date of the appointment cannot be prior to the discharge date.

More information for veterans seeking employment with the state may be found on our website on the [Veterans Information portal](#).