

# Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes

A Monthly Employee Newsletter Published by the Department of Administration

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## Employee of the Month

### PEIA's Marie Terry Demonstrates True Leadership Qualities

**MARIE TERRY**, a Supervisor II for the Training and Outreach Section of the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA), has been selected as the department's *Employee of the Month* for October.

A 32-year employee of state government, Marie provides education and training for new employees' orientation and teaches the "Professional Telephone Techniques" course for the Division of Personnel.

She represents PEIA at public hearings, benefit coordinator workshops and benefit fairs.

One of her co-workers said, "Marie's positive attitude, knowledge and communication skills are a testament to her true leadership qualities. Marie is a role model and inspiration to all her co-workers in the agency."

Another co-worker added, "She is efficient, thorough, knowledgeable and willing to take on any task and per-

form it with expertise."

In Marie's spare time, she enjoys singing in her church choir, playing the piano, sewing and doing crafts. In addition to her athletic side of playing softball, bowling and walking, she enjoys entertaining friends and family.

Please join Marie's friends and co-workers at a special ceremony in her honor at 11 a.m. on Friday, October 1, at PEIA's office in Building 5, Room 1001.



**MARIE TERRY**  
October Employee of the Month

Are you registered to vote in the November 2 General Election?



If not, it's not too late, but you must act quickly. The deadline is October 13. You may register at your local county clerk's office, Division of Motor Vehicles office or via the Secretary of State's website at [www.wvsos.com/elections/voters/register now.htm](http://www.wvsos.com/elections/voters/register_now.htm).

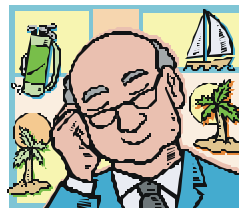
### Thinking of Retiring?

### Let's Clear Up a Few Myths First

*This two-part series will continue next month with more issues surrounding retirement.*

**Scenario:** Your daughter is pregnant with your first grandchild and due to deliver in six months. You are concerned about the delivery and the baby after being released from the hospital. "If only it were later," you say to her. "I'm 55 and in eight months, when I reach the "anniversary date" of when I was hired, I plan to retire." Seven months down the road, you make application for retirement only to find out if you had applied earlier, as recommended, you could have actually retired two months ago.

Under the Public Employees Retirement System, a salaried employee only has to work 10 months in a calendar year to have a full year of service and an hourly employee will receive a full year after accruing 1440 hours. *Continued on Page 4*



### Sneak Peek INSIDE...

- ◆ Our Employees Offer Ways to Calm Disgruntled Customers
- ◆ New Federal Accounting Rule Results in Challenges from Certain Agencies
- ◆ PEIA Works with WVU on Award-Winning Program
- ◆ People Talk

# Our Department Employees Offer Ways to Calm those Disgruntled Customers



**Monica Matthews (l) and Erika Vance (r) of the Purchasing Division greet customers in the reception area as part of their job.**

## Training on Dealing with Customers

For more information on handling disgruntled customers, consider these courses offered by the Division of Personnel:

### Quality Customer Service

### Dealing with Upset and Angry Customers

### Professional Telephone Techniques

### It's How You Say It: *Telephone Skills for Managing Difficult Calls*

For more details or to register, contact Personnel's website at [www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel).

Aggressive behaviors are occurring more frequently in our workplaces. Some customers feel free to express their frustrations and anger, but some are unable to do so effectively. Therefore, as public servants, we have the responsibility to be prepared and skilled in dealing with this potentially aggressive behavior.

It is normal for people to get angry when their goals are not being met, when they feel the situation is unfair or when they fear their goals will not be met in the future. However, if one does not manage his/her anger productively, feelings intensify, resulting in a cycle of destructive thoughts, physiological reactions and behaviors.

