



NEWS RELEASE

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO U.I. *Unemployment Benefits Observe 70th Anniversary in August*

OKLAHOMA CITY – This year marks the 70th anniversary of the federal legislation that created modern unemployment benefits. Signed into law on August 14, 1935, the Social Security Act of 1935 established the basic federal-state partnership for the Unemployment Insurance (U.I.) program. U.I. offers a first line of defense against the effects of unemployment.

In general, the federal-state U.I. program provides unemployment benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own and meet other state eligibility requirements. Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program within the federal guidelines. Eligibility for U.I. benefits, benefit amounts and length of time benefits are available are also determined by state law.

Through payments made directly to eligible unemployed workers, Unemployment Insurance ensures that necessities such as food, shelter and clothing are provided on a weekly basis while a person searches for work. This critical program has helped millions of families meet the challenge of unemployment in the modern world.

When U.I. benefits for Americans were established in 1935, the concept of unemployment compensation wasn't new. In fact, ancient trade groups used levies to protect members. In more recent times, labor unions adopted similar systems to help members get back on their feet. The first government incarnation of U.I. was launched in Britain in 1911.

In Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) has collected U.I. taxes from employers and administered U.I. benefits since the agency was created by state law in 1941. Between January 2000 and December 2004, OESC received over 717,000 initial unemployment claims and paid eligible recipients more than \$1 billion in unemployment benefits.

On Sunday, August 14, 2005, please take the time to recognize and honor the Unemployment Insurance program's 70 years of service and the good it has done for Americans.

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