

Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

A Monthly Employee Newsletter Published by the Department of Administration
April 1999 • Vol. 7, Issue 4

Employee of the Month

Finance's Diane Connelly Offers Extra Effort to Others

Diane Connelly, an Accounting Technician III for the Accounting Section of the Finance Division, has been selected as the Department's **Employee of the Month** for April.

Diane has worked for state government for nine years. Her responsibilities include processing travel reimbursement settlements for most divisions and agencies within the Department of Administration.

She also has responsibility over procurements and accounts payable for the Division of Personnel.

According to one of her co-workers, "Diane is an employee who puts forth the extra effort for the benefit of others. She is always ready to offer assistance, and demonstrates what *team work* is all about." Another co-worker adds, "Diane is a great co-worker. She continues to be willing to assist others and does whatever it takes to get the job done."

In her spare time, Diane enjoys reading, tackling crossword puzzles and challenging herself in the field of mathematics.

Please join Cabinet Secretary Joseph Markus and Diane's friends and co-workers at a special **Employee of the Month** presentation at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, April 2, 1999, in the Rotunda of the State Capitol.



Diane Connelly
April Employee
of the Month

Agencies Asked to Provide Input on E-Commerce

Have you ever made an order via the Internet? Do you pay bills online? Would you like to see the applications your agency utilizes have the same functions and efficiency? **We're talking E-commerce!**

A special work group of the Information Technology Council has created a survey on the state's Intranet to help them understand YOUR needs. Visit this site at Intranet. state.wv.us (do not use the www prefix) and complete the survey.

Do You Understand Your Health Coverage Changes?

What We Can Expect on July 1st

In an attempt to relieve its financial deficit, the Public Employees Insurance Agency's (PEIA) finance board voted in December to increase co-payments and deductibles for some state employees. These changes will go into effect July 1, 1999. Gov. Cecil Underwood has committed an additional \$10.7 million to the PEIA's funding in this year's budget request.

Premiums will remain unchanged; however, co-payments, deductibles and out-of-

pocket levels will increase based on the individual employee's salary. Employees with salaries under \$18,000 will experience no increase in their medical deductibles or out-of-pocket expenses. Prescription drug deductibles will increase by \$25 for individual or family coverages.

PEIA's beneficiaries include 98,082 school teachers, state employees and higher education employees as well as

Continued on Page 4

Sneak Peek INSIDE...

- ◆ Purchasing Forums Set to Inform State Agencies
- ◆ Plans Begin for Public Service Recognition Week
- ◆ **Tax Day!...** Here's a Brief Overview of Some Changes
- ◆ **Springtime...** Time to Start Getting Healthy
- ◆ April Birthdays

Purchasing Forums Set in April to Open Discussion on Issues

AGENDA

Suggested Topics for
Purchasing Forums

April 7

**Paying with Plastic
...How's it Working?**

[State Purchasing
Card]

**Grab your Board
and Surf our
Website!**

[Purchasing's Website]

April 14

**From Accordion
Files to Zip Disks,
the OFFICE98**

**Contract has
Changed How We
Get our Supplies**

[OFFICE98 State
Contract]

April 21

**Purchasing Agents
are from Mars.
Vendors are from
Venus...How to
Successfully
Communicate our
Needs**

[Vendor Relations,
Protests and Appeal
Process, Marketing
West Virginia Vendors]

April 28

**Can It Really
Happen? Making
'The Process'
Simpler and Faster**

[Professional and
Business Services,
Request for Proposals]

The Purchasing Division offers an open invitation to all agency personnel to join its staff for informal discussions on various issues, ranging from the State Purchasing Card to Vendor Relations.

These Open Purchasing Forums will be held every Wednesday in April from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Purchasing Division's conference room.

"Several agency representatives have approached me about sitting down and talking about different purchasing-related programs or procedures," according to Purchasing Director Dave Tinch. "These requests gave me the idea of setting aside a certain time to allow any agency employee the opportunity to express their opinions or solutions to some tough issues."

Although suggested topics have been designated for each week, there is no strict schedule, Tinch adds.

No registration is required for these sessions and seating is limited. Questions regarding the April Open Purchasing Forums may be directed to Diane Holley at (304) 558-0661.

