Big or Small...All Projects Valued by IS&C's Bev Thomas

Bev Thomas, a Program Analyst 1 for the Development Center of the Information Services and Communications Division, has been selected as the Department’s Employee of the Month for August.

A 35-year employee of state government, Bev is responsible for maintaining the Department of Education’s Stanford Testing results and the Education Writing Assessment jobs.

Bev also maintains the computer programs for the State Capitol Telephone Directory.

According to one of her co-workers, "Bev takes on new assignments, big or small, with a cheerful can-do attitude." Another co-worker adds, "She is very conscientious, friendly to all and has quite a knack for working with customers to ensure that they are pleased with the work she has delivered."

In her spare time, Bev enjoys watching football. She claims to be a BIG West Virginia University fan. Bev also enjoys spending time with her two dogs, Peanut and Patti Jo.

Please join Cabinet Secretary Greg Burton and all of Bev’s friends and co-workers at her Employee of the Month presentation at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 1st at IS&C’s Kanawha City Office.

Renovation Begins on the Governor’s Mansion

The General Services Division recently began restoring the Governor’s Mansion to its original beauty.

Acting Director David Pentz of the General Services Division was charged to oversee this project by Cabinet Secretary Greg Burton. “We have several significant problems,” Pentz said. “So we put this project as top priority. It (the building) was literally falling apart when we first inspected it.”

The first phase involves the restoration of the porch. Bill Pauley, Acting Deputy Director, explains that the goal is to return the structure of the porch to its original grandeur. “We’re going to restore what they call a balustrade (a banister) to this porch, which was removed at some time,” Pauley explains.

Among the challenges facing General Services staff are rotted column bases, broken tile on the porch, and inadequate lighting.

General Services is unsure of the extent of the repairs needed.
Safety at the Workplace...
Measures Taken to Ensure Employee Protection

By Carrie McComas
Communication Intern

Homicide, burglary, domestic abuse and accidents...We live in a dangerous world, and unfortunately, the workplace is no exception.

For this reason, Chuck Starcher, Director of the Division of Protective Services, said he believes it is extremely important that state government takes extensive precautions to make our workplace safe.

“After this year, we will have spent $3 million,” Starcher said, adding that the amount of money spent on safety at the Capitol Complex shows that others are also concerned. “Much of the expense is to increase the safety of the people that work here, visit here, and do business here.”

What has the money been used for? The list includes card systems, electronic door locks, reinforced doors, metal detectors, and security services. “We have installed many security cameras,” Starcher said. “We can just about cover the outside of the entire complex now.”

Starcher describes the Capitol Complex as a small city, with similar problems. To counteract such crimes, the Division of Protective Services has taken great measures to keep state workers safe.

“Our Division was very instrumental in the design of the security system in the Diamond Building,” Starcher said. “I would like for everything to be like the Diamond.” Unfortunately, Starcher added, the Capitol Complex is a very public area, so it is impossible to secure it in a similar way.

Therefore, Protective Services has used other means to reduce the threat of workplace crime at the Capitol Complex. “The Senate now has electronic door locks,” assured Starcher, who is planning to have the same security for the House of Representatives.

Starcher’s focus goes beyond electronic improvements. Protective Services offers to escort employees to their cars, or other locations, if they feel unsafe at any time. In addition, security guards also have the power to arrest on campus.

Starcher said he hopes to offer seminars to state employees soon on safety. For more details, please call 558-9911 or 558-5715.

Chuck Starcher, Director of Protective Services Division, is pictured at the “command center” with surveillance screens. There are 60 cameras in service on the Capitol grounds with approximately 80 cameras soon to be installed.

Chuck Starcher Speaks Out...

Workplace Violence
“The number one problem in the workplace now is domestic violence.”

Capitol Police
“We are a full-ability police force. We have the authority to arrest and to investigate crimes.”

Workplace Crime Prevention
“Don’t leave money out...If you leave your office for any amount of time, lock [valuables] up.”

Safety Outside
“Leaving the building in the evening, just be smart....Be aware of your surroundings.”

