

**Services Provided To The
Employer Community**

**Compiled by staff from
State Employment Security Agencies
and
The Employment and Training Administration**

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Category 1

Providing Information on Services Offered

ALABAMA

The Department of Industrial Relations has a speaker's bureau, which includes benefits and tax experts. Employer seminars are scheduled around the State and the sessions are well attended by the employer community. Representatives of the UC program meet regularly with an employer advisory group to get feedback on methods of improving services.

Alabama publishes an employer newsletter that is distributed regularly to the employer community. The UC program also participates actively in rapid response activity, meeting regularly with employers having large layoffs or plant closings to coordinate services available to the employees.

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ALABAMA

Providing Information on Services Offered

In addition to tax web pages, Alabama rewrote its Employer's Handbook during 1998. The new handbook combines several handbooks and informational pages previously provided to the employer community. Service locations are specified and samples of all common tax forms are provided along with instructions for their use. At employer seminars, the handbook is distributed to all new employers. The handbook is also available by request to any tax service provider.

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ALASKA

Providing Information on Services Offered

Employment Service Tax prepares a quarterly newsletter distributed with each quarterly return form. The subject matter is determined by a group of ES Tax managers and workers based on:

- Significant problems detected in the daily work flow apparently caused by employer misunderstanding/need for additional information or training.
- Policy changes, introduction of new forms or services.
- Warnings in advance of important deadlines that affect rates or other employer account features for the coming year.
- Information of interest to employers from other ES and UI partner agencies.

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ALASKA

Providing Information on Services Offered

ES Tax currently conducts or participates in a number of employer training and education efforts statewide. Most often, a local office manager or auditor uses a projector and notebook PC to display a PowerPoint presentation tailored to the interests of the employer audience. However, target groups and training venues vary widely and include:

- IRS employer training classes during which ES Tax has been invited to address employers about UI issues.

- Small/New employer training classes offered by the local Small Business Administration office or local university, including a section on UI issues, presented by ES Tax, often including information on Employment Services available to employers through ES.

- Small government administration training offered to rural communities sponsored by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs generally includes a section on employer taxes, part of which is presented by ES Tax.

- Presentations made to other DOL agencies.

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CALIFORNIA

Providing Information on Services Offered

In partnership with local, State and Federal agencies, the State is again cosponsoring Taxpayer Service Days in various locations around California.

These events are unique, all-day educational conferences designed to assist small business owners by providing the opportunity to access numerous government agencies at a single location. Information provided includes:

- Obtaining forms, publications, and answers to questions at information booths and through classes from tax experts .
- Classes cover topics such as reporting requirements and employee and independent contractor relationships.
- The opportunity to talk with taxpayer Rights Advocate staff.

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CALIFORNIA

Providing Information on Services Offered

An Administrative Law Judges Session is held yearly.

It includes topics and programs of special interest to individuals and organizations who wish to learn more about unemployment insurance (UI) and disability insurance (DI) benefits, and the appeals process. A special program on violence in the workplace is also being planned for this year's forum. The ALJA is a private professional organization of the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board.

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CONNECTICUT

Providing Information on Services Offered

In Connecticut, agency staff are constantly offering employers the opportunity to be informed on Unemployment Insurance law (UI) and operations. Presentations are customized to audience interest. Many seminars have focused on major UI legislative reform enacted in 1995, but specific educational topics have included:

- Understanding Discharge and Willful Misconduct Provisions
- How to represent the interests of your business more effectively in the adjudicative process
- Managing experience rating and UI taxes
- The Appeals Hearing
- Board of Review Precedent Decisions

Educational programs are delivered in a variety of contexts including:

Agency-sponsored programs in which UI is one of a range of subjects, along with Wage and Hour law, Business Services, Labor Market Information, Apprenticeship and other areas within DOL's jurisdiction; UI seminars sponsored by local chambers of commerce, trade associations and professional human resources organizations; agency legal and policy staff frequently partner with law firms in more intensive one-day seminars which are targeted at human resource and industrial relations professionals.

