



Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

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Gov. Patrick Morrisey Highlights Past Success and Future Plans in State of the State Speech



West Virginia Legislature | Perry Bennett

Gov. Patrick Morrisey gives his second State of the State address at the Capitol in Charleston, W.Va., on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026.

Gov. Patrick Morrisey gave his second State of the State address on Wednesday, Jan. 14, during which he highlighted the state's success during his first year in office and offered proposals to build a better West Virginia for the next generation.

"Last year I stood before you and I talked about some hard truths, some budget pressures, obstacles to economic development, some poor health care and educational rankings," Gov. Morrisey said. "Tonight, I can report that we are making real progress. The Mountain State comeback is underway."

Gov. Morrisey highlighted \$4.5 billion in new private sector investments

during the last month, which will result in 4,200 jobs. He also mentioned the passing of a comprehensive microgrids law, which he said is attracting deep interest from companies across the country.

"That law will become one of the single biggest economic development drivers in our history," he said. "Companies are calling. They want in. When all is said and done, the types of investments under our law could total tens of billions of dollars."

Gov. Morrisey also highlighted the development of business-ready sites and infrastructure improvement that

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How to Track Bills During Legislative Session

The legislative session is in full swing and representatives in both chambers are busy pushing bills through various committees. Many agencies and state employees are watching to see if bills are passed that could potentially affect their processes and daily tasks, as well as those dealing with insurance, retirement, other aspects of employment, and even their personal lives.

Individuals can easily track bills that are of interest to them by visiting the Legislature's website at www.wvlegislature.gov and clicking on the Bill Status tab at the top of the page. A dropdown menu will give two options: Bill Status or Bill Tracking.

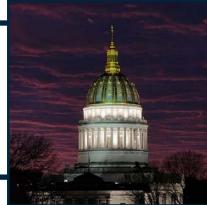
Choosing Bill Status allows users to view all bills introduced in each chamber or to search for them by number, subject, short title, sponsor, or date introduced. Bill Tracking requires the user to set up an account with a username and password. Then, by clicking on the Add Bills/Lists tab, the user can create multiple lists with unique names and add bills accordingly.

To check the progress of bills on each list, the user simply needs to click on the My List tab under Bill Tracking, and click on the list name. The latest activity for each bill will populate.

Anyone needing technical assistance can click the Contact tab on the home page.

SNEAK PEEK

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Two State Directories Help Employees and Public Locate Contacts and Find Information

Visitors to the state's website at wv.gov have access to two different state directories. Each listing is designed to be updated by the individual agency to ensure information remains accurate and accessible for those seeking contact information.

The first directory is a PDF directory located under the "Government" tab at wv.gov. This directory is revised and updated each month at www.wv.gov/Documents/StateGovernmentDirectory.pdf. Each department has a designated contact person who is responsible for making the changes for their department's information. Changes to the Department of Administration's agencies can be sent to Purchasing.Training@wv.gov.



The second listing on wv.gov is the Phone Directory, which can also be accessed under the "Government" tab.

The data that populates this directory comes from wvOASIS or inputs made by West Virginia Interactive. The human resources staff member within each department or agency is

responsible for making these updates. Alternatively, updates can be submitted directly to West Virginia Interactive if the information cannot be collected via wvOASIS. The [wv.gov](http://www.wv.gov/pages/state-phone-directory.aspx) phone directory can be found online at www.wv.gov/pages/state-phone-directory.aspx.

Please note that the accuracy of the information depends on the employees who are responsible for making the updates. If your agency contact has not done so recently, they are encouraged to review the contact information currently listed and monitor each month for changes or updates. If you're not sure who is assigned to make changes for your agency, contact Krista Chadband at krista.a.chadband@wv.gov.

WVOT Introduces AI Features

The West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) is pleased to announce the approval and implementation of Google Gemini Chat across all Google Workspace Applications.

