Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

Monthly Employee Newsletter Published by the Department of Administration

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WVOT Hosts Digital Government Summit





Frankie Russo
8X Inc. 500 Founder, 2X best-selling author, Top Growth Keynote Speaker

The West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) welcomed federal, state, and local government employees to its West Virginia Digital Government Summit last month at the Charleston Convention Center.

This year's summit was focused on fostering discussion and dialogue on the use of information technology, cybersecurity, AI, and data governance.

"We were excited to welcome everyone back for the 2026 West Virginia Digital Government Summit," said Chief Information Officer Heather Abbott. "Each year, this event brings together technology leaders and public sector professionals from across our state to exchange ideas, strengthen partnerships, and explore innovative approaches to delivering better government services."

This year's event featured leadership discussions, topical breakout sessions, and networking opportunities. Some of the topics addressed included:

- Governing AI: Guardrails, Standards and Responsible Use
- The Threat Is Evolving: Securing Government in the AI Era
- Know Your Data: Privacy, Protection and AI Readiness
- Building Cyber Resilience with Limited Resources
- Navigating WVOT Services

"As technology continues to evolve, collaboration remains essential to building a more efficient, secure, and citizen-focused government for West Virginia," Abbott said.

WVOT Issues Two Policies Regarding Use of Artificial Intelligence

The West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) has issued two policies governing the safe, secure, and ethical use of artificial intelligence.

The policies include:

- **WVOT-PO1034 - Artificial Intelligence Code of Ethics**
- **WVOT-PO1035 - Generative Artificial Intelligence Acceptable Use**

These policies establish requirements for the responsible use of artificial intelligence in accordance with W. Va. Code § 5A-6-9.

Recommended AI security and acceptable-use training modules are available to all staff through the state's KnowBe4 and LMS learning platforms. For technical assistance or questions regarding approved software access, contact the WVOT Service Desk at ***servicedesk@wv.gov*** or 304-558-9966.

SNEAK PEEK

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2026 Public Hearings

The PEIA Finance Board wants your input!
Proposals for Plan Year 2028 (benefits from 7/1/27-6/30/28 and 1/1/28-12/31/28 for Medicare members) are being finalized now. You'll find the proposed changes at ***peia.wv.gov***.

NOV 9
MORGANTOWN
Hampton Inn & Suites, University Town Centre
325 Granville Square, Morgantown, WV 26501

NOV 10
BECKLEY
Beckley-Raleigh Convention Center
200 Armory Drive, Beckley, WV 25801

NOV 12
VIRTUAL MEETING
LINK: meet.google.com/ekx-vfac-pfy
PHONE: 1-941-800-3158 PIN: 432 061 428#

NOV 16
SHEPHERDSTOWN
Shepherd University Student Center Storer Ballroom
210 North King Street, Shepherdstown, WV 25443

NOV 17
CHARLESTON*
WV Capitol Complex - Building 3
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25305

NOV 19
WHEELING**
River City Restaurant, First Floor
1400 Main Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Everyone attending the meeting must sign in and indicate if they wish to speak. The proposals will be presented and audience comments will be recognized by the board.

*Parking for the Charleston event is located in the parking lot on Piedmont Street.
**Parking for the Wheeling event is permitted in the bank parking lot across the street, as well as on-street availability.

DOP Accepting Applications for 2027 Cohort Program

The Division of Personnel's Organization and Human Resource Development (OHRD) section is now accepting applications for the 2027 Cohort Program.

The cohort program is an accelerated one-year training program for supervisors and managers who need to complete the classes required under DOP Policy-18. Participants will move through the program together as a cohort over one calendar year, promoting collaboration, continuity, and shared learning.

The program allows participants to complete all required DOP Policy-18 classes in a simple, year-long program. Classes are designed to provide the essential tools and knowledge needed to successfully navigate the responsibilities of supervising in state government, as well as offer opportunities to network with supervisors and managers in other state agencies. Participants will also have access to individualized coaching and support from OHRD training and development staff.

Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the cohort webpage at ***https://personnel.wv.gov/ohrd-cohort-program*** to learn more about the program, review the cohort schedule, and find the program application. The application deadline is Dec. 1, 2026.

New Cybersecurity Training Course Now Available

Training is a critical step in safeguarding citizen and state data, and state employees are the first line of defense against cyber threats. The West Virginia Office of Technology and State Privacy Office have released a new training session on the KnowBe4 platform to help employees recognize phishing attacks. Employees must complete "Phishing Foundations" by Nov. 15, 2026.



If you have any questions or need assistance logging into KnowBe4, please contact the WVOT Service Desk by calling 304-558-9966, or emailing ***servicedesk@wv.gov***.

Honoring Department of Administration Veterans


David Dyer


Kerri Gaston


Jerry McKee

The Department of Administration is pleased to recognize many of the veterans who served our country and now serve the citizens of West Virginia through our department. Thank you all for your sacrifices and for your service.

