



# Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

Monthly Employee Newsletter Published by the Department of Administration  
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## Employee of the Month

### General Services' Randy Briscoe Shows Leadership



RANDY BRISCOE  
April Employee  
of the Month

**RANDY BRISCOE**, a Master Electrician for the General Services Division, has been selected as the Department of Administration's *Employee of the Month* for April.

A state government employee for almost two years, Briscoe's primary duties include replacing fuse panels and re-wiring light fixtures, particularly in Buildings 3, 5, 6 and 7.

"Randy is willing to go beyond the call of duty. He will come in on the weekends to get the job done if necessary," said one co-worker. "Randy is also willing to share ideas with others in order to make the job being done more efficient."

Another co-worker added, "Randy shows great leadership. He works well and has good customer relations with the ten-

ants of Buildings 3, 5, 6 and 7."

In his spare time, Briscoe enjoys the outdoors, especially golfing and four-wheeling.

Briscoe will be joined by his friends and co-workers at a special ceremony presented by Cabinet Secretary Robert Ferguson on Thursday, April 2 at 1 p.m. at the General Services Division office (Building 1) in Charleston.

## Building for the Future

### West Virginia Chosen To Participate In Pew Center Program

West Virginia has been selected by the Pew Center on the States as one of three states to participate in a year-long program designed to strengthen state operations and save tax dollars. West Virginia's project will establish new statewide and budgeting systems that will enable the state to ensure the best return on public investments.

The state will receive intensive management support from Pew experts and advisors, as well as a monetary offering of \$50,000, to accelerate state improvements in targeted areas. Also selected for the program were the states of Georgia and Ohio.

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**Governor Joe Manchin III meets with Pew Center representatives during discussion of the state's participation in the Pew Center on the States program.**

## SNEAK PEEK



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# Chief Technology Officer Kyle Schafer Pleased As Statewide Consolidation Progress Continues



The consolidation of information technology personnel into the Office of Technology (OT), which began three years ago, has moved along smoothly, said Chief Technology Officer Kyle Schafer. The result, Schafer said, has been both effective service and a savings to the taxpayers.

"We have saved \$3.5 million in the past three years by eliminating 57 full-time positions through attrition," Schafer said. "Furthermore, we have renegotiated about 80 percent of the largest information technology contracts."

Among those contracts was the statewide information processing contract for computer purchases. Hewlett-Packard became the recent successful vendor for state computer purchases.

Schafer said the Office of Technology had seen a constant increase in annual expenses for information

technology, with \$51 million in the fiscal 2006 year being the highest amount. He said that subsequent years following the OT consolidation have seen decreases, down to \$46 million in 2008 and a projected \$43 million for this fiscal year.

"We have seen hardware and software costs decrease by \$8.5 million, and an overall cost reduction of \$11.5 million," he said.

Schafer added that the consolidation's effectiveness showed the hard work put into the change. "I think we have a very positive story to tell," he said.

Schafer said the consolidation is progressing on schedule, and all executive branch agencies, except the Department of Revenue and some

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## State Agencies Encouraged to Participate in Governor's Internship Program

State agencies can continue to sign up to participate in the Governor's Internship Program which assembles high-achieving college students to be made available to serve as summer interns.



Agencies can enroll at [www.wvgip.org](http://www.wvgip.org). Once an agency submits its enrollment form through this Web site, the Division of Personnel sends the agency contact a login code, enabling them to review resumes of the college interns enrolled in the program. Interns are required to have a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average and have finished their first year of college.

Narratives describing their field of study and work interests are also available and two letters of recommendation are required by the prospective intern.

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## New Benches In The Capitol

**Eight marble benches are the newest additions to the décor at the Capitol. The marble benches are located in the lower rotunda area and main hallways. The General Services Division placed the new benches in March. They are produced by Vermont Quarries of Rutland, the same quarry that provided the original marble for the Capitol interior.**

**Four marble benches are located around the lower rotunda area and two benches are located at each end of the hallways near the East and West wings.**

# Division of Personnel Takes First Step Toward Long-Term Workforce Plan

The Division of Personnel has taken a large first step toward developing a statewide workforce plan to address the staffing needs of state government in the near- and long-term future.

Effective March 1, the Division of Personnel began implementing its Workforce Planning policy, which was written by staff and approved by its board in February. The Workforce Planning Policy is a recommendation made in December of 2008 by the Legislative Auditor's office



OTIS COX

to develop a statewide workforce plan to ensure that each state government agency has a plan in place to employ sufficient qualified staff to carry out the present and future responsibilities of the agency.

With the Planning Policy in place, Personnel staff has assembled an advisory committee of human resource representatives from all state agencies to write the comprehensive workforce plan.