**It is ironic, but true, that
in this age of electronic
communications,
personal interaction is
becoming more
important than ever.**

Regis McKenna
Marketing Consultant



April 22nd: Earth Day

Let's Take a Moment to Pay Tribute to our Environment



First observed in 1970 with the message, "Give Earth a Chance," Earth Day has included a variety of activities to celebrate our natural resources. This special day also teaches us the importance of protecting mother nature.



Pictured are children with Smokey Bear during last year's celebration of Earth Day. With 23 exhibitors offering information on recycling and other environmental programs, over 1,300 children attended the activities and left with an environmental message they may carry throughout their lives.

According to Kim Mitchell, the WV Make It Shine Coordinator for the Division of Natural Resources, a variety of activities will be held again this year on April 22nd from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Capitol Plaza Fountain. In case of rain, the events will take place at the lower Rotunda of the Capitol. Some of this year's exhibitors include Three Rivers Avian Center; the Division of Forestry, accompanied by Smokey Bear; the Boy Scouts of America; Goodwill Industries (with a donation truck on site); the Division of Environmental Protection; stream partners program; and a recycling discovery area. Free tree and wildflower seedlings also will be available.

Plans are in the Works for the 1999 Public Service Recognition Week

By Debbie Watkins
Purchasing Division



It's time again for Public Service Recognition Week! This year's activities will be held May 3-7.

West Virginia will join nearly every federal, state, and local government across the country in celebrating this event to help educate the American public on the value of public employees and the services they provide. This designated week is also a vehicle used to stimulate interest in public service careers and to encourage excellence and *esprit de corps* within government. The theme for the 1999 Public Service Recognition Week is **Public Employees: Working for America**.

Gov. Cecil H. Underwood encourages all state agencies, colleges and universities to hold special activities, such as an open house, local tours, awareness fairs and award programs to honor and recognize long-tenured employees for their outstanding work and service.

The activities include various food vendors and entertainment (daily from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at the fountain and stage area). The *tentative* schedule of events planned for the week include:

Monday, May 3 (12:00 noon)

Opening ceremony to be held at the Courtyard Stage

Tuesday, May 4 (11:30 a.m.)

The ever-popular **Goodies Bake-Off** will take place at the Main Capitol Building, East

Wing, near the Attorney General's Office. All entries must arrive at the Judge's Stand by 8:00 am with judging to take place that morning. Prize ribbons will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each of the six categories at 12:00 noon.

Samples of the goodies will be distributed during the lunch hour. For more information and/or an entry form, contact Charlotte Belcher (Division of Personnel) at 558-3950, ext. 234. The deadline for entries is April 23.

(1:30 p.m.)

Governor's Award Ceremony at the Cultural Center Theater for employees with 30+ years of service. A reception will follow the ceremony.

Wednesday, May 5

Plans were not confirmed when this publication went to print.

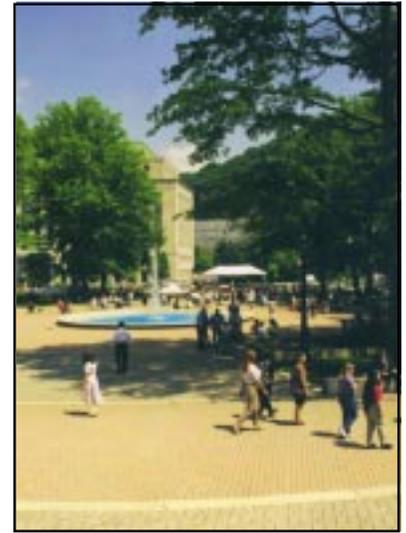
Thursday, May 6

Plans were not confirmed when this publication went to print.

Friday, May 7

Divisions will conduct their own awards ceremony at their individual locations for employees with 20-25-30- 35-40 and 45+ years of service.

Employee participation is needed to make this week a success. If you are interested in serving on a committee (Publicity, Certificate Proofing and Assembly, Food Vendor, Certificate Printing and others), call Jane Fouty, PSRW chairperson, at 558-3950, ext. 206.



Public Employees Recognition Week gives state workers an opportunity to enjoy various activities with other state employees.

Our Benefits...

What's in it for YOU?