Sgt. Bob Long of the Division of Protective Services, along with Senior Development Consultant Mark Isabella of the Division of Personnel, recommend caution when signs of aggression indicate a customer should be considered a *threat*. These signs include an attack-type posture (tightening body; clenched fists, jaws or teeth; speaking in a loud or emotional tone; or a forward body lean), cursing, verbal abuse, insults, name-calling, threats, or slamming or throwing objects.

"Ideally, we want to be able to help customers manage their anger, and one way is to help them get their goals and expectations met to the greatest degree possible," said Isabella. "While we can't always say yes to customer requests due to the law, rules and regulations that govern our work, we can demonstrate through our behavior that we respect customers, that we want to help them, and that we care about their goals."

Personnel's Organization and Human Resource Development Section offers specific strategies for calming upset customers:

- ◆ Don't get hooked by the customer's anger - your high emotion will fuel his or hers.
- ◆ Monitor your stress level - take deep breaths to remain calm, and take a "time-out."
- ◆ Speak calmly and slowly.
- ◆ Deal first with the person, then with the problem. Address the customer's feelings, and keep communication flowing. Then, work with the customer to solve the problem.
- ◆ Practice effective listening skills - show empathy, ask relevant questions, maintain an open posture, acknowledge and paraphrase what the customer says.
- ◆ Provide options to the customer.

Some of our department employees took time to share ways or experiences they have had involving disgruntled employees.

"If a person is angry to the point of being out of control, I usually ask that we postpone the discussion until we can both be more objective about the topic," said Betty Francisco of the Purchasing Division. "That allows the problem to

be addressed instead of simply reacting to the behavior of the individual."

Christy Romeo of the Division of Personnel uses the old adage of *killing them with kindness*. "A little bit of acknowledgment and compassion can go a long way," she said. Using this technique, Romeo has had the result of cranky customers apologizing to her for their behavior.

Sherlene Jones, also of the Division of Personnel, reminds us that we have all been on the other side of the desk. "If we just listen, take our time and treat people the way we want to be treated, a solution can be worked out," she adds.

Sgt. Long states that aggression builds in steps. Often it is not the issue at stake that is fueling the customer's anger, but the way in which we are communicating.

For instance, displaying our own anger inappropriately; interrupting the customer; displaying an indifferent, uncaring demeanor; exhibiting poor listening habits; making excuses; failing to apologize when mistakes are made; or exhibiting rude, offensive or disrespectful

*Continued on Page 3*



**Purchasing's Sandy Singleton offers information to a customer on the telephone.**

# New Federal Accounting Rule Results in Challenges from Certain Agencies

This year, a new rule issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) becomes effective with the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

Colleges, universities and other state agencies are to include their foundations and certain other component units in their financial statements.

However, discussions surrounding this requirement with some foundations and institutions have proven challenging; therefore, the state may be forced to legislate compliance to this GASB rule

in order to receive a clean opinion from the independent audit firm, according to Chris Sforza, Financial Reporting Specialist for the Finance Division.

"We've given the Governor's Office the pertinent information about GASB 39 and the foundations. We are now waiting to see what happens," she said. The CAFR opinion has a material affect on the state's bond rating.

According to the *West Virginia Code*, the Financial Accounting and Reporting Section (FARS) of the Department of Administration is responsible for the CAFR, which provides decision makers (legislators and agency heads), creditors and investors with necessary, financial information. In addition, bond raters use the CAFR to help decide the interest rates for the state's bond issues. It is in a format required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), which

includes the basic financial statements, an introductory section and a statistical section.

Each April, the FARS staff meets with an independent auditing firm to plan and begin work on the audit prior to the close of the fiscal year. In June, they start collecting information from the West Virginia Financial Information Management System and the agencies for inclusion in the CAFR.

West Virginia's first audited CAFR was published in 1994. Since that time, FARS has worked with state agencies to improve the process, making it easier and faster.