One Stop Career Centers also sponsor one-to-two hour programs on specific UI topics. These programs are marketed by One-Stop Business Services Staff and usually draw on resources from local adjudication staff, as well as central office policy staff.

Tax Information

With each quarterly mailing of experience reports, the UI Tax Division mails an informational flyer which reaches the State's 97,000 employers. During the annual assessments of recent years, this flyer has been utilized to provide regular advance estimates of the likely rate of such assessment. This approach, which grew out of consultation with the Advisory Board, has been generally praised as helping employers plan and budget for what is considered an extraordinary expense.

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CONNECTICUT

Providing Information on Services Offered

Employment Security Advisory Board

In 1993, Connecticut's General Assembly enacted legislation creating the Employment Security Advisory Board. This group - which is comprised of four individuals representing employer and business interests and four individuals representing labor and workers - advises the Labor Commissioner regarding matters involving employment security operations. Its primary focus has been on unemployment insurance, specifically the Agency's efforts to restore its Trust Fund to solvency and legislative reform regarding benefit eligibility.

The contributions of this panel have been very important in shaping policy and improving communications. Whenever the agency is promulgating a regulation or amending an existing rule, the proposal is presented to the Advisory Board for its review and consultation, even before the formal UAPA regulatory process commences. Securing input from the major constituencies early in the process not only makes for a better rule, but also lays a foundation for better understanding and acceptance of the regulation when it is final. Employer input through the Advisory Board has also resulted in the agency implementing a variety of new mechanisms for communicating about tax rates and special assessments to employers.

Ombudsman

Connecticut's Labor Commissioner appointed an individual to act as the agency's ombudsman to businesses. This individual organizes employer educational programs, responds to employer inquiries and problems and frequently visits businesses to address specific concerns.

Appeals Division Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Connecticut Employment Security Appeals Division has commissioned two separate customer satisfaction surveys. These independent surveys, which asked employers and claimants to assess the fairness of the hearing process, were conducted by the University of Connecticut Institute of Public Service.

Business Services Units

Connecticut's One-Stop system includes nine (9) Business Service Units which provide an array of services to Connecticut employers including access to unemployment insurance information and marketing of the Shared Work Program as an alternative to layoffs during temporary economic downturns.

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IDAHO

Providing Information on Services Offered

The Department is an active participant with about 20 other Federal, State, and local agencies in presenting ongoing “Small Business Information Fairs” throughout the State. These fairs provide new and potential employers with a one-stop source of information about employer reporting requirements. The Department’s Tax Representatives are regular speakers at seminars and other educational forums, and a special brochure, “Employers -- How to Control your Unemployment Insurance Tax Rate,” was developed to assist in these efforts.

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IDAHO

Providing Information on Services Offered

Idaho's last legislative season culminated a two-year effort to completely revamp Idaho's Employment Security Law to eliminate "legalese" and to shorten and simplify the statutes. Major changes were also made to the tax schedules which resulted in significant reductions in tax rates for most employers, lowering Idaho's effective average unemployment insurance tax rate from 0.9 percent to 0.8 percent. The law change also deleted one step in a five-step benefit claim appeals process, responding to a common employer complaint regarding the lengthy appeals process, and indexed the minimum weekly benefit amount to 50 percent of the State minimum wage.

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FLORIDA

Providing Information on Services Offered

An Employer Information Center was established in the Bureau of Tax as a single point of contact for employers to call for information on the Florida unemployment compensation tax program. A toll-free telephone number (800-482-8293) provides employers easy access to trained, experienced staff who provide tax information, answer questions, complete transactions, and resolve problems.

Tax forms may be obtained by calling the above toll-free number and leaving a voice mail message. Forms are mailed within one business day. New to the Employer Information Center is the option for the Fax-on-Demand system. Employers can make a toll-free telephone call, follow the instructions, and order Tax forms to be faxed to their business within moments of their request.

