

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.  
**Joel C. Richard**,  
*Secretary.*  
 [FR Doc. 00-2712 Filed 2-4-00; 8:45 am]  
 BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Bureau of Transportation Statistics

[Docket No. BTS-2000-6845]

#### Request for OMB Clearance of an Information Collection; Customer Satisfaction Surveys

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Transportation Statistics, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget for an information collection, its Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Before submitting its request, BTS is publishing this notice to invite public comment on the continuing need and usefulness of BTS collecting this information.

**DATES:** You must submit your written comments by April 7, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Please send comments to the Docket Clerk, Docket No. BTS-2000-6845, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

You only need to submit one copy. If you would like the Department to acknowledge receipt of the comments, you must include a self-addressed stamped postcard with the following statement: Comments on Docket BTS-2000-6845. The Docket Clerk will date stamp the postcard and mail it back to you. If you wish to file comments using the Internet, you may use the U.S. DOT Dockets Management System website at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Please follow the instructions online for more information. This website can also be used to read comments received.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Heather M. Contrino, Office of Statistical Programs and Services, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590, telephone number 202/366-6584, email [heather.contrino@bts.gov](mailto:heather.contrino@bts.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Customer Satisfaction Surveys.  
*OMB Control Number:* 2139-0007.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Needs and Uses:* Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, directs BTS to conduct surveys to determine the kind and quality of services and products our customers want and their level of satisfaction with existing services and products. BTS will use the information it collects to improve product development and service delivery and determine whether additional products and services are needed.

*Description of Survey Topics:* In 1998 and 1999, the BTS Customer Survey Program included two surveys—the Product Evaluation Survey (PES) and the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The main objective of the PES was to give BTS a better understanding of the technical preferences and information needs of specific users. While it provided information on levels of customer satisfaction, the PES focused on products. The main objective of the CSS was to provide information about the overall satisfaction of BTS customers, the frequency of use of products and services, and specific information on how BTS is meeting various customer service criteria. Although the CSS addresses some product issues such as format compatibility and difficulty of use, those were not the main objectives of the survey.

In the next three years, BTS anticipates surveys in two areas—products and services. The product survey is a continuation of the CSS and PES and will sample the population of BTS customers who have ordered BTS products. The survey will obtain information on overall levels of customer satisfaction, technical preferences, and informational needs of customers. In addition, it will obtain feedback from customers on specific BTS products.

The services surveys will provide BTS with feedback on the services it provides to the general public and to other agencies in the Department of Transportation. Through these surveys, BTS will obtain feedback on the quality, completeness, utility, responsiveness, and timeliness of its Statistical Information Line, National Transportation Library, website, and BTS-sponsored workshops.

*Burden Statement:* The total annual respondent burden estimate is 1,665 hours. The number of respondents and average burden hour per response will vary with each survey.

*Public Comments Invited:* BTS requests comments regarding any aspect of this information collection,

including, but not limited to: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the collected information, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. BTS will summarize the comments submitted in response to this notice in its request for OMB clearance.

**Susan Lapham**,

*Acting Associate Director for Statistical Programs and Services.*

[FR Doc. 00-2676 Filed 2-4-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-FE-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Fiscal Service

#### Surety Companies Acceptable on Federal Bonds: Gerling Global Reinsurance Corporation of America

**AGENCY:** Financial Management Service, Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This is Supplement No. 12 to the Treasury Department Circular 570; 1999 Revision, published July 1, 1999, at 64 FR 35864.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Surety Bond Branch at (202) 874-6779.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A Certificate of Authority as an acceptable reinsurer on Federal bonds is hereby issued to the following Company under 31 U.S.C. 9304 to 9308. Federal bond-approving officers should annotate their reference copies of the Treasury Circular 570, 1998 Revision, on page 35895 to reflect this addition: *Gerling Global Reinsurance Corporation of America. Business address: 717 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022. Phone: (212) 754-7500. Underwriting Limitation b/: \$34,265,000. Incorporated in: New York.*

Certificates of Authority expire on June 30 each year, unless revoked prior to that date. The Certificates are subject to subsequent annual renewal as long as the companies remain qualified (31 CFR Part 223). A list of qualified companies is published annually as of July 1 in Treasury Department Circular 570, with details as to underwriting limitations, areas in which licensed to transact surety business and other information.