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fastest Growing Occupations
The U.S. Labor Department predicts that the fastest-growing occupations through the year 2008 will be database administrators, computer engineers, systems analysts, teachers, librarians and counselors. Health care workers of all kinds will be needed to take care of aging baby boomers, who will be able to afford the best care and attention.

Right now, the need for nurses is critical. To encourage entering the profession, employers offer more flexible hours and less overtime. There are Web alternatives to expensive classes and more scholarships.

General Statistics in the U.S.
Each workday, there are...
✓ 16,400 threats
✓ 723 workers attacked
✓ 43,800 harassed workers

Approximately 960,000 women experience domestic violence at work.

Homicide was the leading cause of workplace death last year in the United States.
PEIA Days: Visiting West Virginia Communities to Explain Services

PEIA Days will be coming to a community near you soon!

According to a recent announcement by Governor Bob Wise, the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) will conduct a series of events across the state to answer members’ questions about PEIA, gather information about what services members value most and determine how customer service might be improved.

"PEIA Days is another example of my commitment to make government more customer friendly," Gov. Wise said. "These events give members a chance to voice their opinions and concerns."

With the first event conducted on July 12 in Beckley, each event will begin with focus groups where members will have a chance to meet face-to-face with customer service representatives. It will conclude with a public listening session where questions will be answered by PEIA administrators in a town hall meeting format.

"We want to hear firsthand from the people whose opinions matter most. This is a great opportunity for members to share their views with us and help our organization serve them better," said PEIA Director Tom Susman.

If you have questions regarding PEIA Days or are interested in participating in the scheduled focus groups, please call toll-free 1-888-680-7342.

What Are We Talking About?

Studies show that we are talking with our bosses and co-workers not only around the watercooler, but in the hallways and outside of our offices. But what are we saying? According to an OfficeTeam report:

- 39 percent of information conversations are work-related
- 9 percent are office gossip
- 7 percent are about investments and mergers
- 6 percent are about sports
- 5 percent are about politics
- 17 percent are about other topics, such as humor, hobbies, families, vacations, and personal problems.

- adapted from Business Psychology News

Public Service Recognition Week Planned

Public Service Recognition Week has been scheduled for September 24-28, in honor of all public employees. The official ceremony to kick off the week will be held on September 24 on the North Capitol steps.

More details will be reported in the next issue of Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes.

Searching is half the fun: life is much more manageable when thought of as a scavenger hunt as oppose to a surprise party.

Jimmy Buffet
Calculate THIS!

Division of Personnel Offers Online Help in Calculating Employment Benefits

By Mike Campbell
Division of Personnel

The Division of Personnel recently expanded its website (www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel) to include interactive forms which can assist state agency personnel offices and employees in performing certain cumbersome payroll related computations.

One such calculator can be used to quickly determine Workers’ Compensation/ Sick Leave reimbursement, or “buy back” amounts. West Virginia Code and the Division of Personnel policy prohibits employees from receiving payment for sick leave and for Workers’ Compensation Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefits for the same period. Employees who elect to receive TTD have the option of utilizing paid sick leave until the initial benefit check is received. However, the employee must reimburse the state the net value of any unused annual leave is converted to the equivalent increment tenure. Similar to the Sick Leave buy back procedure, a user simply enters information on a screen form, and clicks “Compute”. Both the Sick Leave Buy Back and the Pro-Rata Increment calculators are available in the Employee Information and Payroll Audit section of the Division of Personnel website at www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empinfo/default.htm.

Other calculators are also available which may be of interest to agency personnel staff and employees. The Links and Reference section of the Division of Personnel website includes a Typing Speed Estimator (just for fun) and an Accrued Leave Calculator. The leave calculator can be used by employees to determine how much leave must be used to avoid exceeding the maximum carry-forward amount.

The Division of Personnel always welcomes suggestions to its website. HAPPY COMPUTING!

Employees Helping One Another

The Donation Leave Program allows state employees to offer annual leave to another state employee who has expired all annual and sick leave. The annual leave is converted into sick leave for the employee in need.