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OREGON

Providing Information on Services Offered

Staff from the Employment Department periodically provide seminars to employers and tax preparers called Fast Track Tax Facts. These seminars cover everything the new or existing employer needs to know about the requirements of being a subject employer. They cover such areas as employer registration, filing requirements, how tax rates are determined, penalties, electronic filing of reports, the definition of an employee, and anything else the employers want to cover. This is an outreach effort to inform employers about the system and thereby reduce errors.

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OREGON

Providing Information on Services Offered

The Employment Department has translated many “topic-specific” explanations of UI provisions into Spanish for employers who might be more fluent in Spanish than English and might, because of the nature of their business, have certain types of UI problems or questions come up more often than others. For the topics identified, the Department has translated the one-page “information sheet” into Spanish, for better employer education and to avoid problems.

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OREGON

Providing Information on Services Offered

The Employment Department participates in a special “Certificate of Compliance” Program which the State’s Wage and Hour/Licensing Agency established as part of Oregon’s licensing program for farm labor contractors. As part of the yearly contractor license renewal or for the original license, an applicant must get a certificate from the Employment Department that the employer is (1) not covered for UI tax or (2) in compliance with the UI tax obligations. (Compliance means either current in the reporting and tax-paying obligations or under a payment plan acceptable to the Department’s Tax Unit.)

This program attempts to ensure that only those individuals who are in compliance with their employer tax obligations are licensed and doing business as farm labor contractors in Oregon. (The Federal IRS and Oregon’s State Department of Revenue are also in the program and must issue a certificate of compliance in order for a contractor license to be issued/renewed.) This program helps labor contractors who “operate by the rules” by catching those who might try to gain an unfair competitive advantage over complying contractors by “under-bidding” on contracts, possibly intending to “avoid” paying the employer deductions on State/ Federal income tax or State UI tax.

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UTAH

Providing Information on Services Offered

In conjunction with representatives from the Internal Revenue Service and the State Tax Commission, the Utah Department of Workforce Services has co-sponsored a series of employer seminars. These seminars, held throughout the State, are directed to new businesses and are used to provide information related to tax issues, including unemployment insurance tax. Employers attending the seminars are provided with a comprehensive presentation and a package of information about the State unemployment insurance program, tax requirements and the necessary forms required by the Department.

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UTAH

Providing Information on Services Offered:

The Utah Department of Workforce Services has created folders specifically for employers which contain leaflets of information on the various services and programs which the Department provides. These information packets are distributed to employers by auditors, employer relations representatives and any other Department employee who may visit an employer. Each leaflet within the folders contains basic information on a specific program or service as well as a contact number allowing the employer to obtain additional information as needed.

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WASHINGTON

Providing Information on Services Offered

The Washington Employment Security Department is an active participant in the statewide multi-agency Unified Business Identifier (UBI), one-stop licensing team. The team helps employers by:

Conducting UBI workshops in the spring and fall. Free workshops are given at various locations across the State twice a year. Presenters include the Employment Security Department, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Revenue, Labor and Industries, and Licensing.

Providing customers upon request with “Operating a Business in Washington.” This handbook briefly addresses responsibilities and provides phone numbers and addresses. All State agencies provide this to the public.

In its One-Stop Centers, Washington’s Employment Security Department intends to help provide a rapid response to employers in assisting with filing, paperwork, administrative problems, and preparation for appeals in cases of downsizing and plant closures. There will be help on “walking (employers) through the paperwork” in keeping with the recommendations of a Joint Labor/Management Task Force.

Providing Unemployment Insurance Tax Information to all new and existing employers.

The Unified Business Identifier (UBI) Program in Washington serves employers by allowing one-stop registration. Employers who are registering for the first time may also complete a SS4 and receive a FEIN number if they apply in person. This can be done at any UBI service location.

