

in January 2004 is 4.94 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.81 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for December 2003).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in February 2004 is 4.83 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.68 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for January 2004).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in March 2004 is 4.79 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.63 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for February 2004).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in April 2004 is 4.62 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.44 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for March 2004).

The following table lists the required interest rates to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning between May 2003 and April 2004. Note that the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in May through December 2003 were determined under the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002, and that the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004 were determined under the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004.

For premium payment years beginning in:	The required interest rate is:
May 2003*	4.90
June 2003*	4.53
July 2003*	4.37
August 2003*	4.93
September 2003*	5.31
October 2003*	5.14
November 2003*	5.16
December 2003*	5.12
January 2004**	4.94
February 2004**	4.83
March 2004**	4.79
April 2004**	4.62

*The required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in May through December 2003 were determined under the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002.

**The required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004 were determined under the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004.

Issued in Washington, DC, on this 13th day of April, 2004.

Joseph H. Grant,

Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request for a New Information Collection: General Population Rental Equivalency Survey

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13, May 22, 1995), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget a request for a review of a new information collection. OPM plans to conduct a General Population Rental Equivalency Survey (GPRES) on a one-time basis to collect information on actual and estimated rents and rental characteristics from homeowners and renters in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Washington, DC, area.

OPM will use this information to determine whether (1) differences between homeowner rent estimates and rental rates for comparable housing vary among the nonforeign cost-of-living allowance (COLA) areas and the Washington, DC, area; (2) rents vary among areas based on how long renters live in their rental units; and (3) rental data collected in GPRES differ on average from rental data that OPM collects in the COLA surveys. OPM regulations, adopted pursuant to the stipulation of settlement in *Caraballo v. United States*, No. 1997-0027 (D.V.I.), August 17, 2000, require the survey of rents and rental equivalence (homeowner estimates of the rental value of their homes).

OPM will collect information from approximately 5,000 to 8,000 respondents and estimates the total time per respondent will be 8 minutes, for a total burden of 670 to 1070 hours.

For copies of this proposal, contact Mary Beth Smith-Toomey on (202) 606-8358, fax: (202) 418-3251, or e-mail: MaryBeth.Smith-Toomey@opm.gov. Please include a mailing address with your request.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 17, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send or deliver comments to:

- Donald J. Winstead, Deputy Associate Director for Pay and Performance Policy, Office of Personnel Management, Room 7H31, 1900 E Street NW., Washington, DC 20415-8200; fax: (202) 606-4264; or e-mail: cola@opm.gov; and

- Joseph F. Lackey, OPM Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, NW., Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donald L. Paquin, (202) 606-2838.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Kay Coles James,

Director.

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RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

SUMMARY: In accordance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 which provides opportunity for public comment on new or revised data collections, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) will publish periodic summaries of proposed data collections.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the RRB's estimate of the burden of the collection of the information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden related to the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title and purpose of information collection: Public Service Pension Questionnaires; OMB 3220-0136. Public Law 95-216 amended the Social Security Act of 1977 by providing, in part, that spouse or survivor benefits may be reduced when the beneficiary is in receipt of a pension based on employment with a Federal, State, or local governmental unit. Initially, the reduction was equal to the full amount of the government pension.

Public Law 98-21 changed the reduction to two-thirds of the amount of the government pension.

Public Law 108-203, the Social Security Protection Act of 2004, was

enacted on March 2, 2004. Section 418 of the Act changes the requirements a spouse or widow(er) who is employed by a Federal, State or local government must meet in order to be exempt from the public pension offset. Under the new provisions, if the application for railroad benefits is filed after March 2004 and the last day of public service is after June 30, 2004, FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) taxes must have been deducted from the public service employment for the last 60 months of this employment. Previously, FICA taxes had to be deducted from the public service employment only on the person's last day of employment. A transition provision applies to these changes for workers whose last day of government employment occurs within five years after the March 2, 2004, date of enactment. For these workers, the requirement for 60 consecutive months of social security covered employment is shortened by the total number of months that the worker had in social security covered government service under the same retirement system before the date of enactment, but not to less than one month. If the 60-month period is shortened, the remaining months of service needed to fulfill the requirement must be performed after March 2, 2004, and in the last months of public service employment.