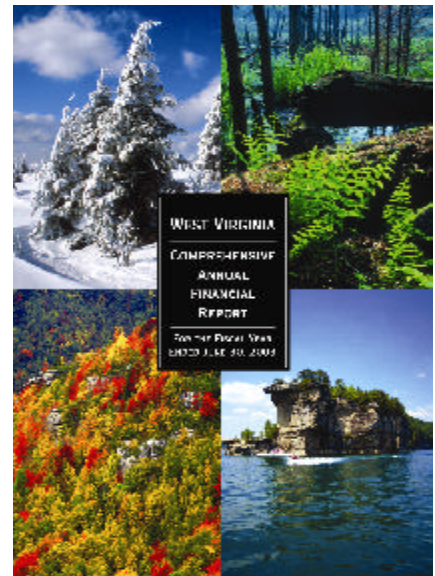
Since 1995, FARS has been recognized each year by the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) with a *Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting*. This honor is quite an accomplishment, for which those individuals responsible should be commended for their efforts.

we do not have to tolerate and when to draw the line, especially when someone is using profanity or threats," he said. "Never allow yourself to go to their level. Bring them up to yours."

Most aggressive situations can either be turned around or avoided; however, should you find yourself in a threatening situation, both Isabella and Sgt. Long recommend you seek immediate assistance from your supervisor or co-workers.

It is also useful to place emergency numbers on your speed-dial or make them accessible near your telephone. Familiarizing yourself with agency procedures when dealing with upset customers is also a good practice.

A little bit of patience and kindness mixed with finesse can go a long way to help calm a disgruntled customer and make a smoother day for you and the customer.



**Pictured is the cover of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003.**

## Disgruntled Customers Continued from Page 2

behavior. "Try to gain control because they are out of control," said Sgt. Long, "by *politely* making statements such as, 'if you don't lower your voice, I can't help you'."

Kay Tenney of the Public Employees Insurance Agency turned a situation around when she combined firmness with courtesy. "I had a very rude woman on the telephone who was cursing at me. I told her that I would be glad to help her but the language would have to stop or I would hang up. I explained I was there to help her. She complied and turned out to be a very nice lady who I was able to help," she said.

Chris Bush of the Consolidated Public Retirement Board said he highly recommends the "Professional Telephone Techniques' class offered by Personnel. "I often deal with irate members. It is important to know what

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**Bob Wise**  
Governor

**John Poffenbarger**  
Acting Cabinet Secretary

**Diane Holley**  
Public Information Officer/Editor

### **Special Thanks**

Debbie Harrison  
JoAnn Calhoun  
Kaye Parks  
Teresa Miller  
Chris Sforza  
Sandy Singleton



And now a few words from...



## Getting Those Public Speaking Jitters?

Speaking in front of our colleagues – or any group, for that matter – is often anything but enjoyable for many of us. However, as part of our job, we sometimes must challenge ourselves by doing what we may fear the most.

Here are some tips for keeping the butterflies in check and your presentation looking confident:

### **Know your stuff**

You don't need to practice in front of a mirror. Simply

make an outline of the material you are presenting and go over it in your head. Practice it out loud so you can catch any word combinations that trip up your tongue.

### **Don't apologize**

Never announce your state of nervousness. You will only call attention to something no one may have detected.

### **Latch onto friendly faces**

In any crowd, you can always spot the folks who look like they are in rapt attention. Talk to them.

### **Stay steady**

If you get the shakes in front of your audience, steady yourself first. If you are standing at a lectern, rest your hands on it. Public speaking experts recommend that to better engage the audience, the presenter should move from behind the lectern, but steady him or herself and get into the flow of the presentation. The presenter can later step away.

## A Halloween Guide for Safety



Although Halloween can be great fun, parents and children need to keep in mind that safety is a concern. Here are a few tips to help you get through this *frightful* holiday:

- ♦ Make sure your child picks out or makes a safe costume, meaning fireproof and offering good vision.
- ♦ If you set jack-o-lanterns out on your porch, make sure that they are far enough away from where children will be walking.
- ♦ Make sure that if your child is carrying a prop, such as a fake scythe or knife, that the ends are smooth and it is flexible.
- ♦ Don't let small children carve pumpkins.
- ♦ Make sure you review basic safety rules with your kids before they set out.
- ♦ Explain the difference between "tricks" and vandalism to your kids. In addition, explain to your child that cruelty to animals is not acceptable.

