



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## State to Pay Unemployment Benefits Electronically

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OK** (November 20, 2008) – Oklahomans will soon have a faster and more convenient way to access unemployment benefits. On December 1, 2008, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) will begin issuing unemployment insurance (UI) benefits electronically using either direct deposit or a debit card. Paper checks will no longer be provided to claimants.

All unemployment insurance recipients may sign up for direct deposit. If this isn't an option, UI benefits will be available on a MasterCard-branded debit card that can be used to access funds at banks and ATMs and to pay for goods and services. Cardholders will also receive one fee-free ATM withdrawal and one fee-free teller withdrawal through Bank of Oklahoma for each deposit posted to an account on the card.

Use of electronic payments is expected to translate into lower costs for the state in relation to the production and mailing of benefit checks and fewer checks that are returned, lost or stolen. Clients gain more secure access to funds, freedom from fees at check cashing outlets, and the convenience of a debit card widely accepted by retailers.

"This move will not only help the state of Oklahoma become more efficient, but will also create a system that significantly improves the experience for our citizens," said Jon Brock, OESC Executive Director. "The electronic payment system is a win-win solution for Oklahoma."

To assist with the transition, existing unemployment insurance claimants are being advised and provided with instructions on choosing a payment method. New claimants will sign up for electronic payment when they file their first unemployment insurance claim. Anyone not selecting direct deposit will automatically be enrolled for the card.

More information about OESC's new electronic payment system can be found at [www.unemployment.ok.gov](http://www.unemployment.ok.gov) .

**About OESC** - The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission is Oklahoma's state workforce agency. OESC provides unemployment compensation to support unemployed workers and their communities; matches jobs and workers to benefit local labor markets; refers workers to training opportunities; and gathers, analyzes and distributes information about the labor force to improve local economic decisions.

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