

Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

A Monthly Employee Newsletter Published by the Department of Administration

December 2000 • Vol. 8, Issue 12

Employee of the Month

General Services' Virgil Jones Takes Pride in His Work

Virgil Jones, Facilities and Equipment Maintenance Technician for the General Services Division, is the Department's **Employee of the Month** for December.

A four-year veteran of state government, Virgil operates and maintains building heating/cooling, electrical and plumbing equipment. He responds to emergency and non-emergency requests from tenants of the State Capitol Complex.

According to one of his co-workers, "Virgil shows determination in doing his job efficiently and courteously. He takes a lot of pride from his work. He responds quickly and effectively to all service calls." Another co-worker adds, "He keeps a smile on his face, and has a great sense of humor; he is always pleasant."

In his spare time, Virgil assists elderly individuals in his community. He also enjoys watching football.

Virgil wanted the opportunity to thank the Department's employees for time donated and cards sent during his recent illness. The kindness demonstrated from his co-workers and friends were greatly appreciated.

Please join Cabinet Secretary Jack Buckalew at the **Employee of the Month** presentation at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, December 1st in Room MB-69 of the main Capitol Building.



VIRGIL JONES
December Employee of the Month

IS&C's Data Center Offers "Open House" for State Government and Public to Explain Services

The Data Center of the Information Services and Communications Division (IS&C) recently opened its doors to offer state employees and the public a look at how state government maintains information electronically.

The Data Center provides centralized information technology support to state agencies and other entities 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

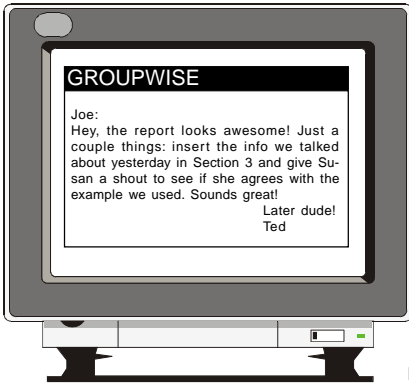


Mart Denison, Data Center Manager, offers a tour to a group of students from Kenna Elementary who were attending the center's "Open House" on October 19.

Sneak Peek INSIDE...

- ◆ Has Electronic Mail Made Communicating Too Informal?
- ◆ Aviation Day Offers Training for Pilots and Security Officials
- ◆ Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?
- ◆ Employee of the Year Award to Be Announced this Month
- ◆ Administrative Notes

Department Employees Voice Opinions on Electronic Mail for Business Use



Misspelled words, incorrect grammar and use of slang are just a few of the signs of the informality of using electronic mail, but is that acceptable? Our Department employees indicate that electronic mail works for them, but there are situations where paper correspondence should be used.

In today's fast-paced business world, the use of e-mail is essential. The *message* is the key.

Frank Drobot
Secretary's Office

Electronic mail has made a major impact in today's business world in how we communicate with one another. Because of the rapid surge of e-mail in nearly every business throughout the world, we continue to

search for standards in how best to use this medium.

According to a recent survey conducted by **Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes**, our Department employees had varying opinions on their dependency on electronic mail. Its advocates claim that it is convenient, easy, cheap, quick, efficient, productive, and user-friendly. They maintain that it reaches a bigger audience and offers a *paper trail* for future reference.

E-mail opponents caution that it is not *official* due to the lack of an original signature and that it contains more grammatical and spelling errors than paper correspondence. They insist that it is appropriate for communicating with co-workers, but not for customers or the public and, although it may be a valuable communication tool, it should not replace all business correspondence.

Nearly everyone agrees that electronic mail is definitely informal; however, the dispute lies in whether this informality is good or bad. "I am cautious with gram-

mar, spelling and content," said IS&C's Chuck Walker, "But I use more of a *discussion format* rather than the structure that I use with letters and memorandums."

Many employees indicate that informality is a welcome change as long as grammar and spelling are correct, while others noted that they use e-mail for internal use but rely on formal correspondence, such as memoranda or letters, for most external business writing. "Informality in electronic mail messages is no problem, unless the informality results in sloppy thinking and expression which causes confusion in the communication," explains IS&C's

Steve McCloud.

An interesting point posed related to the *emotional interpretation* of electronic mail messages. "The tone or emphasis of a statement can be misconstrued, sometimes leading to misunderstandings," said FARS' Terry Harless. Another employee experienced a similar problem when she replied using e-mail and the receiver misread the message and became offended.

