

UA change to BASIS payroll software goes smoothly

By MAYLON T. RICE

Staff Writer

Last week the University of Arkansas cleared a new Y2K technological hurdle for the campus as the month-ending payroll for some 4,500 to 5,000 appointed positions at the UA was completed without technological incident or snafu.

"It (the new computer program) ran really smoothly," said Tom Dorre, associate vice chancellor for Finance.

"We have heard no complaints from the employees on the new format for the payroll, it went smooth as could be," he said.

The University of Arkansas payroll is the largest single employer payroll in Washington County.

The new UA payroll method, called Business Administration Strategic Information System, also known by the acronym of BASIS, completed the \$12 to \$13 million monthly payroll in 48 minutes from start to finish.

Ordinarily, under the older more antiquated computer payroll system used by the UA, the same month-ending payroll would cover three separate nights, Dorre said.

"We would run a portion of the payroll on one night. Stop and check the results all the next day, then make corrections, and run the second phase the next night and so on," he said. "This new system ran it all in 48 minutes and ran it smoothly," Dorre said.

Enclosed in the September paychecks on campus was a one-page flyer entitled: "Human Resources News." The same issue was placed in the final and largest segment of the UA's monthly payroll describing changes made in the new payroll system, Dorre said.

Already for September, the UA ran its hourly employees two payroll offerings and the supplemental time payrolls for overtime, Dorre said. "There were no problems, within those runs either," Dorre said.

For instance, the sheet said, the newest payroll by the BASIS format applied the newest state tax withholding calculations by the state — resulting in a lower state withholding.

Another change was the UA's formula for calculating the health and life, accidental death and dismemberment, and long term disability rates have been revised — showing some savings on the

monthly premiums.

Also changes were made in the supplemental pay federal withholding tax as well as the UA's older method of calculating federal income taxes from overtime pay.

Previously, the UA calculated a flat 28 percent taxation method from the Internal Revenue Service. The new method will withhold the tax at a lower "look back" rate which adds the supplemental pay to the most recent pay received, determining the taxes due and then subtracting the taxes already withheld to determine the amount of taxes to be taken from the supplemental pay, according to the

UA handout.

Another change was that UA employees who receive supplemental pay with more than one direct deposit into more than one financial institution, will have the pay deposited into the last institution listed, rather than the first, as was a previous practice of the UA, the sheet said.

Any UA employee having any questions about the taxing or direct deposit information described in the sheet, should contact the UA Payroll office at 575-4851. For questions regarding insurance, call Human Resources Benefits at 575-2167, Dorre said.



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