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WASHINGTON

Providing Information on Services Offered

The Washington Employer Help Line assists employers statewide with information on a wide range of services offered by the Employment Security Department, such as:

Work First -- Washington's version of welfare reform;

WOTC -- Work Opportunity Tax Credit;

Shared Work -- reducing employees' hours and wages by an agreed-upon percentage during a business slowdown while the employee receives a corresponding percentage of unemployment insurance;

Veterans -- access to an experienced workforce of former military men and women; and

Special Recruitment -- helping employers in customized recruitment for employees with hard-to-find skills.

A key aspect of this package is some new terminology and a fresh outlook on interactions with employers who voluntarily seek ESD's help with compliance. This package will prompt significant employer interest in ESD's offerings of education, technical assistance, and voluntary audits. Specifically, this package contains a letter from the Commissioner, an informational brochure, and return reply card. This package is sent to new employers each month who have been in business for at least one year.

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WASHINGTON

Providing Information in Services Offered

The UI Division of the Employment Security Department in Washington provides employers with a diverse range of services, including:

Home page

UBI Workshops in the spring and fall

“Operating a Business in Washington” handbooks

Employment Security Department employer handbooks

UBI (Unified Business Identifier) Service locations

The cities of Richland and Bellevue offer UBI information and accept Master Business Applications

Job Service Centers provide employer services, as does the IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System)

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Category 2

Improvements in Technology

ALABAMA

Alabama maintains a web site with information about departmental services such as ES, UC, and LMI. It was written by line supervisors in the tax units and includes general information and frequently asked questions. This site will be expanded to include the UC law, forms, and other information commonly requested by employers.

Another big project underway is a new remittance processing system involving imaging and workflow management to handle the processing of contribution and wage reports. The documents will be instantly available on the departmental LAN, thus reducing dependency on microfilm.

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ALASKA

Improvements in Technology

ES Tax contributes content to a State Department of Labor web site containing employer information about UI programs and links to other sites of interest to employers. Specific ES Tax contributions include:

- The entire text of the “Employer Handbook” in .pdf and .html format, which explains the statutes, regulations, reporting requirements, employer contribution rate issues, phone numbers and office locations
- Tax appeal decisions indexed by statute and issues to help employers understand recent interpretations of statute and regulation and to assist employers who may be preparing for an appeal proceeding.

(In development)

- Quarterly report, account adjustment, and employer registration forms in .pdf format.
- Links to statutes and other ES Tax related sites.
- Comprehensive contact information, including e-mail addresses for the main Tax office and the “smart” 800 numbers currently used to route employer inquiries to the proper office.

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ALASKA

Improvements in Technology

All field auditors use portable PCs, both in the office -- connected to all network resources via a docking station -- and outside the office for conducting audits. The LAN connection provides each auditor access to mainframe and other shared data. The portability allows auditors to record the audit directly on the PC audit report form. Benefits include:

- Minimizing errors inherent in transferring employer data from form to form.
- Reducing the time required to complete an audit, allowing more time for providing any necessary information to employees during the field visit.
- Allowing submission of audits for review and submission of account adjustment requests by internal e-mail, reducing duplication of printed matter and the attendant storage and handling expenses.
- Account adjustments are loaded directly to the mainframe database (batch mode) rather than keying each individual adjustment. This is a tremendous time and error saving feature.

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CALIFORNIA

Improvements in Technology

A program called Telefiles provides an easier way to file reports. Telefiles allow employers to file their wage reports and pay their unemployment taxes by telephone. Telefiles is a voluntary electronic filing option. Registration packages are mailed out to employers with one to six employees. The package contains a temporary Personal Identification Number plus everything needed to register and start filing reports and tax payments electronically or by telephone. Telefiles instruction forms from the State's website can be downloaded from www.edd.ca.gov/taxinfo.htm.