## Retirement Myths Continued from Page 1

This is only one of several myths of prospective retirees. See below for more *myths* and the actual *truths*:

***Misconception:*** Members who terminate employment with a participating agency, and defer retirement or become employed elsewhere, must wait until they are 65 to retire.

***Truth:*** Members are eligible for full benefits at 60 with 20 years of service or at 62 with at least 5 years of service.

***Misconception:*** If a surviving spouse remarries, his/her Survivor Benefits end.

***Truth:*** Survivor Benefits continue until the death of the surviving spouse.

***Misconception:*** When a member selects a Joint Survivor Annuity and uses accrued leave to extend employer-paid PEIA insurance coverage, at the death of the member the surviving spouse may continue to receive the

accrued leave insurance benefit.

***Truth:*** At the death of the member, the accrued leave insurance benefit is terminated, even if the surviving spouse elects to continue PEIA insurance coverage.

***Misconception:*** If a member terminates employment with an agency, he/she may freeze the accrued sick leave and use it at the time of retirement.

***Truth:*** A public employee who terminates his/her position with an agency and defers retirement may not freeze the sick leave to use at the time of retirement. If the employee returns to work for a participating public employer within 12 months of termination, he/she may reinstate sick leave. [This is a Division of Personnel rule. Each employee should consult with the payroll officer or Personnel about freezing and reinstatement of sick leave.]

If you plan to retire within the next six months, the Consolidated Public Retirement Board recommends making an appointment for consultation with its office by calling (304) 558-3570.

# PEIA Works with WVU to Create Award-Winning Program

Programs from West Virginia and Arkansas have been selected as Innovations Award winners by a panel of state officials at the Council of State Governments (CSG) Southern Legislative Conference meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas on August 15.

The two programs were selected from 10 Southern regional finalists that were initially part of a national competition of 237 applications.

West Virginia's program, called Accessible Intelligent Medication Strategies (AIMS), employs registered pharmacists to visit physicians in their offices to provide clear, concise, evidence-based information regarding the use of pharmaceuticals to aid prescribing decisions in various disease states.

The goal of AIMS is to counter an 83 percent increase in spending on pharmaceuticals that the West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) experienced between 1999 and 2003. PEIA attributes this trend to direct-to-consumer advertising by pharmaceutical companies, new and more expensive drug introductions, increased utilization, changing disease diagnosis and treatment guidelines, and pharmaceutical "detailing," whereby representatives from pharmaceutical companies call on physicians for the express purpose of convincing them that the pharmaceutical company's product is superior for treating a specific disease.

West Virginia University's School of Pharmacy develop-

ed the program for PEIA. AIMS started in Charleston and Morgantown, which have the highest concentrations of PEIA members, and initially targeted antibiotics, anti-hypertensives, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, cholesterol lowering medications and gastric acid suppression medications. The program also focuses on the top 20 percent of prescribers in these regions of the state.

Support for the program has been outstanding, and expansion of the program is now taking place in the Huntington area.

PEIA has employed a number of techniques to curtail pharmaceutical expenditures, including a five-state drug purchasing program managed by a single pharmacy benefit manager, prior authorization, step therapy, and co-pay waivers for generics. The AIMS program is another means for containing these expenditures, focusing on where the prescriptions are issued.

PEIA's annual investment of \$428,100 is paying dividends by strengthening PEIA's presence among prescribers, building trust and credibility within the prescribing community, providing a clinically-based alternative to prescribers, and sustaining and increasing sustained generic usage.

Generic penetration now exceeds 49 percent. Obviously, PEIA cannot attribute the estimated \$3 million savings to the AIMS program, but it has definitely been a contributing factor.

