



## **A Message from the Executive Director on the BFO Office Closure**

March 26, 2020

With the Nation in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to close the IAM Benefit Funds Office physical location effective March 17<sup>th</sup> through March 27<sup>th</sup> to protect our employees and their families. We will reassess the situation by March 27<sup>th</sup> to determine if our physical office must remain closed for an additional period or can reopen. Our goal is to remain operational during the pandemic, however you may experience delays in processing or response time. We kindly ask for your patience and understanding should delays occur due to the unprecedented conditions under which we are currently operating. We are currently working remotely with limited staffing. Supported by the Board of Trustees, we have been acting to supply the remainder of the staff with work from home capabilities and expect to reach that goal over the next two to three weeks.

We expect that within the next week we will have our Customer Service phone lines back open. We are also bringing the pension processing team back up around the same time, although we do ask for your patience as processing pension applications remotely will take additional time. We are focusing on processing the completed applications and Benefit Election Forms with the earliest pension effective dates first. Please refer to this website for announcements regarding our office's functionality.

Understanding these are trying times for all of us, we processed the April 1, 2020 pension payments for those in pay status early, and the direct deposits will be made March 26, 2020 and checks were mailed out Wednesday, March 25, 2020. At this time, we are not aware of any reductions of service for the US Postal System or in banking institutions that would cause a delay, but we wanted to get these payments out early to be sure.

We wish to remind you that while the physical office will remain closed during this time, we have taken all necessary actions to ensure that all participants and beneficiaries currently receiving benefits, will continue to do so.

Given the spread of the pandemic, we encourage Plan participants to follow public health instructions and guidelines in their communities.

We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation to ensure business continuity, while protecting our employees and their families. We don't know when the pandemic or the restrictions

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will end, but we are committed to continued service to the participants. Working together, we will get through this Stay safe and check back for updates.

Ryk Tierney, CEBS

Executive Director