"I am very pleased at the progress we are making," said Personnel Di-

rector Otis Cox. "In addition to the work of our advisory committee, we have been collaborating with other states to compare everyone's best practices and the direction we are going is pretty much in line with the best practices of other states. By the time this comprehensive workforce plan is written, I am confident we will have sound document in place."

One of the primary challenges to assembling the plan, Cox said, is to assess current workforce staff, determine future staffing needs, and to identify and address the gaps between the two.

"It will be crucial to develop strategies to address these gaps and then just as important is to monitor and evaluate progress of the standards, methods and timetables that are established in the workforce plan," Cox said. "Our state has many unique workforce challenges in front of it. I am confident we are up to the challenge in finding in the best solutions to meet those challenges."

# PEIA Schedules Plan Benefit Fairs Throughout April

The Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA) is sponsoring benefit fairs throughout the state in April for members to learn more about different plans available. Open enrollment is currently underway through April 30. Information about changes in coverages and plans is available at the benefit fairs. For more details, call PEIA at 1-877-676-5573.



The benefit fairs are as follows:

- **April 6 - Charleston**  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
State Capitol Complex  
Bldg. 7, Capitol Room
- **April 6 - Charleston**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Charleston Civic Center  
200 Civic Center Drive
- **April 7 - Weirton**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Holiday Inn  
350 Three Springs Drive
- **April 8 - Wheeling**  
1 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Northern Community College  
Market St.
- **April 9 - Morgantown**  
10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
WVU Alumni Center  
Durrett Hall
- **April 9 - Morgantown**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Ramada Inn  
I-68 (exit 1), US Route 119N
- **April 13 - Parkersburg**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Comfort Suites of Parkersburg  
I-77 & State Route 14 (exit 170)  
Mineral Wells

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## Updating Your Retirement Beneficiary Designations Important as Time Passes

By Jamie Hardman  
Consolidated Public Retirement Board

Participation in a defined benefit retirement plan administered by the Consolidated Public Retirement Board (CPRB) has many advantages for members, such as a guaranteed lifetime annuity, professional management of equities investments and disability and survivor benefits. For active members, an important factor in ensuring that your retirement options reflect your current choices is to update your pre-retirement beneficiary designations when a significant change occurs in your life circumstances. For

example, when you experience a life altering event, such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, or death of a spouse, you should request a new Pre-Retirement Beneficiary form from your employer's payroll coordinator to update your beneficiary options. You can also access a Pre-Retirement Beneficiary form on the CPRB Website at <http://www.wvretirement.com>

In completing a Pre-Retirement Beneficiary form, you may elect to name multiple primary and/or secondary beneficiaries. When choosing this option, be

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# Teachers' Retirement System Receives National Award

The West Virginia Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) was recently named the 2009 Plan Sponsor of the Year, by PLANSPONSOR magazine for leadership in providing a more secure retirement for workers.

According to the magazine, Plan Sponsor of the Year winners are distinguished for demonstrating strong investment performance, rigorous corporate governance and an enduring commitment to participant education. West Virginia's TRS is this year's Public Sector/State recipient of the award.

"With our partnership with the West Virginia Investment Board and our dedicated, hard-working staff, the Consolidated Public Retirement Board (CPRB) is pleased that our Teachers' Retirement System has been recognized for this distinct honor," said CPRB Executive Director Anne Lambright. "We always place our members and retirees first in every decision we make, which ensures that a positive and progressive path is followed in the management of all of our retirement systems."

The Plan Sponsor of the Year recipients will be recognized at PLANSPONSOR's annual Awards for Excellence dinner in New York on April 2, and was featured in the March issue of its magazine.

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independent boards and commissions, have been consolidated.

With the move toward a standard desktop and a common executive branch domain (wv.gov), Schafer said state employees are beginning to see more advantages. "Under the new executive domain, we have a global address book, which simplifies finding e-mail addresses for employees," Schafer said.

In addition, the use of Office Communicator, an internal instant messenger device for all executive domain e-mail address holders, allows instant communication, he said. Approximately 7,000 email addresses have been converted thus far to the common executive branch domain, he said.

Schafer said that while the consolidation has generally run smoothly, and that he is pleased with the results, it is ultimately not up to him to determine its success. "I feel positive but it does not matter what I think," he said. "It matters what the agencies think."