Sections 4(a)(1) and 4(f)(1) of the Railroad Retirement Act (RRA) provides that a spouse or survivor annuity should be equal in amount to what the annuitant would receive if entitled to a like benefit from the Social Security Administration. Therefore, the public service pension (PSP) provisions apply to RRA annuities.

RRB Regulations pertaining to the collection of evidence relating to public service pensions or worker's compensation paid to spouse or survivor applicants or annuitants are found in 20 CFR 219.64c.

The RRB utilizes Form G-208, Public Service Pension Questionnaire, and Form G-212, Public Service Monitoring Questionnaire, to obtain information used to determine whether an annuity reduction is in order. The RRB proposes to revise Form G-208 to add questions needed to determine if the public pension offset applies as well as minor non-burden impacting editorial changes. No changes are proposed to Form G-212.

Completion of the forms is voluntary. However, failure to complete the forms could result in the nonpayment of

benefits. One response is requested of each respondent. The completion time for the G-208 is estimated at 16 minutes and the G-212 is estimated at 15 minutes. The RRB estimates that approximately 70 Form G-208's and 1,100 Form G-212's are completed annually.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request more information or to obtain a copy of the information collection justification, forms, and/or supporting material, please call the RRB Clearance Officer at (312) 751-3363 or send an e-mail request to Charles.Mierzwa@RRB.GOV. Comments regarding the information collection should be addressed to Ronald J. Hodapp, Railroad Retirement Board, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2092 or send an e-mail to Ronald.Hodapp@RRB.GOV. Written comments should be received within 60 days of this notice.

Charles Mierzwa,
Clearance Officer.

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RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

SUMMARY: In accordance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 which provides opportunity for public comment on new or revised data collections, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) will publish periodic summaries of proposed data collections.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the RRB's estimate of the burden of the collection of the information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden related to the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title and purpose of information collection: Placement Service; OMB 3220-0057. Section 12(i) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA), authorizes the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) to establish, maintain, and operate free employment offices to

provide claimants for unemployment benefits with job placement opportunities. Section 704(d) of the Regional Railroad Reorganization Act of 1973, as amended, and as extended by the consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, required the RRB to maintain and distribute a list of railroad job vacancies, by class and craft, based on information furnished by rail carriers to the RRB. Although this requirement under the law expired effective August 13, 1987, the RRB has continued to obtain this information in keeping with its employment service responsibilities under section 12(k) of the RUIA. Application procedures for the job placement program are prescribed in 20 CFR part 325. The procedures pertaining to the RRB's obtaining and distributing job vacancy reports furnished by rail carriers are described in 20 CFR 346.1.

The RRB currently utilizes four forms to obtain information needed to carry out its job placement responsibilities. Form ES-2, Supplemental Information for Central Register, is used by the RRB to obtain information needed to update a computerized central register of separated and furloughed railroad employees available for employment in the railroad industry. Form ES-21, Referral to State Employment Service, and ES-21c, Report of State Employment Service Office, are used by the RRB to provide placement assistance for unemployed railroad employees through arrangements with State Employment Service offices. Form UI-35, Field Office Record of Claimant Interview, is used primarily by RRB field office staff to conduct in-person interviews of claimants for unemployment benefits. Completion of these forms is required to obtain or maintain a benefit. In addition, the RRB also collects Railroad Job Vacancies information received voluntarily from railroad employers.

The RRB proposes minor, non-burden impacting, editorial changes to Forms ES-21, reformatting changes to Form ES-21c and minor editorial and reformatting changes to Form UI-35. Minor non-burden impacting changes are being proposed to the Railroad Job Vacancies Report portion of the information collection. The RRB proposes no changes to Form ES-2.

Estimate of Annual Respondent Burden

The estimated annual respondent burden for this collection is as follows: