



# Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

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

### Nichols Gives Extra Care to Maintaining Mansion Grounds



**John Nichols**  
August Employee  
of the Month

John Nichols, groundskeeper for the General Services Division (GSD), has been selected as the Department of Administration's *Employee of the Month* for August.

A state employee for five years, Nichols maintains the grounds and gardens surrounding the Governor's Mansion, including weedeating, mowing, leaf blowing, and watering. His work also includes planting spring and fall flowers around the mansion; planting and pruning shrubs and trees; mulching; blowing and picking up debris; and pressure washing sidewalks, porches, steps, etc.

"John does an excellent job maintaining the grounds at the Governor's Mansion," said the co-worker who nominated him. "He takes pride in his work and is dedicated, while often working under the coldest conditions. The grounds surrounding

the mansion always look well kept.

"We think John is all-around terrific. He greets all of our Governor's Mansion staff every day with a friendly hello, and often asks about our respective families," the co-worker continued. "Many times, John has jumped in at the last minute and taken extra special care to ensure that the mansion porches and porticos are nice and clean for an unexpected event or when dignitaries are visiting the Governor's Mansion."

When he's not working, Nichols enjoys wood-working, swimming, and spending quality time with his wife and two daughters.

Nichols will be joined by friends and co-workers at a special ceremony presented by Cabinet Secretary Mark D. Scott on Friday, Aug. 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Governor's Mansion.

## DOP Helps in Creation of K9 Search Unit

The Division of Personnel (DOP) recently assisted the Division of Natural Resources (DNR) in its creation of a search and rescue K9 unit within DNR's Law Enforcement Section, along with a stipend for the officers.

The Classification and Compensation section within the DOP worked with the DNR to determine the needs of the agency and to assist them with a proposal to provide a stipend for the officers who are K9 handlers.

"We enjoy partnering with agencies to support them in

Please see DNR DOGS, page 5



*Photos courtesy  
of DNR*

## SNEAK PEEK

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# Fingernails More Than Fashion for WVOT's Danielle Cox

When Danielle Cox goes on an upcoming vacation, she won't have to worry about carrying a wallet or trying to keep up with a hotel key card while at the pool or beach. That's because any payment method or access card she will need will be at her fingertips, literally.

Cox, chief information security officer for the West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT), has been experimenting with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips embedded in her acrylic nails. With commercially available software and a scanner, information from any kind of swipe technology can be duplicated on the chip, including credit or debit cards, hotel key cards, or any access cards.

She got the idea when she was trying to come up with fun projects for WVOT's summer interns. She wanted the students to be able to test different scenarios with RFID chips, without breaking anything important. That's when she found the RFID tag stickers.

Cox had friends who had gotten RFID chips inserted into their actual hands at a security conference she attended.

"That seemed fun, but way too permanent for me," Cox said.

Since the RFID tag stickers are thin strips, Cox decided to give them a try



**Danielle Cox, chief information security officer for the West Virginia Office of Technology, is combining fashion and technology by embedding RFID chips in her acrylic nails.**

on her fingernails. She likes that it's not permanent and the strips are waterproof. The tag/chip is implanted into the acrylic that lays over her nails. She worked with her nail technician to test the chip's functionality at each step in the acrylic nail process.

She doesn't wear the chips all the time, and when she does just depends on what she's doing. One or two chips are more than sufficient for simple access to hotels or work, gas payments,

etc.

"I'm very excited to duplicate my hotel card onto a nail during my next vacation. I won't have to keep track of a card or phone while swimming at the pool," she said.

As for security, Cox said control over access is with the system owner, not the access card owner. When the nails are removed or replaced, the chip is completely destroyed in the filing process.

## United Way Honors Department of Administration



Margaret O'Neal, president and CPO of the United Way of Central West Virginia, recently presented the Department of Administration with an award for its fundraising efforts during its May shoe drive. Deputy Cabinet Secretary and General Services Division Director John McHugh accepted the award on behalf of the Department.

## Employee Handbook Updated for Dept. of Administration

The Department of Administration is pleased to announce that a new version of the *Department of Administration Employee Handbook* is now available to employees. The Handbook offers a brief review of the laws, rules, policies, and benefits applicable to Department employees.

The handbook addresses employee information, such as dress code, health and safety, computer use, and confidentiality. There is also a section that covers employment issues, including probationary periods, performance appraisals, and promotions. Division employees can also find information on insurance, training opportunities, leave time, and much more.