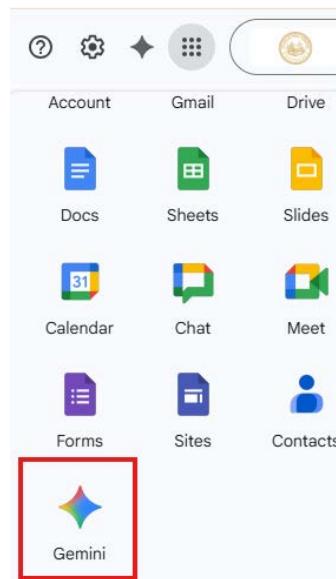
Gemini can be accessed through the stand-alone Chat App found in the Google Waffle (the grid icon) or by navigating directly to gemini.google.com. This deployment grants access to innovative features such as Deep Research, Canvas, and the ability to create images and videos. Helpful information to get started can be found at the links below:

- [How to use Gemini Apps](#)
- [Learn more about Gemini](#)

New AI training courses are available in [KnowBe4](#). From the dashboard, navigate to the Library. Then use the search bar to look for specific AI classes. The WVOT recommends the following:

- Artificial Intelligence Foundations
- Executive Series: Artificial Intelligence
- What Is Generative Artificial Intelligence?
- AI Chatbots: Understanding Their Use, Risks, and Limitations in the Workplace
- AI At Work: Use It Wisely

For training links and the latest news on AI, visit the [WVOTHub AI landing page](#).



New Mileage Rate Announced for 2026 Calendar Year

In accordance with the West Virginia State Travel Rules, the state's mileage reimbursement rate for privately-owned vehicles has been updated to reflect the federal government rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

As of Jan. 1, 2026, the current GSA rate increased to \$0.725 cents, from 70 cents last year. This rate will remain in effect until further notice.

Questions regarding the mileage reimbursement rate should be directed to your agency's travel coordinator or purchasing.travel@wv.gov.

Additional travel information is also available online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/Travel.

Employees Urged to ‘Take Control of Your Data’

“Take Control of Your Data” was the theme for Data Privacy Week 2026 last month.

The State Privacy Office within the Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM) recognized Data Privacy Week Jan. 26-30. The event is an international effort that shines a spotlight on the importance of data privacy.

Led by the National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCA), this year’s Data Privacy Week aimed to encourage individuals to manage their digital footprint, while organizations focused on “Privacy by Design” to build trust.

State employees are reminded of the information they share online every day, often without even realizing it. From shopping online to asking an AI chatbot for help with various tasks, our digital footprint has grown in ways that can feel complicated, or even out of our control.

Online activity creates a treasure trove of data. This data ranges from interests and purchases to online behaviors, and it is collected by websites, apps, devices, services, and companies all around the globe. This data can even include personal information, such as health data—think about how an app on your phone might count how many steps you take.

The State Privacy Office distributed short training videos and privacy tips to state employees each day of Data Privacy Week. The videos can be accessed at <https://training.knowbe4.com>. For more information about online safety, go to <https://brim.wv.gov/privacy/Pages/default.aspx> or <https://www.staysafeonline.org/data-privacy-week>.

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businesses need. Last year, the state focused on improvement of site selection and remediation, and put \$74 million toward water and sewer infrastructure projects across the state.

In looking ahead, the governor asked for a 3% pay raise for select employees, including teachers, school personnel, and police.

“These state employees are working hard. They’re teaching our kids. They’re fixing our roads and bridges. They’re guarding our prisons, and they’re policing our streets. They show up every day to serve others,” Gov. Morrisey said. “They’ve all earned a pay raise.”

The governor also addressed some progress with the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA).

“After years of double-digit premium increases, we spent a lot of time with the House and Senate on this over the summer. PEIA premiums will be limited to a 3% increase this year,” he said. “But to truly position PEIA for long-term success, however, I’m going to ask the legislature to work with me on some real reforms. It is important that we get it right.”

The governor wants the legislature to kickstart economic growth and return more money back to the people through a 10% income tax cut. He also wants to increase funding for higher education; focus on infrastructure maintenance and improvement; and support the Rural Healthcare Transformation project through advancing legislative initiatives that promote prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility.

Gov. Morrisey also announced a new pilot initiative called SENTRY, and asked the legislature for \$10 million to fund the pilot, which will modernize how West Virginia detects flood risk and warns the public.