State employees receive a variety of benefits as part of our employment package. Each month, we will take a brief look at these valuable incentives:

U.S. Savings Bonds Payroll Plan

Through the U.S. Savings Bonds Payroll Plan, a portion of your pay is automatically directed toward the purchase of savings bonds each pay period. Savings bonds can be held from six months to 30 years and are backed by the full faith and credit of the United State government. They offer competitive, market-based rates and exemption from federal income taxes. Interest earned may also be exempt from federal taxes if used for qualified higher education. For more information, call the State Auditor's Office at (304) 558-2251. For current interest rate information, call **1-800-USBONDS**.

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**Cecil H.
Underwood**
Governor

Joseph Markus
Cabinet Secretary

Diane Holley
Public Information
Officer/Editor

Special Thanks

LeeAnn Carnahan
Kaye Parks
Rosemary Spaulding
Debbie Watkins

Deductions, Exemptions, Tax Changes...

What Does All of This Mean to You?

To make itemization profitable, your deductions must exceed the standard deduction (\$3,350 for singles; \$6,250 for head of household; and \$7100 for joint filers).

Some common deductions include state/local income and property taxes, home mortgage interest, charitable contributions, and medical expenses. Listed below are more deductions (excerpt from Charleston Gazette*. Used by permission).

GENERAL

- ♦ Contributions to an IRA, Keogh or SEP retirement plan/medical savings account.
- ♦ Student-loan interest.
- ♦ Legal fees related to the collection of income, including alimony.

CHARITY

- ♦ Fair-market value of clothing, computers, housewares donated to charity.
- ♦ Appraisal fees for charitable donations or casualty losses.
- ♦ Out of pocket and car expenses (now 14 cents a mile) for volunteer charity work.
- ♦ A portion of Girl Scout cookies.

CAREER

- ♦ Labor union dues.

**By Lee Ann Carnahan
Grievance Board**

No taxes for 1998...**April Fools!** Although we may like to play practical jokes this time of the year, one thing most of us don't find so amusing is TAXES. However, April 15th comes whether we are ready or not!

With more than 800 changes in the 1998 tax code from such acts as the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, and the Tax and Trade Relief Act of 1998, keeping track of these changes can be overwhelming.

An overview of the tax law changes effective in 1998 can be accessed from the Internal Revenue Service website (www.irs.ustreas.gov). Some of these changes include:

- ♦ Lower tax rate on capital gains for property held more than one year.
- ♦ Child Tax Credit: Reduces taxes by \$400 for each qualifying child under 17.
- ♦ A number of new tax benefits available to those who are saving for or paying higher education costs or repaying student loans.
- ♦ New rules for business use of the home.
- ♦ Technical corrections that affect the new Education and Roth IRAs.
- ♦ Earned Income Credit: An increase in the maximum amount of credit and the amount you can earn to receive the credit.
- ♦ Standard Mileage Rate for charity has increased from 12 cents to 14 cents per mile.

- ♦ Individual Retirement Accounts have been expanded to include new IRAs for education and investment.
- ♦ Credit for gift and estate taxes increased for the estates of decedents dying in 1998.
- ♦ Exclusion up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for joint filers) of the gain from the sale of a home if you owned and lived in the home for at least two of the five years preceding the sale.
- ♦ No penalty for underpayment of estimated tax less than \$1000 (\$600 for state taxes).
- ♦ Deductions of up to \$1000 for *qualified* student loan interest.

The fastest and easiest way to check on the status of a return is by calling the Automated Refund Service at 800-829-4477 for the Federal IRS, and 800-422-2075 for the State Tax Commission. When calling, you will need to know the first social security number shown on your return, the filing status, and the exact whole dollar amount of your refund. If you need to correct a return, you may file an IRS 1040X or a State 140X.

Free tax services offered by the Federal IRS and State Tax Commission include online and walk-in offices. To obtain tax forms or instructions, your local library may have just what you need.

PEIA Changes Continued from Page 1

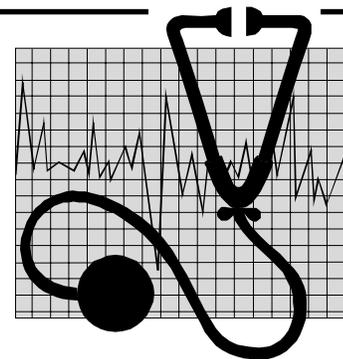
105,766 of their spouses, children and other dependents.

Nationally, health care costs are dramatically increasing, including prices for prescription drugs. This trend has forced PEIA to take proactive steps to address this financial dilemma.