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CALIFORNIA

Improvements in Technology

As a result of suggestions provided by the Small Business Employers Advisory Committee (SBEAC) at quarterly meetings, the State has recently expanded its Internet site to include more unemployment insurance information for employers . The SBEAC, which is comprised of representatives from businesses that collect and remit payroll taxes, provides the State's tax branch with input on issues that affect the small business community. These additions include:

- UI service telephone listings have been expanded to include business hours, the best times to call to receive the quickest customer service, and the use of the Teletypewriter (TTY) for deaf and hard of hearing callers.
- An " About the UI program" feature is now available that provides links to the UI Code and EDD fact sheets
- With help from SBEAC, the "Frequently Asked Questions" have been revised to include more employer related questions.
- The UI Benefit Determination Guide is now available for reference online. This guide is used by staff to determine whether or not a claimant is eligible for UI benefits, and if an employer's account will be charged for the benefits.

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CONNECTICUT

Improvements in Technology

The State's website, located at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/>, is updated almost daily. The Unemployment Insurance Benefits pages list the eligibility requirements, provide answers to frequently asked questions as well as directions to our *Connecticut Works* Centers. The Tax web pages provide forms available for downloading as well as contact units addresses and phone numbers for various topics.

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FLORIDA

Improvements in Technology

Over 80 percent of Florida's employers have ten or fewer employees. The Bureau of Tax has initiated an electronic reporting pilot project targeted to these smaller employers. The pilot project offers 3,800 volunteer employers tax and wage reporting by Telefile (Touch-Tone telephone) or by Internet.

Advantages of electronic reporting include convenience, ease of reporting, and timeliness. Employers will only need to complete gross wages for existing employees, delete former employees, and add new employees. Total gross wages, taxable wages, and taxes due will be calculated for employers. Immediate confirmation will be provided when the report is submitted by telephone or by Internet. Mailing of paper reports will be eliminated. For employers who also sign up for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), no tax payments will need to be mailed.

The Bureau plans to expand electronic reporting to all small employers, eliminating almost 300,000 paper reports being mailed quarterly to and from the Division of Unemployment Compensation. Electronic reporting will also improve the timeliness of quarterly wage reports on the mainframe that are used for benefit determinations.

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FLORIDA

Improvements in Technology

The Bureau of Tax is improving information on the Division's home page. The Employer Handbook was recently updated and put on the Internet. Florida Statutes and legislative updates are also available. Commonly used Tax forms are on the Internet in Adobe Acrobat Reader Formatter. Other timely topics are featured on the Division's home page, including electronic reporting pilot project and new publications and forms. The Division's web site address is: www.state.fl.us/dles/uc/uc_home.htm.

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IDAHO

Improvements in Technology

The Idaho Department of Labor has developed a PC program that is distributed freely to employers who want to submit their Unemployment Insurance tax reports on a diskette. The program can be downloaded from the Web or mailed to the employer. The employer enters wage information into the program, either by hand or import, and the program does the rest. The Department is also investigating using the Internet and telephone resources for providing certain employers the ability to report using these mechanisms and for providing information to employers.

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IDAHO

Improvements in Technology

The Idaho Department of Labor has implemented an Employer Accounts Information System that uses the mainframe computer and an SQL server database system. This will enhance the ability to better provide services to employers by allowing users to engage the Department's resources more easily and effectively.

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MAINE

Improvements in Technology

Employers were given an option to file the Combined Quarterly Report over the Internet beginning with the report for the third quarter of 1998. Employers can eliminate all paper transactions by using both the Internet filing option and the ACH debit or credit method for electronic funds transfer (EFT). They may still pay by check if they prefer by enclosing a remittance invoice, which is printed from their Web browser. The employer can print a copy of the return. The system has built in security features to protect confidential employer data. The address is <http://www.state.me.us/>.

Combined Filing of Unemployment Insurance Contributions and Income Tax Withholding - Employers can use a single form to pay both Unemployment Insurance Contributions and Income Tax Withholding and Wage Records. The Wage Record report is pre-printed with the social security numbers and names of the employer's most recently reported employees for the employer's convenience. The State benefits by processing a single report and using high speed optical character reading equipment to enter both the payment and wage record data into the automated system. The forms are also scanned into an optical image system for storage and retrieval. Paper returns are then destroyed.