“Traditional river gauges can tell us when water has risen to flood stage, but by then, the flood is already underway,” he said. “By expanding sensors in key areas, we can build predictive models and react to leading indicators instead of lagging indicators. Those forecasts promise to identify flood risk one to six hours ahead with a target accuracy of more than 90%.”

Gov. Morrisey’s State of the State speech can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAC843TC0t4>.

Capitol Grounds Shining Under New Lighting

The Capitol Complex is shining bright with some new lights, thanks to a multi-phase project to update lighting across the grounds and the Capitol building itself.

The Capitol Campus Exterior Lighting Project started in 2010 and has been accomplished through various phases, according to Robert Kilpatrick, director of the General Services Division.

"Earlier phases updated exterior lighting around the main Capitol and on the northern areas of the campus, including the Piedmont parking garage," he said. "The current, and final, phase includes modernizing and restoring the original exterior lighting fixtures of the state Capitol itself, replacing the 1970s-era lighting with a more modern system, while remaining complementary to the architectural design of Cass Gilbert."

Cass Gilbert, a New York native, was appointed chief architect of the building in 1921, and it was dedicated in 1932. Gilbert died two years after its completion.

"The new lighting system includes many energy saving and control features, uses the latest generation of LED lighting technology, and should last for many years into the future," Kilpatrick said.

Uplighting for the Capitol dome, which has not been seen in decades, has been restored. As the project gets closer to completion, more aspects of the lighting will be brought into service to showcase the main Capitol.

The project was designed by the West Virginia office of Silling Architects, utilizing Randy Burkett from Reed Burkett Lighting Design of St. Louis, Mo., who contributed extensive specialty lighting design experience. The current phase is 70% complete and scheduled to be finished this spring.

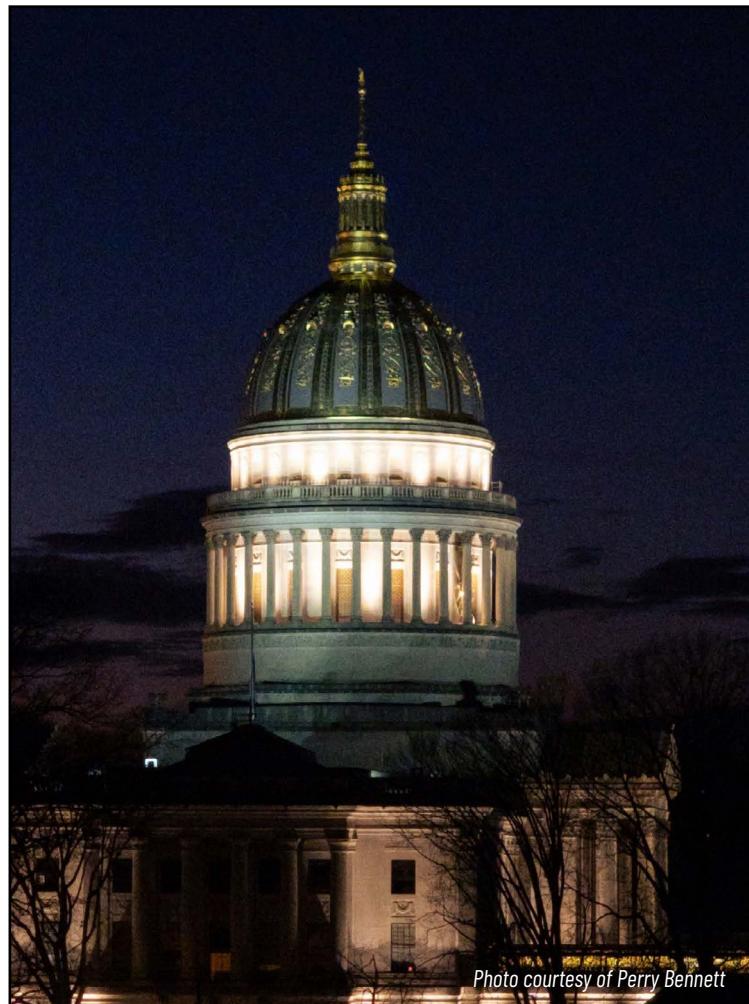


Photo courtesy of Perry Bennett

Eligible Organizations Receive Bottled Water from WVSASP



The W.Va. National Guard loads pallets of water donated by FEMA to deliver to the town of Wayne.