Philip Beckett, *WVOT*
U.S. Army, 1988-1992
Desert Storm Veteran

David Dyer, *BRIM*
U.S. Army, 10 years

Kerri Gaston, *Real Estate*
U.S. Army, 1997-2008

Jeremiah Jones, *CPRB*
U.S. Air Force, 2010-present

Jerry McKee, *WVOT*
U.S. Navy, 1997-2007

Robert Richmond, *WVOT*
U.S. Air Force, 1985-1989

Robert Sheff, *CPRB*
U.S. Navy, 1979-1988

Josh Tinnel, *WVOT*
U.S. Marines, 1996-2000

Steve Wolfe, *CPRB*
U.S. Air Force, 1982-1992
Desert StormVeteran

Shannon Workman, *WVOT*
U.S. Air Force, 1998-2002

Trick-or-Treaters Visit the Purchasing Division and Capitol















A parade of superheroes, cartoon favorites, and little critters! Trick-or-treaters from the West Virginia Early Learning Academy brought plenty of Halloween cheer (and empty candy buckets) as they stopped by the Finance and Purchasing Divisions on their way to the Capitol.

Pumpkin Decorating Contest

Thank you to all Department of Administration employees who participated in this year's Pumpkin Decorating Contest. There were five entries, and the creativity was off the charts! Senior management staff in the Cabinet Secretary's Office judged each unique entry and made the difficult decision to name the following winners:



Overall Winner
Fleet Management



Administration Spirit Award
General Services



Most Creative
Ethics

Additional entries



Grievance



Personnel

West Virginia State Privacy Office Monthly Tip

Cybersecurity Awareness

Cybersecurity isn't just an IT department problem; it's a personal responsibility. Most successful hacks aren't "high-tech" movie scenes; they are simple "social engineering" tricks where someone is tricked into clicking a link or giving up a password. This month is about mastering the big three: software updates, password management, and skepticism.



**Note: Your agency/bureau/department/ division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.*

Your Action:

- Update all your personal devices tonight.
- Software updates are usually "security patches" for holes that hackers are already using.
- Then, commit to using a Password Manager so you can have a different, 20-character password for every site without having to memorize them.



Mountain Moves: New History and Tourism Game for West Virginia Students

A new educational board game designed to engage eighth-grade students in West Virginia history, tourism, and career opportunities, is on its way to schools across the state.

Gov. Patrick Morrisey and Tourism Secretary Kayla Kessinger unveiled 'Mountain Moves' at Oak Hill Middle School last month.

"West Virginia has an incredible story to tell, and our students are the next chapter of that story," said Gov. Morrisey. "'Mountain Moves' gives students a fun, interactive way to learn about the history, communities, and attractions that make our state special while also introducing them to the many career opportunities available right here in West Virginia."

In the coming months, the game will be shipped out to West Virginia history teachers across the state. Inspired by the classic Game of Life, 'Mountain Moves' is a two-to six-player game that combines trivia, strategy and career exploration. Players are assigned careers connected to the tourism industry and advance through the game by answering questions about West Virginia history and tourism.

"Tourism is about more than visiting beautiful places, it is about the people, businesses, and communities that make those experiences possible," Secretary Kessinger said. "'Mountain Moves' gives students an opportunity to learn about West Virginia while seeing themselves as part of the future of our tourism industry."

Gov. Morrisey encourages students to use 'Mountain Moves' as an opportunity to learn more about their home state and consider the many ways they can contribute to West Virginia's future.

WVOT Launches New AI Pilot Program

The Office of Technology is offering all executive branch employees the opportunity to participate in a pilot program with Justinian, an AI platform by Vulcan Technologies built for government legal, legislative, and policy research.

Justinian is free to test, and Vulcan consultants will be available for training and testing. Justinian is secure and uses state SSO credentials for secure browser access without software installation. You can activate your free account using your Google or Microsoft credentials at ***wv.Vulcan.app***.

Vulcan Technologies will contact agencies directly to confirm interest, identify use cases, and lead working sessions to set up workflows and access. To join the pilot or schedule an in-person onboarding session directly with his team, please reach out to Matthew Townsley at ***Matt@vulcan.ai*** or 970-379-4062.

Please note: Sensitive data and PII are prohibited during the pilot without prior authorization from AI Director Chris Price.

For questions, contact IT Project Manager Joann Sturgeon at ***joann.sturgeon@wv.gov*** or AI Director Chris Price at ***christopher.s.price@wv.gov*** or ***wvotai@wv.gov***.

DOP's Richardson Recognized for Exceptional Service

A Division of Personnel (DOP) employee has been recognized for going above and beyond to help a county agency.