The State Legislature has appropriated additional funding in recent years to curtail health care increases and reduction in benefits which would directly affect PEIA beneficiaries.

Many factors are contributing to these increases in health care costs for state employees:

- PEIA's insured population is not as young nor healthy as in many states. Currently, the average age of



its beneficiaries is 53 years. This results in increased utilization of the more expensive services; and,

- West Virginians are less healthy than most Americans, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Full details of the new plan will be included in the Plan Year 2000 Shopper's Guide, which was mailed in late March. **Open enrollment for Plan Year 2000 is set for April 5 through May 21, 1999.**



Spring into a Healthier New Outlook on Exercise



With the arrival of spring, many vivid thoughts come to mind...flowers, the warm sun, green grass... and trying to fit into those shorts from last summer!

During the months of April and May, we tend to focus attention on our health and getting back into shape. Most people overestimate the amount of exercise it takes to accomplish this goal. Surprisingly, as little as 90 minutes a week of normal exercise can provide a wide variety of mental and physical benefits.

The types of exercise from which to choose is nearly endless: aerobics, basketball, bowling, cross-country skiing, cycling, golfing, racquetball, jogging, skating, soccer, swimming, tennis, walking... yadda yadda yadda.

EXERCISE ETIQUETTE

Tips for Walkers and Joggers:

- ♦ Walk and jog against traffic flow when you use a street shoulder, so you can see and be seen;
- ♦ On a narrow shoulder, never walk or jog side-by-side with a partner.

Source: President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

Experts indicate three factors that enhance the success of your exercise program: frequency [how often], intensity [at what level] and time [for how long]. The more we increase these factors, the more success we are likely to experience.

Why should we exercise? According to West Virginia Health-Styles, aside from just keeping us in shape, there are many reasons why exercise is important to our health:

- ♦ strengthens our heart and lungs;
- ♦ increases the level of HDL ("good") cholesterol in our blood;
- ♦ lowers an elevated blood pressure;
- ♦ prevents diabetes (adult-onset diabetes);

Women's Commission Plans for 'Take Our Daughters To Work Day'

The West Virginia Women's Commission invites you to join the state and the nation in celebrating the seventh annual TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK Day on Thursday, April 22, 1999. This important event encourages young girls ages 9 to 15 to learn about different career possibilities with a parent or other adult. It is a great opportunity for you to share your livelihood with your daughter, granddaughter, niece, neighbor or friend. Many activities are planned; however, seating is limited. Reservations are required for all programs and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more details on the day's events or to make reservations, contact the Women's Commission at 558-0070.

- ♦ strengthens our bones;
- ♦ strengthen and tones our muscles;
- ♦ maintains our desirable weight;
- ♦ improves our productivity and level of energy;
- ♦ improves our sleep;
- ♦ improves our posture and appearance;
- ♦ reduces stress;
- ♦ reduces feeling of depression;
- ♦ improves our overall sense of well-being.

A few of our Department employees share what they do for exercise:

Crystal Lusk Secretary's Office

"I do about 20 minutes on the stairclimber and then at least 45 minutes of muscling toning using Nautilus equipment at the health club. This helps keep my cardiovascular system in check and, yes, to shed a few extra pounds."

Chuck Jones BRIM

"I exercise on the treadmill as often as possible, usually four to five times a week. With warm weather approaching, I hope to pick up the pace."

Roger Smith State Budget Office

"I love to play golf and walk the course instead of using a golf cart. I also like to run but have started biking instead... it's easier on the old knees."

No matter what type of exercise you enjoy, the importance of getting outside and generating energy will make a healthier and happier **YOU!**

DREAM Your Way to Good Health

The secret to a healthy, well-balanced life is to DREAM, according to Jeanne Leonardi of Futureenergy Consulting.

D is for diet. Watch what you eat, because it provides your body's fuel and building blocks for new cells.

R is for relaxation. If you can't do anything about what's bothering you, don't let it bother you.

E is for exercise. Your body needs it regularly.

A is for attitude. A positive attitude will add years to your life.

M is for motivation. Feel motivated about something in your life and it will keep you stimulated.