Quotes, Notes and Anecdotes



## Chipping Away

**Work continues on the Union Soldiers and Sailors monument on the south side of the Capitol grounds. The Union soldier statue and four plaques were removed from the granite foundation in November and have been cleaned and restored to their original finish. The Union soldier statue currently stands in the grand hall of the Division of Culture and History. Workers continue to remove the granite foundation which was cracked and beyond repair. A new granite foundation shaped like the original will replace the old one.**

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## PEIA

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- **April 14 – Martinsburg**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Holiday Inn  
300 Foxcroft Ave.
- **April 15 – Fairmont**  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Fairmont State College  
1201 Locust Ave.
- **April 15 – Romney**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
South Branch Inn  
US Route 50
- **April 16 – Beckley**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Tamarack Conference Center  
Ballroom A  
One Tamarack Park
- **April 20 – Huntington**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Big Sandy Superstore Arena  
1 Civic Center Drive
- **April 22 – Flatwoods**  
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Days Inn  
200 Sutton Lane

# HELP! ... How Can I Better Handle Upset Customers?

As state employees, our jobs entail providing efficient, effective service to our internal and external customers and to the public we serve. Occasionally, this may include customers who are upset or angry.



member not to take comments personally; it's not about you," she said.

## Deal with the person

Focusing on facts and not the emotions displayed while customers are venting will help

you find a resolution. Active listening skills, such as taking notes and rephrasing, can demonstrate understanding and respect.

If the customer is shouting or acting aggressively, be sure not to mirror their behavior or speech pattern — this may inflame the situation. Instead, lower your voice and advise the customer that you want to assist them in resolving the matter.

## Focus on finding a solution

Accept responsibility for resolving the problem. If you cannot resolve the matter, identify who can. Be certain to follow up with the customer, where necessary.

*Start by knowing what triggers your hot buttons and decide an appropriate way to handle them. Also, remember not to take comments personally; it's not about you.*

Mary Bolton

Development Consultant / OHRD  
Division of Personnel

## Manage your stress

Dealing with upset and angry customers can cause tension and stress. Identify and practice methods of managing and defusing stress, such as walking, taking deep breaths, or mediating. Reducing the amount of sugar and caffeine consumed in your diet can also reduce the physical effects of stress.

For additional information regarding OHRD's Dealing with Upset and Angry Customers class, call 304-558-3950, ext. 57204. Offered throughout the year, this class provides participants with a conceptual analysis of conflict, a plan for dealing with challenging customers, and opportunities to practice new skills.

The Division of Personnel's Organization and Human Resource Development (OHRD) section offers the following four-step model to assist in addressing these situations: 1) **Stay calm**; 2) **Deal with the person**; 3) **Address the problem**; and 4) **Manage your stress**.

## Stay calm

Mary Bolton, Development Consultant with OHRD, says that this is the first skill you want to learn. It is often easier said than done when someone is screaming at you.

"Start by knowing what triggers your hot buttons and decide an appropriate way to handle them. Also, re-

## PEW

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"We know we can and must do better to improve our planning and budgeting process," said Governor Joe Manchin III. "We are pleased to have this opportunity to save taxpayer dollars while delivering better service to our hard-working West Virginians."

Each state project included in a "Pew Management Lab" will focus on a specific challenge to improve statewide results and will share what works with other states to spur government improvements nationwide. All 50 states were eligible to apply for the program and projects were selected based on the ability to assemble a senior-level team responsible for

implementing improvement strategies for state taxpayers.

"Given this valuable resource from the Pew Center on the States, West Virginia is anticipating great ideas to develop as our own representation from our key experts in the financial arena work hand-in-hand for positive outcomes," said Department of Administration Cabinet Secretary Robert Ferguson, who is chairing the project on behalf of the state.

The new Management Labs build off of the work of Pew's "Grading the States" report. Pew has been examining all 50 states' management of money, people, information and infrastructure for more than 10 years.

Quotes, Notes and Anecdotes

## RETIREMENT

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certain to indicate what percentage of distribution each beneficiary is to receive, keeping in mind that the percentage column must total 100%. Should you omit to assign a distribution percentage to each beneficiary named, all primary or secondary beneficiaries will share equally in your benefits. Another important factor when updating your Pre-Retirement Beneficiary form is to provide the CPRB with complete information, including Social Security numbers, dates, addresses and appropriate signatures as requested.

For additional questions, please contact CPRB at (304) 558-3570 or (800) 654-4406.

## PROGRAM

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For more details, visit the program's Web site. Interested employers and interns may also call Molly George, Special Projects Coordinator for the Department of Education and the Arts, at 558-2440 or Pat Quinlan of the Division of Personnel at 558-3950, extension 57263 for questions about the applications.

Since its creation in 1989, more than 1,300 talented students have participated in 255 rewarding internship experiences in West Virginia. This year marks the 13th year for this program.

# The Growing Stress Over Money Issues

The American Psychological Association's "2008 Stress in America" survey reported that the declining economy is taking its toll on everyone, though women are hit harder by financial stress. When asked about the recent financial crisis, almost half of Americans said they were worried about their ability to provide for their families' basic needs.