The West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP) helped facilitate the donation, for a small administrative fee, of more than 50 pallets of bottled water to eligible organizations. Those include but are not limited to municipalities, churches, and fire departments. The water was donated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the General Services Administration.

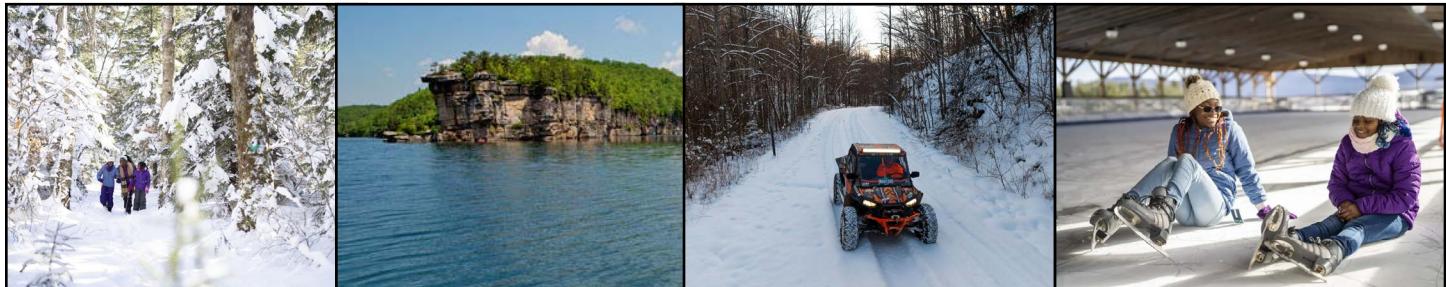
The West Virginia National Guard was among the recipients, and delivered 27 pallets of water to the town of Wayne. An act of vandalism at a mine power substation caused oil to leak into a nearby creek, affecting local water quality. Residents were not able to use their water for drinking, cooking, bathing, laundry, or cleaning. The pallets, which contained more than 50,000

bottles, were donated to the residents.

"We are proud to have played a role in coordinating this delivery," said Assistant Manager Mark Fox. "When a community faces a crisis, cooperation between agencies is key. This partnership allowed us to quickly get bottled water to those who needed it most. Seeing this resource reach the residents of Wayne, allowing them to meet their most basic needs, is exactly why Surplus exists—to serve the people of West Virginia."

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture assisted in transporting the water from Greencastle, PA, where it was being stored, to the Surplus warehouse in Dunbar. The WVSASP is working with FEMA to obtain more water for eligible organizations. Those interested can contact Mark Fox at 304-356-2428 or Mark.S.Fox@wv.gov.

Beyond the Ski Slopes: West Virginia Offers Plenty of Outdoor Winter Fun for Adventurers



When winter settles into West Virginia, the Mountain State transforms into a playground of snow-dusted trails and cold weather adventures. Here are a few activities that both the young and young-at-heart can enjoy:

Winter Hikes

One of the prettiest places during the winter in West Virginia is Blackwater Falls State Park, located in the Allegheny Mountains of Tucker County. The park was named after the amber waters of Blackwater Falls, a 57-foot cascade. Many visitors often think the color of the water is due to mud, but really it is tinted by the tannic acid of fallen hemlock and red spruce needles. The hike to the falls is very short and easy (only 0.3 miles). Hikers descend down wooden steps to the first lookout platform of the waterfall. From here, there are more stairs reaching the end of the trail, which is a platform right next to Blackwater Falls. Other scenic hikes in the area include Elakala Falls, Lindy Point, and Pendleton Point Overlook.

Another area offering the best of wintery West Virginia is one of America's newest national parks, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. Home to more than 70,000 acres of public lands, there's no shortage of exceptional trails or stellar overlooks.