For more details on this program, visit the Division of Personnel’s website at www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empcom/cover.htm.

Educational Reimbursement Policy Assists Employees in Reaching Goals

Are you thinking of going back to school? The Educational Expense Reimbursement/Leave Program (EERL) enables agencies to reimburse employees for employment-related educational expenses and/or grant educational leave dependent on the availability of funding. The key is prior departmental approval.

Each agency or department has established its own program based on specified eligibility requirements, application procedures and reimbursement/leave guidelines. Eligibility is limited to full-time permanent employees.

For more details, please refer to the EERL policy at the Division of Personnel’s website (www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel) or contact its office at (304) 558-3950, ext. 504.
State Ends Year with $25 Million Surplus

Governor Bob Wise recently announced that state government ended its financial year June 30 with an estimated $25 million surplus in the general revenue fund.

"It wasn't easy to sign a 3 percent budget cut on my first day in office," Wise said. "But the spending reductions that were implemented in January of 2001 forced agencies to tighten their budgets and work more efficiently."

About $2,718,380,000 was collected in the General Revenue fund, about $1 million over the official revenue estimate of $2,717,350,000. That $1 million, combined with the $24 million spending reduction, resulted in a general revenue surplus of approximately $25 million.

Revenue collections for the following taxes were higher than estimated: Severance tax ($19.2 million); Personal Income tax ($17.2 million); Interest income ($10.4 million).

Higher energy prices contributed to the increase in severance taxes. Steady gains in employment and wage income caused withholding taxes to grow by 5.7 percent. Higher interest rates in the first six months of the year contributed to increased interest income.

The administration sets the official revenue estimates during the budget process preceding the beginning of each fiscal year. Spending within the state's general revenue fund budget is limited to the total amount of those projected collections for the year. When the actual revenue collections exceed the official estimates for a year, half of the surplus is automatically set aside for the state's Rainy Day Fund and the other half is allocated at the discretion of the State Legislature.

Governor Wise projects that $12.5 million will be deposited into the Rainy Day Fund after all final bills are paid on July 31, 2001. House Bill 302 appropriated $4,799,000 of any surplus for the 2001 fiscal year. An additional $7,689,000 is expected to be available for appropriation by the Legislature.

Governor's Mansion
Continued from Page 1

at the Governor’s Mansion. Once the preservation begins, the staff will have a better knowledge of the tasks to be completed. “There are things you can’t see at first,” Pentz explains. “We’re prepared for the unknown.”

Due to the volume of the work, the General Services Division has enlisted the help of an architectural firm, N/Visions; a restoration specialist, George Soltis; and Wiseman Construction Company...all West Virginia businesses.

This project differs from other Capitol Complex projects because it is a residence. “I appreciate all of the cooperation we’ve received from Governor (Bob) Wise and the First Lady while working on the mansion,” Pentz said. “It can be very difficult trying to raise a family in this situation, but they understand that we’re trying to preserve part of the state’s history. It’s a win-win situation.”

Phase I is estimated to take 8-10 weeks to complete, after which General Services will embark on Phase II, which includes painting the entire exterior of the structure.

**Why this restoration is so important?** “We want to preserve the mansion, make it look nice not only for the Governor and his family, but also for the people of West Virginia,” Pentz said. “With the ground floor being public space, we’re doing these repairs for all West Virginians. We hope that future generations will have the opportunity and privilege to visit this state landmark.”

General Services Acting Director David Pentz (l) and Acting Deputy Director Bill Pauley display areas that need to be repaired at the Governor’s Mansion.

Where is This?

Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes is beginning a new monthly series which will display a picture of an object located at the State Capitol Complex...your mission is to find out where it is.

The answer to this month's mystery picture can be found on page 6 of this issue of the newsletter.
Welcome to the Department! ... Karen Byrd and Chester Popham (Purchasing), Brenda Brooks and Tracy Ketter (Personnel), Tammy Patton and Regina Williams (CPRB), Bill Gillespie (Leasing), and Thomas Booth (Public Defender Services).

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Harry Matthews

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