Tax Deductions

Continued from Page 4

CAREER, Continued

- ◆ Subscriptions to trade journals, magazines and newspapers.
- ◆ Education expenses to maintain or improve skills in current job.
- ◆ Home computer used for the convenience of an employer and as a condition of employment.
- ◆ Uniforms and work clothes not suitable as ordinary wearing apparel (can also include cleaning costs).

HOMEOWNERS

- ◆ Commissions and closing costs paid on sales of property.
- ◆ Casualty losses from storms.
- ◆ Points on home mortgages; certain refinancings; mortgage prepayment penalties and late fees.

INVESTING

- ◆ The cost of computer software and online services used to track your investments, as well as the cost of publications and newsletters you buy for investment advice.
- ◆ Fees to a financial adviser focused on general investment advice.
- ◆ Fees for safe-deposit box.
- ◆ Interest on a bond purchased between interest payment dates.
- ◆ Penalties for early withdrawal of savings.
- ◆ Capital losses up to \$3000 including worthless stock.

MEDICAL

- ◆ Medical aids such as contact lenses, eyeglasses, false teeth, hearing devices and orthopedic shoes.
- ◆ Costs of a weight-loss program for treatment of a specific disease, such as hypertension or obesity.
- ◆ Acupuncture treatments.

TAXPAYERS

- ◆ Accounting fees for tax-preparation services and IRS audits.
- ◆ Legal fees to prepare an estate plan if it requires federal, estate and gift-tax advice.

Welcome...to our new employees: Jennifer Paxton (Finance); Patricia Wehrle (IS&C); Linda Walker (Personnel); and Violet Burns (General Services).

Congratulations!...to Stephanie Davis of IS&C who was promoted from a Programmer Analyst 2 to a Data Base Administrator 1.

Good Luck...to Beverly Morris, who recently transferred from Finance to BEP. Also, best of luck goes out to those who resigned from state government: Emily Lewis (Finance) and Rebecca McCormick (General Services).

Division of Personnel Announces Classes for April...[April 7] The Drug Free Workplace (Clarksburg); [April 7-8] Project Management; [April 14] Workplace Safety; [April 22] Discipline and Documentation (Morgantown); [April 27-28] Coaching and Developing Performance (Beckley); and [April 27-29] Writing Effectively (Martinsburg). For more information or to register, please contact the Division of Personnel at 558-3950, extension 508.

Professional Secretaries Day! On April 21, let's celebrate the hard work and dedication demonstrated by our secretaries within the Department of Administration.



Don't Forget!...Daylight Savings Time is this month. Turn the clocks forward at 2:00 a.m. on April 4th. Unfortunately, we lose an hour of sleep.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY... in April

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Jacqueline Cox Finance
Walter Seals .. General Services
Janie Taylor Purchasing
Sharon Waggy CPRB
Rita Wagner IS&C | 17 Brenda Erwin Finance
Anthony Maddox BRIM
Stephanie Schulz Personnel
George Tanner .. General Services |
| 3 LeAnn Arthur IS&C
Charlyn Miller Purchasing
Jim Sims CPRB | 18 Judy Anderson PEIA
Monta Boggs CPRB |
| 4 Brenda Gould Grievance Board | 19 Kristy James IS&C |
| 5 Mark Isabella Personnel
Sondra Meadows IS&C
Keith Moss General Services | 20 Velma Totten CPRB |
| 6 Jeff Perdue Purchasing | 21 Barbara White IS&C |
| 8 Kristy Gladis Grievance Board
James Hyde CPRB | 22 Ann Crabtree IS&C
Greg Hubbard ... General Services
Wayne Jones IS&C |
| 9 Douglas Keeney . General Services | 23 Carlos Neccuzi IS&C |
| 10 Mary Murphy Personnel
Robert Otey General Services
Rita Selvaraj BRIM | 25 Elaine Hudson Aviation Services
Chuck Kinder Personnel
Tyrell Miller IS&C |
| 11 Jane Shinn Finance
Muriel Smith Purchasing | 26 Philip Nicholas IS&C |
| 12 Roger Emerson Personnel
Doris Lykens CPRB
Matt Short IS&C | 27 William Ballard ... General Services
Karen Balsimo IS&C
Harold Brown Personnel
Becky Hayes Finance
Frank Unger General Services |
| 15 Kathryn Morgan IS&C
Don O'Brien General Services
William Pointer General Services | 28 Richard Holcombe IS&C
29 Carles Farley General Services |