Tracy Richardson was honored by the Berkeley County Deputy Sheriff Civil Service Commission during its meeting on Sept. 16, 2026.

The DOP provides deputy sheriff testing for 54 counties, with the option of a book or online test. When the Berkeley County organization needed assistance with testing a deputy sheriff who was deployed overseas, Richardson coordinated an online test and gave commissioners the opportunity to experience the online testing process firsthand.

In a letter to the DOP, John Alderton of the Civil Service Commission wrote, "In the course of conducting the business of a Civil Service Commission, we routinely rely upon the knowledge, guidance, and cooperation of individuals from other agencies. The quality of those professional relationships can have a significant impact upon our ability to effectively carry out our responsibilities.

"Our experiences with Ms. Richardson have consistently demonstrated someone who approaches her responsibilities with genuine courtesy, patience, initiative, and a willingness to help. She has a remarkable ability to make those seeking assistance feel that their questions and concerns matter. Equally important, she follows through. Those qualities foster confidence and strengthen the working relationship between our Commission and the West Virginia Division of Personnel.

"Too often, exceptional service is simply accepted as part of someone's job and passes without acknowledgment. Our Commission did not want that to be the case with Ms. Richardson. Employees who consistently extend themselves beyond what is simply required deserve to know that their efforts are seen, valued, and appreciated.

"I am incredibly honored by this recognition and truly appreciate the acknowledgement of my work," Richardson said.

The Department of Administration congratulates Tracy and is glad to have her on the team!

OCTOBER QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Below are some of the answers we've received for the fall edition of **"Would You Rather?"** ***Click here*** to see a complete list of responses.

Call the season Autumn or Fall?



Drink hot apple cider or hot chocolate?



Eat pumpkin pie or drink Pumpkin Spice Latte?



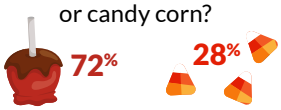
Go on a hayride or visit a pumpkin patch?



Bob for apples or carve a pumpkin?



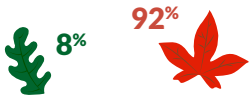
Eat caramel apples or candy corn?



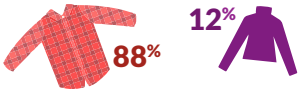
Go trick-or-treating (with or without kids) or go to a Halloween party?



Leaves stay green or leaves change color?



Wear flannel or a turtleneck?



ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

WELCOME! ... The Department of Administration is pleased to welcome **Courtney Koch, Alexis Rainwater, Jacob Shanklin,** and **Brooklyn Watts** (CPRB); **Bobbie Myers** (Finance); **Danielle Brown,** and **Amanda Tankersley** (General Services); **Annette Brown** (PEIA); **Michelle Crouch** (Purchasing); and **Jacob Dusic** and **Michelle Osborne** (Technology).

HAPPY RETIREMENT! ... After years of hard work and dedication, we would like to wish **Diane Corker** (Finance); **Jason Haught** and **Kathy Lester** (PEIA); and **Toney Broyles** and **Robin Roberts** (Technology) the very best during their retirement.

BEST WISHES ... to **Cody Young** (CPRB); **Gary Collias** (Public Defender Services); and **Meghan Shears** (Technology), who recently resigned from our department.

EMPLOYEE QUESTION OF THE MONTH ... This month, we have two questions: What is the funniest or most memorable thing that's ever happened at your Thanksgiving dinner, and What is your Thanksgiving personality: the chef, the taste tester, the dishwasher, the football watcher, or the napper? Answer ***here***.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY in NOVEMBER

Below is a list of Department of Administration employees celebrating their birthdays during the month of November:

AVIATION
Tierra Gable
Sarah Tignor

CPRB
Elizabeth Crowder
Laura Harvey
Salena Legg

FINANCE
Alexandra McDonald
Corey Wade

GEN.SRVS.
Evelyn Arnold
Cara Castle
Michael Clendenin
Elizabeth Elswick
Charles Hager
Eric Mackey
Lorne Morris
John Nichols
Cody Taylor
Michael Urban
Chad Velez

PUB.DEF.SRVS.
Adara Farris
Maxwell Koza
Olivia Lee
Emily Ogden

PEIA
Frances Anderson
Susan Beaty
Billie Landers
Mandi White

PERSONNEL
Lela Alderman
Candace Hodges
Layna Valentine-Brown

PURCHASING
Mark Atkins
Josh Hager
Shane Hall
Samantha Willis
David Botkins
Mark Fox
Matthew Harper
William Pierce
Franklin Sisson

REAL ESTATE
Anthony Signorelli

TECHNOLOGY
Laura Belcher
Crystal Cook
John Ferrell
Megan Gallagher
Angela Graham
David Lalone
Raymond Mullin
Gilbert Richard
Jeremy Tyler
William Ward
Jeffery Whitman
Sarah Wright
Terry Young

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