The Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration is excited to announce the upcoming implementation of our new retirement administration system—called the Public Employee Retirement Information System (PERIS) and the Employer Reporting Information Center (ERIC)—on May 2, 2016.  The new system is designed to improve employer reporting capabilities, reduce the flow of paperwork between our office and yours, and improve customer service for you and your participating employees.

Here is some important information to help you better understand the changes that lie ahead.

Training Sessions

We will be offering a multitude of hands-on training sessions throughout the state (Billings, Miles City, Glendive, Havre, Great Falls, Bozeman, Helena, Kalispell, Missoula) in March - April 2016 in order to help you become familiar with the new system. You will receive communication from us next month that contains specific dates, times and locations so you can register for the session that works best for you.

Changes in Reporting Process

It’s important that you be aware of the following significant developments in employer reporting.

* Data Files — New data file layouts have been designed. We shared the new layouts with all employers and their software vendors back in June 2015 in order to ensure there was adequate time for you to make necessary updates to your own systems. Please visit our website at [mpera.mt.gov/VendorFileFormats.shtml](http://mpera.mt.gov/VendorFileFormats.shtml) if you and/or your software vendor have not already reviewed the new data file layouts.
* Security Access — Someone within your agency will be responsible for assigning security access to all individuals who need to use ERIC in your organization. We refer to this role as a Portal Access Manager.  Please start considering who the best person would be to fulfill this responsibility for you.
* Employer IDs — Currently each system you report has its own Employer ID.  With ERIC, you will report all systems using one Employer ID.  Watch for a letter to arrive soon containing your new Employer ID.

Key Dates

To ensure a smooth conversion of retirement data, we have established several important cut-off dates that may impact your interaction with our office.  Please keep these dates in mind:

* April 15, 2016 — This is the last day we will process payroll adjustments.
* April 29, 2016 (3 p.m.) — This is the last day to submit files through our current Web reporting system.
* May 2, 2016 — By this date, all reporting files must use new file layouts. Once all of your April reporting is complete, there may be a few days’ delay before you are able to begin reporting for May.  For that window of time, there will be no penalties assessed.

In addition, there are a couple of notable dates for your employees.  Any employee wishing to make a service purchase before April, 2016 will need to turn in a request no later than March 15, 2016.  Any employee wishing to retire in April 2016 will need to complete a retirement application no later than April 14, 2016.

We sincerely thank you for your cooperation and patience throughout this process.  If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jenny Weigand, MPERA Education Supervisor, at (406) 444-2996 or jweigand@mt.gov.