Sarcasm in verbal messages can often be sensed by non-verbal cues, such as tone, facial expressions and body language; however, these cues are not present in electronic mail messages.

Confidentiality is another issue when using electronic mail. The message can be

Electronic Mail
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TALKBACK

Below are comments from our Department employees regarding the use of electronic mail at the workplace:

Important documents or legal papers should be written formally and depending upon the purpose of the communication, some e-mails warrant a hard copy follow up. Good judgment is the key.

Secretary's Office's Trudy Oliver

Electronic mail messages are just that, messages. They are quick and informal.

Purchasing's Beverly Toler

I never e-mail anything complicated. I always call because it is too easy to misinterpret the tone of e-mail.

FARS' Chris Sforza

E-mail is the way of the future. I also believe it is the lazy way to correspond.

Public Defenders' Iris Brisendine

E-mail is not appropriate for criticism or for serious discussions about issues which cause impassioned responses.

Public Defenders' Jack Hickok

The degree of formality in business correspondence is dependent on the situation or relationship. This is the guidance for acceptable communication style.

IS&C's Chuck Walker

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Workshop Offers an Alternative to Learning State Purchasing

At the recent Agency Purchasing Conference, the Purchasing Division continued a tradition started a few years back by creating a workshop in a game show format to teach and entertain.

In 1997, the Purchasing Division created its first game show workshop called *Purchasing Jeopardy*, challenging the contestants with purchasing-related questions. Instead of Alex Trebek, Purchasing Director Dave Tincher took the microphone and served as host. The feedback was so overwhelmingly positive that the division continued this workshop for two more conferences.

The "game show production" team, consisting of Purchasing Division staff members Dan Miller, Curt Curtiss, Diane Holley and Kelli Doyle, decided to move on to bigger and better things and modified the *Family Feud* game show to the *Agency Feud* which they conducted last year. Again, positive responses from the evaluation forms were received.

In keeping up with the Griffins (as in well-known game show producer and entertainer Merv Griffin), the production team tackled a new workshop this year, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*



The only two contestants who reached the "million dollar" mark were from the Department of Administration, Finance Division's Linda Lyter and Diane Connelly.

Conference participants noted that they learned more from this type of workshop format than a lecture or discussion format, and requested that they be continued.

At the recent Agency Purchasing Conference, a workshop titled, "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," offered participants a fun way to learn. The only "million dollar" winners were from the Department of Administration. Pictured with Purchasing Director and Host Dave Tincher are FARS' Linda Lyter and Accounting's Diane Connelly.

IS&C's Open House

Continued from Page 1

"The Open House was a great success. I heard nothing but positive comments," said Data Center Manager Mart Denison. "It was a rare opportunity for visitors to see the inside of a facility that has to be off-limits to most people most of the time."

In the past, large main-frame computer systems filled the center to capacity; however, today the equipment is smaller and more efficient. IS&C is storing more data with its enterprise server that takes up less space but processes much more, holding up to three terabytes (one trillion bytes of information).



Kenna Elementary students learned many facets of the computing world at IS&C's Data Center "Open House".

During the Open House, IS&C was pleased to welcome students from Kenna Elementary who were eager to learn about the data processing system at the State Capitol.

"The Data Center's Open House was educational for the hosts as well as our guests. I hope we left the impression that we are purely here to serve and that we have a heart," Denison added.

Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

is published by the Department of Administration

Cecil H. Underwood
Governor

Jack R. Buckalew
Cabinet Secretary

Diane Holley
Public Information Officer/Editor

Special Thanks
Kaye Parks
Roger Williams
Keith Wood

Accomplishment

The superior man is modest in his speech, but excels in his actions.

Confucius

"Employee of the Year" Nominees Cover All Facets of the Department's Services

On December 13, the Department of Administration will announce its 2000 *Employee of the Year* at a special ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda at 12:00 noon, with a reception following through 2:00 p.m.

The recipient will be chosen from 12 candidates, each of whom was selected as an **Employee of the Month** during 2000. All employees are encouraged to attend the ceremony and offer recognition to these outstanding individuals.