The *Department of Administration Employee Handbook* is available online at <https://administration.wv.gov/departments-of-administration-employee-information/Documents/DOA%20Employee%20Handbook.pdf>.

Quotes, Notes and Anecdotes



# Gov. Justice Appoints New Directors to PEIA and WVOT

The Department of Administration is pleased to welcome two new appointed officials. Heather Abbott is now the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) while Brian Cunningham will serve as director of the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA).

Abbott was appointed to lead WVOT following former CIO Josh Spence's move to a position in the private sector.

Abbott is a graduate of the West Virginia Institute of Technology and holds a Bachelor of Management Information Systems and a Bachelor of Business Management.

Bringing 27 years of public service experience to this role, she started her IT career with the West Virginia Department of Transportation. She has held multiple IT management positions over the years with the Department of Health and Human Resources and the WVOT. For the past five years, she has served as Chief Operations Officer for the WVOT.

"I am deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity Governor Justice has given me to serve in the role of CIO," Abbott said. "I look forward to working toward meeting the IT goals of this great state, to drive innovation, enhance technology capabilities, and deliver secure impactful solutions for the betterment of our departments and our community."

Cunningham grew up in Ivydale, W. Va., and graduated from Clay County High School. Upon earning his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University, he moved to Charleston and embarked on a seven-year journey working with community health centers while at the same time direct-



**Heather Abbott**



**Brian Cunningham**

ing several health-related, nonprofit entities.

After earning an MBA from the University of Charleston, he joined one of the nation's largest health and wellness companies, where he held various leadership positions. Most recently, he served as a consultant to the WV Medicaid Managed Care program and as the director of WV PATH.

"I am honored to serve the citizens of West Virginia in this new role with PEIA," he said. "I'm grateful to Governor Justice, Secretary Scott, and their teams for the opportunity and ongoing support."

Brian is married to Amanda, his wife of 18 years, and has a son, Ethan, who attends George Washington High School.

## Benefits Paperwork Made Simpler by Finance Division for Both New and Current Employees

To streamline the onboarding process within the West Virginia Department of Administration, the Finance Division has compiled a list of new employee paperwork on its website at <https://finance.wv.gov/SharedServices/Payroll>. While these documents are reviewed and signed by employees as part of the new hire process, some of these documents can also be used to make changes to an employee's benefits on an as needed basis, including but not limited to optional life insurance, retirement contributions and/or beneficiaries, and more.

As part of this project, a new email address, [doahrcoordinator@wv.gov](mailto:doahrcoordinator@wv.gov), has also been created to assist employees with their ongoing benefits needs. If your agency does not have a designated HR coordinator or you cannot reach them, the above address can be used, or you can call 304-558-6181 and ask for the Payroll Section.

When making changes to your benefits, please keep the following considerations in mind:

- Employees are encouraged to complete all Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) forms online. These include:
  - PEIA Health Benefits Enrollment Form
  - PEIA Basic Life Insurance Enrollment Form
  - PEIA Optional Life Insurance Enrollment Form

- If adding a spouse to your benefits, a copy of the marriage certificate must be attached to the online transaction or submitted with the paper document.
- If adding dependents to your benefits, a copy of each dependent's birth certificate must be provided.
- On the State tax form (WV IT-104), only line 1 (Single) OR line 2 (Married) should be completed, not both.
- For the I-9 supporting documentation, all documents, including the social security card, must be unexpired and signed by the employee to be valid.

The "Manage My Benefits" link on [peia.wv.gov](https://peia.wv.gov) should be used for all enrollments. New hires can create an account and set up their benefits online without completing any paper. Just as current employees can do, they can also upload documents such as birth certificates and marriage licenses to verify their dependents. Benefit coordinators approve their selections and upload required documents, if they haven't been uploaded by the employee.

For answers to frequently asked questions about the Manage My Benefits process, visit [https://peia.wv.gov/benefit\\_coordinators/Documents/New%20Enrollment%20Instructions.pdf](https://peia.wv.gov/benefit_coordinators/Documents/New%20Enrollment%20Instructions.pdf).

# Administration's *Employee Question of the Month*

Thank you to everyone who continues to participate in our department's *Question of the Month*. Last month, we asked Department of Administration employees what they like to bring to a summer cookout.

Here are some of the answers:

- Watermelon
- Banana pudding
- Accoutrements
- VEGGIES!! All of the garden fresh veggies!!
- Chips
- Corn Dorito salad
- Pasta salad
- Smores-chocolate, marshmallows & graham crackers
- Dessert-usually blondies
- Baked beans
- Deviled eggs and dessert
- My husband makes a really great 7-layer salad
- Something I don't have to cook!
- Brownies, veggies, fruit, waters, buns,

napkins, or anything else I don't have to cook or prepare the morning of.