The Circular may be viewed and downloaded through the Internet at

<http://www.fms.treas.gov/c570/index.html>. A hard copy may be purchased from the Government Printing Office (GPO) Subscription Service, Washington, DC, Telephone (202) 512-1800. When ordering the Circular from GPO, use the following stock number: 048000-00527-6.

Questions concerning this Notice may be directed to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, Financial Accounting and Services Division, Surety Bond Branch, 3700 East-West Highway, Room 6A04, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Dated: January 24, 2000.

**Wanda J. Rogers,**

*Director, Financial Accounting and Services Division, Financial Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-2603 Filed 2-4-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4810-35-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Headstone or Marker Allowance Rate

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As required by law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is hereby giving notice of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in certain benefit rates and income limitations. These COLAs affect the pension, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and spina bifida programs. These adjustments are based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the one year period ending

September 30, 1999. VA is also giving notice of the maximum amount of reimbursement that may be paid for headstones or markers purchased in lieu of Government-furnished headstones or markers in Fiscal Year 2000, which began on October 1, 1999.

**DATES:** These COLAs are effective December 1, 1999. The headstone or marker allowance rate is effective October 1, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul Trowbridge, Consultant, Compensation and Pension Service (212A), Veterans Benefit Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-7218.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under former 38 U.S.C. 2306(d), VA was authorized to provide reimbursement for the cost of non-Government headstones or markers at a rate equal to the lesser of the actual cost of the non-Government headstone or marker or the average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the non-Government headstone or marker was purchased.

Section 8041 of Pub. L. 101-508 amended 38 U.S.C. 2306(d) to eliminate the payment of the monetary allowance in lieu of VA-provided headstone or marker for deaths occurring on or after November 1, 1990. However, in a precedent opinion (O.G.C. Prec. 17-90), VA's General Counsel held that there is no limitation period applicable to claims for benefits under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 2306(d).

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or

markers during any fiscal year is determined by dividing the sum of VA costs during that fiscal year for procurement, transportation, and miscellaneous administration, inspection and support staff by the total number of headstones and markers procured by VA during that fiscal year and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount.

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers for Fiscal Year 1999 under the above computation method was \$90. Therefore, effective October 1, 1999, the maximum rate of reimbursement for non-Government headstones or markers purchased during Fiscal Year 2000 is \$90.

### Cost of Living Adjustments

Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312 and section 306 of Pub. L. 95-588, VA is required to increase the benefit rates and income limitations in the pension and parents' DIC programs by the same percentage, and effective the same date, as increases in the benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act. The increased rates and income limitations are also required to be published in the **Federal Register**.

The Social Security Administration has announced that there will be a 2.4 percent cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits effective December 1, 1999. Therefore, applying the same percentage and rounding up in accordance with 38 CFR 3.29, the following increased rates and income limitations for the VA pension and parents' DIC programs will be effective December 1, 1999:

TABLE 1.—IMPROVED PENSION

Maximum annual rates

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) Veterans permanently and totally disabled (38 U.S.C. 1521):  |  |
|  | Veteran with no dependents, \$8,989  |
|  | Veteran with one dependent, \$11,773   |
|  | For each additional dependent, \$1,532   |
| (2) Veterans in need of aid and attendance (38 U.S.C. 1521):   |  |
|  | Veteran with no dependents, \$14,999   |
|  | Veteran with one dependent, \$17,782   |
|  | For each additional dependent, \$1,532   |
| (3) Veterans who are housebound (38 U.S.C. 1521):  |  |
|  | Veteran with no dependents, \$10,987   |
|  | Veteran with one dependent, \$13,771   |
|  | For each additional dependent, \$1,532   |
| (4) Two veterans married to one another, combined rates (38 U.S.C. 1521):  |  |
|  | Neither veteran in need of aid and attendance or housebound, \$11,773          |
|  | Either veteran in need of aid and attendance, \$17,782                         |
|  | Both veterans in need of aid and attendance, \$23,168                          |
|  | Either veteran housebound, \$13,771  |
|  | Both veterans housebound, \$15,770   |
|  | One veteran housebound and one veteran in need of aid and attendance, \$19,777 |
|  | For each dependent child, \$1,532  |
| (5) Surviving spouse alone and with a child or children of the deceased veteran in custody of the surviving spouse (38 U.S.C. 1541): |  |
|  | Surviving spouse alone, \$6,026  |
|  | Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$7,891                  |