This difficult decision was made by our employees through a balloting process. The nominees for this annual honor are:

Sharon Horn, Division of Personnel; Linda Lyter, Finance Division (Financial Accounting and Reporting Section); Gloria Long, Public Employees Insurance Agency; Teresa Siders, Public Defender Services; Anthony Thaxton, General Services Division; Jim Bone, Information Services and Communications Division; Alice Thibodeaux, Purchasing Division (Surplus Property); Waltt Vest, Finance Division (Accounting); Debbie Watkins, Purchasing Division; Rob Roberts, Information Services and Communications Division; Pat Powers, Consolidated Public Retirement Board (Contributions Section); and Virgil Jones, General Services Division.

All of these individuals deserve the highest degree of recognition for their outstanding dedication in performing their respective jobs within the Department of Administration.



Sharon Horn
Personnel



Linda Lyter
Finance



Gloria Long
PEIA



Teresa Siders
Public Defender



Anthony Thaxton
General Services



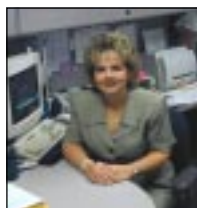
Jim Bone
IS&C



Alice Thibodeaux
Purchasing



Waltt Vest
Finance



Debbie Watkins
Purchasing



Rob Roberts
IS&C



Pat Powers
CPRB



Virgil Jones
General Services

Electronic Mail

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easily forwarded to others without the sender's knowledge. For this reason, says one employee, certain information should be sent by paper or addressed verbally by telephone or face-to-face conversation.

Electronic mail has alleviated the problem of trying to get an answer quickly. By leaving an e-mail message, the receiver can provide an answer at his convenience. CPRB's Bob Nichols noted that we often feel we need to reply immediately, which is not necessarily true. Responding before thinking the issue through may lead to *e-mail tag*, replying back and forth numerous times for clarification.

Several e-mail proponents stated that the environment is spared. "We can get our answers much faster and take care of our customers' needs quicker. It also saves paper," BRIM's Sue McMinn said. PEIA's Tammy Scarberry

agrees, "E-mail messages may be too informal, but they are a time and a tree saver."

The bottom line: Electronic mail is a highly effective tool in business correspondence. E-mail messages are not necessarily good or bad, just easier. Although it is a more informal manner of communicating, proper spelling and grammar should be checked because the message and its sender may be judged on these qualities. As IS&C's Pat Wehrle states, "It is still a form of professional representation and should be treated as such."

Author Virginia Shae notes in her **Rules of Netiquette**, "You won't be judged by the color of your skin, eyes, hair, weight, age or clothing. You will, however, be judged by the quality of your writing." The best solution is to re-read your e-mail for spelling, grammar and content before hitting the "send" button on your computer.

MILESTONES

Honoring our Employees' Service Years

The Department of Administration is pleased to begin including in each issue of **Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes** "milestone" anniversary dates for our tenured employees.

Each month, we will list in five-year increments the employees who are celebrating their years of service with the state of West Virginia. We value our employees and the knowledge and dedication they share with their respective agencies and divisions.

Congratulations to our employees who are celebrating their service year anniversaries during the month of December:

5 YEARS

Charles Strickland
(General Services)

10 YEARS

Ken Huffman
(General Services)

Mike Michaelson
(General Services)

Robert Withrow
(General Services)

15 YEARS

Jerry Gladwell
(BRIM)

20 YEARS

Robert Lewis
(General Services)

Ron Robinson
(General Services)

25 YEARS

Ron Wright
(Grievance Board)

Aviation Day Offers Training for State Pilots and Security Staff

For four consecutive years, the Aviation Division has conducted an Aviation Safety Day and Open House at the State Hangar in November to train flight personnel and the Governor's security staff on various safety issues.

According to Aviation Director Keith Wood, the feedback from this training has been overwhelmingly positive. "Aviation Safety Day consists of devoting one day each year from our pilots' hectic flight schedule to discuss and perform various forms of safety training."

This year's agenda includes in-house pilot training and a hands-on class for the Governor's Security personnel on in-flight emergency procedures and possible duties and responsibilities pertaining to in-flight scenarios. The training consists of discussing various scenarios and determining positive solutions. Wood indicated that the purpose of this training is to prepare the security staff for possible emergency situations.

This year was the first time the division offered training on the use of the defibrillator,



The state's King Air plane is used to transport government officials to their destinations.

which assists in certain medical emergencies. Wood indicated that most airlines are not currently offering this type of training.

The Aviation Division is pleased to have a 100 percent safety record and finds that this annual training event assists in maintaining this perfect record.

Our Benefits... What's in it for YOU?