- A healthy appetite
- Sweet potato fries
- Pasta salad full of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers.
- The grill, the charcoal, and corn on the cob!
- Creamsicle cupcakes
- Hash brown casserole
- Macaroni salad
- Broccoli and cauliflower salad. It has red wine vinegar, chunk cheese, bacon, and honey Greek yogurt.
- Homemade pizza
- A BIG bag of Lays potato chips (I don't cook)
- Buffalo chicken dip!
- Deviled eggs from my pet chickens
- Cold fruit, refreshing on a hot day
- Beer
- Cowboy Caviar
- Doubled eggs (like deviled, but better)

- The jokes and fun, likely attributed to the baked beans that I brought
- Fruit pizza or watermelon basket
- Sunscreen
- ICE and flatware
- Ribs
- Antipasto skewers
- Ice cold Coca Cola
- Mac and cheese
- Steak
- Tater salad
- Hot dogs
- Deviled eggs or potato salad
- Green beans
- The meat for grilling
- Baked beans with sausage
- Hot sauce
- Myself

For our August *Question of the Month*, we want to know... "What is your favorite emoji?" Submit your answer by visiting <https://forms.gle/hH4fdNYhWtWmX-mjX7> by the end of the day on Aug. 14, 2023.

## WVOT Employees Recognized for Mainframe Project

Gov. Jim Justice recently recognized several state employees for their work on a safer, more resilient mainframe computer system to prevent outages and disruptions to services. A ceremony was held on July 19, 2023 where several West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) employees were recognized.

Pictured from left to right are: Tom Allen (WVOT), Raymond Mullin (WVOT), Michael Nichols (WorkForce WV), and former WVOT Chief Information Officer Josh Spence.

Not pictured but also recognized with certificates were Larry Sutters, Matthew Malone, and Joshua Forinash.





## Audra State Park Perfect Summer Getaway Location

A picturesque park, Audra State Park offers a variety of activities, making it a perfect summer spot. Located in Buckhannon, the park is spread across Barbour and Upshur Counties.

Divided by the Middle Fork River, Audra State Park becomes a popular swimming spot in the summer. While there is a main swimming hole at the river, locals say the best spot for a swim is just below the rapid, underneath the bridge. Plenty of flat rocks also offer a relaxing spot to sunbathe after a swim.

Audra State Park offers more water activities than just swimming. Whitewater enthusiasts are drawn to the waters of the Middle Fork River and are invited to experience at their own risk. For those wanting less adventure, the river is a popular fishing spot, while nearby Teter Creek Lake gives anglers a chance at trout, bass, and bluegill.

Have a large group? Audra State Park offers a covered picnic shelter that can accommodate up to 50 people. With ample parking, the shelter features water, electricity, and grills.

While fall is several months away, Audra State Park is also a popular destination for leaf-peeping season. The Alum Cave Trail and Rock Cliff Trail are perfect for hikers or mountain bikers.

To learn more, visit <https://wvstateparks.com>.

## STATE PARK HIGHLIGHT

### AUDRA STATE PARK

8397 Audra Park Road • Buckhannon, WV 26201

304-457-1162 • [AudraSP@wv.gov](mailto:AudraSP@wv.gov)

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

- Camping

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Biking
- Boating
- Fishing
- Geocaching
- Hiking
- Swimming

#### NEARBY:

- Town of Buckhannon
- West Virginia State Wildlife Center
- Philippi Covered Bridge
- Tygart Lake State Park
- Valley Falls State Park
- Civil War sites
- Fidler's Mill
- West Virginia Wesleyan Planetarium
- Holly River State Park

## DNR DOGS

Continued from Page 1

creating new programs or achieving agency goals,” said Sheryl Webb, director of the Division of Personnel. “It was a pleasure for the DOP’s Classification and Compensation section to work with DNR as they began the process to create the K9 unit.”

“Our dogs are already proving to be a great asset to our field staff during investigations and public relations,” said Col. Bobby Cales, DNR’s chief of law enforcement. “I, as well as the rest of the Natural Resources Police section, sincerely appreciate Director Webb and her staff at DOP for their hard work and assistance in the implementation of a K9 handler stipend.”

**The Division of Personnel assisted the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with acquiring dogs to help create a K9 unit within DNR’s Law Enforcement section.**



## OEO Conference Registration Underway

The West Virginia Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) is pleased to announce that registration for its annual conference is now open.