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NEW YORK

Improvements in Technology

The Workforce Development Suite is a Windows-based software program distributed via diskette and electronic Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) by the Research and Statistics Division of the New York State Department of Labor. This 5 in 1 software suite currently includes Department of Labor job listings, registered applicants, wage data, local office locations and a Job Order Entry Form.

The wages program allows users to keyboard search for occupational wage data statewide, regionally, MSA, or county in New York State. The program presents median and middle 50 percent wage-range data based on the prior earnings of unemployment insurance recipients, as well as job-order wages listed by employers. The System is being modified to accept OES wage data.

The Workforce Development Suite software and daily data updates are available at no costs to the user by contacting a local Labor Market Analyst or calling any of the 10 regional electronic BBS or by accessing the Workforce Development System Home Page on the Internet.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Improvements in Technology

Employers can now file partial claims and the detail portion of their Quarterly Tax and Wage Reports via the Internet. UI On-line Services on the agency's web site (www.esc.state.nc.us) provide two user-friendly reporting systems -- (1) an on-line data entry page and (2) the capability to transfer claims and wage files prepared using agency software or prescribed formats.

The Internet filing options are popular with the employer community and North Carolina expects a significant reduction in paper filing. This technology also allows the agency to process data from employers more efficiently.

The applications were developed by agency staff using ASP/ADO technology with VB script. A demo site is available for other States to use these products.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Improvements in Technology

North Carolina provides a variety of information for employers through its web site, ESC On-line (www.esc.state.nc.us), including general and specific Tax and Claims information. Tax forms and instructions may be downloaded as well as agency-developed software for filing wage reports and partial claims.

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NORTH DAKOTA

Improvements in Technology

North Dakota designed its home page so that employers and applicants can directly access the following Job Insurance information:

- A description of the programs that Job Insurance provides.
- Business Tax Update Workshops - Tips for improving business tax returns.
- Electronic Tax and Wage Reporting - Information on employer's contribution and wage reporting mediums.
- Employer's Guide - Information about employer reporting requirements, liability, appeals and responses to notices.
- Frequently Asked Questions - Responses to questions from claimants and employers.
- Job Insurance Claims - Outreach sites for filing job insurance claims.
- Job Insurance Handbook - Narrative, table and graphs pertaining to all aspects of the North Dakota job insurance program.
- Job Service Local Offices - Includes a link to a detailed map and directions.
- Rate and Wage Base Table - Job insurance tax rates schedule and wage base for the current year.
- Report to Determine Liability - A form that can be downloaded to determine liability and register new businesses.
- Weekly Activity - UCFE, UCX, continued and final payments data which is updated weekly.

The home page also provides information for: Job Seekers on job openings and training, Employers on hiring, training and taxes, and Labor Market Information on wages and economic trends.

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OKLAHOMA

Technology

We also implemented an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) for employers to file quarterly reports by touch-tone telephone. The IVRS would be for those employers with a zero rate, had reached taxable wages or a no employee record. The system would confirm the right to file by telephone and give the employer a confirmation number.

Oklahoma will soon be expanding its IVRS to allow for more inquiries such as charges, telephone numbers for the Tax Enforcement Officer assigned to an employer and special information listed.

Next project involves new employer reports. Currently, the New Hire data is not only being sent to the Child Support Units within the Department of Human Services, but it is going against our claim files and disrupting payment to any match-week ending to date of hire. A major reduction in total dollars of overpayment is anticipated.

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OREGON

Improvements in Technology

Oregon combines payroll reporting to multiple State agencies for employers. All reports, whether paper or electronic, are a single report that combines the reporting requirements for the Employment Department, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Consumer and Business Services. This combined reporting allows the employer to file one report with one account number for three different agencies and write one check that covers up to five taxes.

Related to this simplified reporting is the State Business Information Center that was created to give information and help to all employers about starting and running a business. This gives employers a single point of contact for their questions rather than locating and calling multiple agencies. If the employer needs more detailed information, the Center can refer employers to the appropriate resource.