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

Updating Your Beneficiary Form

The beneficiary form in your retirement file at the Consolidated Public Retirement Board will determine who receives survivor benefits if you die before retirement. When there are changes in your family situation, review and update your beneficiary designation promptly.

You may name a new beneficiary at any time before your retirement. You should review your beneficiary designation in the event of a change in your marital status, the arrival of a new family member, a death in the family, or other changes in your family status.

To update this information, contact your payroll officer or call CPRB at 558-3570.



**Happy Holidays
from the
Department of
Administration**

The Importance of Customer Service

Although the words *customer service* are often used in the private and public sectors, we find examples each day of where businesses and government offices are lacking.



The Department of Administration is a service-oriented agency. Despite which direction you turn, the divisions and agency under our jurisdiction offer a type of service: insurance, retirement, procurement, grounds and facilities maintenance, computer consulting, personnel, legal services and...the list continues.

It is very important for all of us to maintain a mindset of the importance of how we portray ourselves and our agencies. A *moment of truth* can be based on one telephone call. The next telephone call you handle may be the only time that the individual may deal with your office. What impression will that person have of your agency?...of you?

Although we may carry many titles in our lives, both personal and professional, when you are at work, you are a *public servant* of each citizen in West Virginia. They are relying on us to answer questions and assist them in a variety of ways.

It is our responsibility to maintain their trust and provide the service our customers have come to expect from the Department of Administration.

Continue to keep up the wonderful work that each and every one of you do for our West Virginia citizens!

Welcome to the Department! ... Pam Clark (Public Defenders); **Bill Rainey** (PEIA); **Barry Williams, Darrell Stephenson** (General Services), and **Thomas Allen** (IS&C).

Best Wishes...to Wayne Jones (IS&C) who recently retired and to **Donna Madden** (Grievance Board) and **Matt Brown** (IS&C) who recently resigned from the Department of Administration.

Great Job!...to Aaron Riley (IS&C) who was promoted from an Information Systems Consultant I to a Programmer.

West Virginia State Employees' Blood Drive...The West Virginia State Employees' Blood Program is sponsoring a West Virginia Chapter of the American Red Cross Bloodmobile Drive for Tuesday, December 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Building 7 Conference Center. There is a critical blood shortage in the Kanawha Valley and donors are encouraged to participate. For more details, contact Larry Griffith, Coordinator, at (304) 558-2864.

Congratulations!...The Budget Section of the Finance Division has received a **Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation** from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the Fiscal Year 2000 Executive Budget Document. This is the fourth consecutive year the Budget Office has received this award!

PEOPLE TALK

A Big Thank You!... CPRB's Susan Estep was off work for four months due to a serious illness and surgery, which was a success. She would like to thank everyone in the Department who contributed annual leave time to assist her during her absence and offers a special note of gratitude to her friends and co-workers at CPRB.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY...in December

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Tim Lee General Services | 17 Cecil Hill CPRB |
| 2 Betty Ireland CPRB | Sandra Joyce Purchasing |
| 3 Ron Price Purchasing | Andrew Maier .. Grievance Board |
| 5 Felice Joseph PEIA | Charles McDowell .. Purchasing |
| Jan Long PEIA | Kara Tully IS&C |
| 8 Wilma Garbett IS&C | 18 Johnny Fernatt BRIM |
| Iona Keller Grievance Board | Dan Miller Purchasing |
| Louise Miller Finance | 21 Sylvia Thomas . Gen. Services |
| 9 Cathy Fowlkes Finance | 22 David Lester IS&C |
| Mary Jo Swartz Grievance Board | 23 Sue Smith Purchasing |
| Keith Wood Aviation Services | 24 Billy Miller IS&C |
| 10 Julie Blosser .. Grievance Board | Paul Stone . Public Defender |
| Kim Covert PEIA | 26 Deepesh Randeri IS&C |
| Charles Forsythe Personnel | 27 Jeff Long Personnel |
| Erik Hawkins IS&C | 28 Rick Alker Ethics |
| 12 Darrell Utt General Services | Linda Lyter Finance |
| 14 Joseph Estep PEIA | Chip Myers PEIA |
| Max Farley Personnel | 29 Charles Black . Gen. Services |
| Darlene Held IS&C | 30 Teresa Bowles Personnel |
| 15 Cindy Burr ... Pros. Atty. Institute | 31 Stephanie Isner BRIM |
| Shan Ferrell Finance | Chuck Jones BRIM |
| 16 Sandra Singleton CPRB | |