Eight out of 10 Americans said the economy was a significant cause of stress -- with women (83 percent) more likely to suffer ill effects from it than men (78 percent).

Other findings include:

- Women of the Boomer Generation (ages 44-62) and "Matures" (age 63 and older) were the most likely to report the economy as a significant stressor.
- Women, in general, ranked financial worries above personal health, though Boomer women reported higher stress levels when it came to job stability and concerns about the health of their families.

## Online Tax Filing Gain Popularity

Filing tax returns by e-mail is becoming more common. Individual taxpayers filed almost 90 million returns online in 2008 -- up by 12 percent over the previous year, and more than half of the 155 million returns sent to the IRS as a whole.

In the past decade, the total number of returns rose by 23 percent, but electronic returns increased by 206 percent, according to the IRS.

Nearly 27 million returns were e-mailed by individual taxpayers from their home computers.

**Welcome!** ... to our new employees: **Shannon Looney** (CHIP); **Martin Wright** (Ethics); **Beverly Hedrick** and **Amber Rose** (PEIA); **Jenny Bradley** and **Elizabeth Williams** (Personnel); **Afton Hutson** (Secretary's Office); and **Thomas Riddell** (Technology).

**Time to Relax** ... After many years of hard work, **Bonnie Walker** of the Division of Personnel is now ready to kick back and relax. Happy retirement!

**Best Wishes** ... to our employees who recently resigned from our department: **Denise Spatafore** (Grievance); **Rebecca Kelly** and **Angela Maynard** (Personnel); and **Laura Johnson** and **Brian Shields** (Technology).

### People Talk

**Kudos to our Kids!** ... Trace Mahan, a fourth grader at Pinch Elementary School, was chosen for the All-Kanawha County Orchestra that will perform at the Clay Center this spring. He is the son of **Dawn Mahan** (CPRB).

**Baby News** ... Jordan Allen Ratcliff, grandson of **Wanda Casto** (CHIP), was born Feb. 20. He was 8 pounds, 5 ounces ... Max Thomas Suchy, grandson of **Lucy Suchy** (Ethics), was born Feb. 4. His parents are Jason and Tina Suchy.

**Got News?...** Let us know what's going on with you and your family. Contact Diane Holley, Editor, at (304) 558-0661 or at [Diane.M.Holley@wv.gov](mailto:Diane.M.Holley@wv.gov) with information to share with the department's employees.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY ... in April

1 Harry Mandel ..... CPRB	15 Torrie Williams ..... CPRB
Deanne Turley ..... BRIM	16 Jeanne Barnhart ..... Purchasing
3 Leann Arthur ..... Technology	Michael Cheeks ..... Technology
Bill Rainey ..... PEIA	David Williams ..... Gen. Svcs.
Chad Williamson ..... Purchasing	17 George Tanner ..... Gen. Svcs.
4 Brenda Gould ..... Grievance	19 Nidia Henderson ..... PEIA
5 Jo Ann Adkins ..... Purchasing	Howard Mehringer ..... Aviation
Heather Christenberry ..... CPRB	20 Keith Burdette ..... Gen. Svcs.
Mark Isabella ..... Personnel	Kelly Dean ..... CPRB
6 Donna Lipscomb ..... Sec. Office	Andrew Guz ..... Gen. Svcs.
Rebecca Whetzel .... Technology	Debra Hughart ..... CPRB
7 Benton Hall ..... Technology	Velma Totten ..... CPRB
8 Jim Hyde ..... CPRB	21 Evelyn Davis ..... Personnel
Stefanie Youngblood ..... CPRB	22 Anne Crabtree ..... Technology
9 Pauravi Randeri ..... Technology	Greg Hubbard ..... Gen. Svcs.
10 Lester Shanklink III ..... Gen. Svcs.	Gary Reed ..... PEIA
11 Anita Brewster ..... CPRB	23 Carlos Neccuzzi ..... Technology
Byron Lusher ..... Technology	25 Natalie McGill ..... Technology
Tony O'Leary ..... Purchasing	26 Jim Hawley ..... Gen. Svcs.
Jane Shinn ..... Finance	Richard Miller ..... Gen. Svcs.
12 Matt Short ..... Technology	Robin Perdue ..... Grievance
Tim Summers ..... Technology	28 Cynthia Adkins ..... CPRB
13 Shelley Burford ..... CPRB	Tina Murdock ..... CPRB
Jeff Harbour ..... Gen. Svcs.	Jeff Wilson ..... Technology
Jim Richards ..... Technology	29 Carles Farley ..... Gen. Svcs.
14 Ed Coleman ..... CPRB	30 Lethie Purkey ..... Technology
Bernard Huffman ..... PEIA	Michael Scyoc ..... CPRB
15 Sarah Hunter ..... CPRB	

# Administrative Notes

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