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OREGON

Improvements in Technology

Oregon has developed and implemented an automated combined reporting system for employers. The program is loaded onto employers' PCs, either by loading diskettes or downloading from the Internet. The program installs on the PC's hard drive and allows employers to file one quarterly report that covers requirements from three different State agencies: the Employment Department UI tax reports, Department of Revenue tax reports, and Workers's Compensation reports.

The system is paperless and makes a computer file that can be transmitted by diskette or as an attachment to an e-mail. Paper copies can be printed as file copies for the employer. When creating a new report, employers can copy data from the previous quarter so it saves them from retyping duplicate data. The program has error messages built into it so, when an employer creates an error when completing the report, the message appears and the report can be corrected before it is filed.

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OREGON

Improvements in Technology

The Employment Department has a wealth of information available to Oregon employers on the Internet. Information on the Internet is accurate, up to date, and easy to find. Information ranges from specifications for magnetic media reporting (Oregon accepts reports filed on 3480 or 3490 cartridges), what “covered employment” is, to downloadable forms. There are also links to other relevant agencies on the web site.

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OREGON

Improvements in Technology

Many employers in Oregon have large, automated tax preparers file their tax reports. These firms, such as ADP, have many employer customers whose UI tax rates change each year. The Employment Department identifies which employers use each of these preparers and compiles a cartridge of all customer tax rates assigned to that preparer and sends the cartridge to them.

Employers who are concerned about their tax rates can also request a list of charges against their accounts. That way they have accurate information from the Department and do not have to track down the new tax rates from each of their customers individually.

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WASHINGTON

Improvements in Technology

The Washington Employment Security Department has merged the power of computers with the convenience of the telephone to build a break-through service called “Job Hunter.” Employer job openings are matched with thousands of unemployed claimants through the service.

Claimants who file their weekly unemployment claims by telephone automatically hear the job title, wage, location, and referral information if there is a job match in the JobNet system. This system can speed referral of qualified claimants to employers, helping them fill their job openings faster. “Job Hunter” is just one more way to get the reemployment message to claimants.

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WASHINGTON

Improvements in Technology

The Data Entry Storage and Retrieval System is comprised of a critical component entitled "UIFASTAX". This is a part of Washington's new system that is targeted for employers with 13 or more employees. Modeled after a system developed for the State of Oregon, it allows both tax and wage reports to be filed together. It assists employers with correct filing of reports due to a key system of edits, i.e., the calculation of excess wages. In addition, both encrypted and password protected material can be sent by e-mail or diskette to UI Tax Administration for processing.

The ESD has been able to replace its 25-year old data entry equipment for data entry with upgraded state-of-the-art equipment in both its newly redesigned Data Entry Unit and its Multi-Media Unit to expedite service to employers and claimants in the processing of wage and tax reports.

The agency has eliminated thousands of old microfiche records and cut storage space in its facility by 75 percent. Staff have moved from working with dumb terminals to using the power of personal computers which includes communication tools and work flow that integrates images with work, i.e., terminal emulation for side-to-side viewing which is an essential element in working with processing wage and tax reports. In order to facilitate that work effort, the agency has conducted an ergonomic analysis and has purchased the appropriate furniture and hardware for staff.

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WASHINGTON

Improvements in Technology

The Washington Employer Help Line has been an instant success with many businesses and organizations in the State. It won a prestigious award for quality for the fourth quarter of 1998 from Governor Gary Locke. The Employer Help Line allows businesses (24 hours a day/7 days a week) to file No Payroll Reports, obtain vital data on their tax account, or have tax forms or instructions faxed to them. The system can even assist employers with understanding their benefit charges, filing an amended or corrected tax report, or calculating any penalties and interest.

The State intends to add a statewide toll-free number for employers which they anticipate will substantially increase the number of employers who use the system. The ESD is examining adding the filing of wage reports as well through this Interactive Voice Response System.

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