Scheduled for Sept. 21, 2023, the conference will be held at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W. Va. The conference will begin that day at 9 a.m. and feature sessions on:

- Digital identity
- Service animals in the workplace
- Leave as an accommodation
- Evaluate, energize, educate, elevate, empower
- Questions and answers discussion

While this conference is designed for human resources and equal employment opportunity coordinators, anyone is welcome to register. To register for the conference, please contact OEO's Brittany Rutrough at 304-558-0400 or [Brittany.N.Rutrough@wv.gov](mailto:Brittany.N.Rutrough@wv.gov).

**Are you  
following the  
Department of  
Administration  
on our social  
media?**

**LinkedIn**

**Twitter**



**Welcome!** ... The Department of Administration is pleased to welcome **Mary Escarda** (BRIM); **Cara Castle**, **Edwin Miller**, **Erick Mackey**, and **Willie Nelson** (General Services); **Jessica Halstead** (Personnel); **Samantha Chaney** (Purchasing); and **Grant Dickson**, **Jessica Fish**, **Kaleb Fletcher**, **Robert Pack**, and **Corey Leist** (Technology).

**Best Wishes** ... to **Kenneth Jackson** (Real Estate) who recently resigned from our department.

**Happy Retirement!** ... After years of hard work and dedication, we would like to wish **Sarah Smith** (Finance); **Kimberly Miller** (General Services); **Karen Hall** (PEIA); and **Louis Blair** (Technology) the very best during their retirements.

**Got News?** ... Share YOUR good news with all of your department co-workers! Email [Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov](mailto:Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov) with detailed information so we may include it in the next issue of the newsletter.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY ... in AUGUST

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

Christopher Bostick.....Aviation	Rosa McFarland.....Pub.Def.Srvs.
Shelley Brightwell.....BRIM	Samantha Chaney.....Purchasing
Robert Fisher.....BRIM	Timothy Miller.....Purchasing
Jennifer Boggess.....CPRB	Cody Rose.....Purchasing
Jonathan Booher.....CPRB	Mike Sheets.....Purchasing
Patricia Bowgren.....CPRB	Melissa Skiles.....Purchasing
Michael Ciarochi.....CPRB	Beverly Toler.....Purchasing
Elizabeth Cooper.....CPRB	Kateland Cantrell....Sec. of Admin
Amber Fox.....CPRB	James Caraballo.....Technology
Ashley Gunnoe.....CPRB	Jessica Fish.....Technology
Brianna Means.....CPRB	Brandon Fox.....Technology
Shane Parsons.....CPRB	Greg Ganoe.....Technology
Brittany Smith.....CPRB	Jennifer Harless.....Technology
Debra Young.....CPRB	James Hicks.....Technology
David Scruggs.....Finance	Brandon Hill.....Technology
Jessica Wiseman.....Finance	Joshua Johnston.....Technology
Renee Brooks.....Gen.Srvs.	Kelly Klein.....Technology
Robert Clark.....Gen.Srvs.	Gregory Matfox.....Technology
William Graham.....Gen.Srvs.	Jamison Mitchell.....Technology
Keith Hawkins.....Gen.Srvs.	Sherri Moore.....Technology
Jonathan Hughes.....Gen.Srvs.	Edward Nelson.....Technology
James Jones.....Gen.Srvs.	Mitchell Olive.....Technology
Charles Long.....Gen.Srvs.	Rebecca Owens.....Technology
Claude Lynch.....Gen.Srvs.	Donald Patterson.....Technology
Zachary Paxton.....Gen.Srvs.	Charles Persinger.....Technology
Robert Stafford.....Gen.Srvs.	Krista Peyton.....Technology
Billy Stephens.....Gen.Srvs.	Dekota Phillips.....Technology
Kathleen Craddock.....Grievance	Melissa Ramsey.....Technology
Ryan Lawler.....Grievance	Bryant Reynolds.....Technology
Marcia Booker.....PEIA	David Roberts.....Technology
Cynthia Dotson.....PEIA	Cynthia Smith.....Technology
Kayla Smith.....PEIA	Michael Smith.....Technology
Trina Sweeney.....PEIA	Sean Smyth.....Technology
Varsha Vaghela.....PEIA	Sabrina Snead.....Technology
Tracy Dennis.....Personnel	Matthew Winfree.....Technology
Aju James.....Personnel	Bradlee Wolfe.....Technology
Mary Perdue.....Personnel	

# Administrative Notes

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& Anecdotes**  
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