Summersville Lake State Park

West Virginia's newest state park, Summersville Lake, is particularly popular in the summer, sitting on 177 acres on the northern shore of the state's largest lake in Nicholas County. However, this area is full of unique rock formations, and its well-known crags and climbing areas continue to attract rock climbers from around the world even in the colder months. Looking for climbing routes that aren't covered in snow and ice? The park has that too! The lake is drained every winter, opening up beautiful sun-drenched cliff lines that are usually submerged, making amazing starts for beginners.

Hatfield-McCoy Trails

Kick up the adventure this winter and go off-roading on the 1,000-plus miles that make up the Hatfield-McCoy Trail Systems. The rideable terrain varies in difficulty, making for an enjoyable trip for all first-timers as well as providing quite the test to experienced thrill-seekers. Open 365 days a year, the weather has no say over this one-of-a-kind experience. Find ATV-friendly towns, delicious restaurants, and quaint lodging options dotted along the way.

Ice Skating

Ice skating is something everyone can enjoy. You may spend more time on the ground than actually upright, but there is no denying that you'll have fun either way! You can find ice skating rinks for family-friendly fun throughout the state.

Located just outside of the cozy, unique towns of Thomas and Davis, Canaan Valley Resort State Park is home to an ice skating rink that's surrounded by beautiful rolling mountains and plains. They offer skate rentals, too.

The outdoor rink at The Greenbrier is open to both hotel guests and the general public. Located on the Rhododendron Patio, just outside the doors of the historic indoor pool, the rink provides a festive atmosphere and incredible views of the iconic front entrance for skaters of all ages. Beginners will take comfort in the help of training aids, while experts will guide gracefully around the ice, enjoying the fresh mountain air.

For information on other winter activities around the state, visit wvtourism.com.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Last month, we asked Department of Administration employees "Which is worse..." Here are your responses:

53% Sitting in gridlock traffic

47% Sitting on the tarmac in a delayed airplane

60% Stepping on something sticky in bare feet

40% Stepping on a wet rug with socks

55% A crying baby

45% A barking dog

70% Stepping on a Lego

30% Hitting your funny bone

87% Running out of toilet paper

13% Running out of coffee

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

WELCOME! ... The Department of Administration is pleased to welcome **John Lyall** and **Michael Short** (General Services); **Shawn Mckenzie** (PEIA); **Meliza Harpol** (Public Defender Services); and **Jessica Riley** (Purchasing).

BEST WISHES ... to **Rodney Burdette** (CPRB); **Elizabeth Hatfield** (Public Defender Services); and **Christopher Miorelli** (Technology) who recently resigned from our department.

HOLIDAY ... The Department of Administration will be closed on Monday, Feb. 16, 2026, in observance of Presidents Day.

W-2s NOW ONLINE ... West Virginia state employees can view and print their W-2s for the 2025 calendar year electronically through Employee Self Service (ESS) on **OneLogin**. If an employee does not have access or needs assistance with logging in, the employee should contact the WVAO help desk at 304-340-4850 or email **helpdesk@wvsaao.gov**.

GOT NEWS? ... Share YOUR good news with all of your department co-workers! Email **Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov** with detailed information so we may include it in the next issue of the newsletter.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY in FEBRUARY

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

BRIM Valerie Poindexter

CPRB Lindsey Atkins

Amber Hawkins

Joshua Hudnall

Ashley Knapp

Nathan Moul

ETHICS Rachel Carpenter

FINANCE Marjorie Stephenson

GEN.SRVS. Nicole Adkins

Jacob Hughes

Steve Pinkerton

GRIEVANCE Candace Spade

PERSONNEL James Bateman

Kymberly Gillespie

Gary Goble

Tracy Richardson

PEIA Cynthia Burch

Kelly Davis

Katrina Hamdan

PUB.DEF. SRVS. Lisa Conley

Brooke Pittman

PURCHASING Nicholas Downs

Robert Ross

REAL ESTATE Jason Thompson

Misty Corsaro

Ronald Pleasant

Andrew Sabatino

TECHNOLOGY Christopher Bailey

Ethan Boley

Michael Ebert

Matthew Fenney

Carlos Kinder

Luke Lovejoy

Chaz Pittman

Jillian Pizza

Tony Riley

Adam Robinson

Jason Smith

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