



# 15-B INSIDER



<http://www.mea15b.org>

**Marty Lankford**  
**UniServ Director**

[mlankford@mea.org](mailto:mlankford@mea.org)  
[tgrames@mea.org](mailto:tgrames@mea.org)  
**1-800-300-1162**

**Tabby Grames**  
**UniServ Field Assistant**



**March MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION 2008**



## CONGRATULATIONS OPIE HONOREES!!

Our annual OPIE Banquet is just one month away! Preparations are being finalized to celebrate our 32nd year on April 17th. This year we will be honoring 14 individuals as Outstanding Persons in Education and 8 individuals as Friends of Education. Please congratulate the honorees in your school district for their outstanding contributions in education.

Outstanding Persons in Education – *Jason Main*, Cadillac EA; *Donna Sayer*, Cadillac ESP; *Christy Veit*, Ewart EA; *Suzzane Bishop*, Forest Area EA; *Kip Damgard.*, Manton EA; *Sheri Porter*, Manton ESP; *Stephen Henderson*, Marion EA; *Linda Raymond*, Marion ESP; *Shawn Murphy*, McBain EA; *Betty Bell*, McBain ESP; *Sarah DeKett*, Mesick EA; *Judy Hughes*, Mesick ESP; *Carolyn Kassien*, Pine River EA; and *Stephania Ruppert*, Pine River ESP.

Friends of Education – *Marsha Jones*, Ewart; *Ed Westveer*, Manton; *Roberta Williams*, Marion; *Julie Bassett*, McBain; *Greg and Ginny Buzzell*, Mesick; and *Doug and Traci Warner*, Pine River.

## OPIE BANQUET: YOU'RE INVITED!!



We will be holding our banquet at Timber Wolf Lake again this year. It is located just four (4) miles north of Lake City on M-66. This is a beautiful lodge in a scenic location. If you haven't already made your reservation, why not do it now and join us for a wonderful evening celebrating education. Social time with appetizers is at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 6:45 p.m. Pine River High School students will be our wait staff this year. Reservations are coming in fast. We are continuing to hold the price at \$15.00 per person on a first come-first serve basis. Reservation forms are available through your local association or from the UniServ office.

## SCHOOL EMPLOYEES STILL ELIGIBLE FOR \$250 FEDERAL TAX DEDUCTION



If you purchased classroom supplies or equipment last year, don't forget to claim a federal tax deduction up to \$250 when you file your taxes. The Educator Expenses Deduction is still available for 2007, even though it isn't listed on federal tax forms and even though it isn't mentioned in most tax software programs. The educator expense deduction is available whether or not you itemize deductions on Schedule A.

If you were an eligible educator in 2007 (K-12 teachers, instructors, counselors, principals, or aides who worked in a school for at least 900 hours during the school year), you may deduct up to \$250 in expenses for supplies including books, computer software and other items that were helpful in the classroom. Qualified expenses do not include expenses for home schooling or non-athletic supplies for courses in health or physical education. Check with your tax preparer or with the IRS to see if you are eligible.

## **FROM THE OFFICE OF RETIREMENT SERVICES**

The Office of Retirement Services was asked *what action must be taken by a member in order to be considered by that office as having made an election prior to July 1, 2008, which would allow the purchase of MPERS Service Credit to count towards years of service for retiree health.*

The Director of the Office of Retirement Services for the state of Michigan, Phil Stoddard, responded in writing as follows:

“In order to be considered a member who elected to purchase service on or before June 30, 2008, the *Public School Employees Agreement to Purchase Service Credit through Tax-Deferred Payroll Deduction* form must be completed and signed by the member and signed by human resources/payroll representative on or before June 30, 2008. The date on which the form is signed by the human resources/payroll representative is the effective date of the agreement. As long as the TDP agreement was signed by the member’s human resources/payroll representative prior to July 1, 2008, the member does not have to complete payment prior to July 1, 2008.”

It is equally important that members contact MPERS as soon as possible, because of the time needed for the Office of Retirement Services to calculate the cost for the purchase of service credit.

## **MPSERS 1-800-381-5111**

### **BARGAINING 2008-2009**

Cadillac EA  
Cadillac PACE  
Ewart ESP (re-opener salary & ins)  
Ewart Transportation  
Manton ESP (salary only)  
McBain EA  
McBain ESP  
Pine River EA  
Pine River ESP

### **UNSETTLED 07-08**

Unsettled Contract 07-08 – MESICK EA  
Unsettled Contract 07-08-MESICK ESP



### **\* MARK YOUR CALENDAR\***

March 21	MEA Office Closed	Good Friday
April 3	BFCL-Coordinating Council Training	Grand Traverse Resort
April 4 & 5	ESP Statewide Conference	Grand Traverse Resort
April 17	OPIE Banquet	Timber Wolf Lake
April 11-12	UP Leadership Conference/NZ Bargaining Process	Marquette
April 25-26	Spring Representative Assembly	East Lansing
May 19	Coordinating Council Meeting	MEA office

Think



Spring!