The AIMS program requires

building personal trust and credibility. Overall, acceptance by physicians and other prescribers has been high in both areas as evidenced by the increased access both clinical educators are achieving with prescribers.

"The medical environment in which we practice is widespread with salesmen; it is refreshing to have input into cost effective care that is unbiased...I have been especially excited to see how...the family practice residents here are developing a better sense of the cost issues involved in medicine," according to a spokesperson of the Department of Family Medicine at West Virginia University.

The program awards will be presented to the winners at its spring meeting at Lake Tahoe, California in June of 2005. All of the 2004 Innovations Award winners will be highlighted in the November/December, 2004 issue of their publication, *State News*.

**For more details regarding the AIMS program, please contact:**

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26505-9510  
(304) 293-6033

## Accessible Intelligent Medication Strategies EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GOALS

The Accessible Intelligent Medication Strategies will work through trained, registered pharmacists (clinical educators) and continuing education programs to:

- ◆ provide prescribers well-researched, unbiased, evidenced-based drug use information
- ◆ respond to provider drug information needs accurately and quickly
- ◆ foster appropriate and rational use of medications
- ◆ impact rate of growth of pharmaceutical costs through total health care management
- ◆ reduce disparities in treatments across populations of patients and providers
- ◆ encourage the use of the most cost-effective medication within a given class, and
- ◆ increase generic usage when appropriate

## The Key to Streamlining Your Life

Everyone is busy these days and could benefit from doing a little streamlining when it comes to time management. Below are ways to recoup some time for yourself:

- ◆ When you cook, make a double batch and freeze the extra portion for a future meal.
- ◆ Buy your movie tickets online, so you don't have to spend time waiting in line at the theatre.
- ◆ Sign up for automatic bill paying on your bank's website.
- ◆ Keep a stash of birthday cards and gifts on hand at home, so you don't have to shop for one each time you need one.
- ◆ Book early appointments to avoid possible delays when you are waiting to see your doctor or dentist, etc. Often later appointments in the day are more behind schedule.
- ◆ Buy ready-to-eat foods, so you don't have to cook.
- ◆ Give gift certificates online and have them mailed to recipients. This will cut down the time you spend selecting a gift.

For more in-depth information, the Organization and Human Resource Development Center of Quality Government is offering a class, **Time Management**, on October 18 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon during the Regional Management Conference at the Erickson Alumni Center in Morgantown.

Participants will learn how to gain greater control of their time through analyzing the current use of time. They also will learn to better clarify priorities, identify steps in successful behavioral change, and develop a plan for more effective use of time at work.

**Welcome!...**to the employees who recently joined our department: **Marilyn Summers** (IS&C); **Eric Stringer** and Patricia Bowgren (CPRB); **Gilbert Kokol** (General Services); and **Jeremy Wolfe** (BRIM).

**Best Wishes...**to the following employees who recently resigned from the Department of Administration: **Autumn Omecinski** (Personnel); **Chris Rush** (General Services); **Stephen Zoeller** (Secretary's Office); **Leetta Brillhart**, **Stephanie Davis**, **Dana Long** and **Chris Leslie** (IS&C); and **David Wolfe** (Purchasing).

**Division of Highways/District One Golf League...**The Division of Highways/District One Golf League, composed of 24 two-man golf teams that compete for a 17-week season, held their annual golf outing on August 27 at Riverside Golf Course in Mason, WV. Of the 101 players participating, the team of Roger Smith (Budget Office) and Scott Joslin (Division of Personnel) won the Championship round this year and were awarded the 'First Place' trophy.

**Power Outage Scheduled...**From 8 a.m. through 8 p.m. on Oct. 10, American Electric Power Co. will perform an electrical upgrade. Electricity and climate control will be affected to Buildings 5, 6 and 7, along with the Chiller Plant.

### PEOPLE TALK

**Professional Excellence...**Congratulations to Personnel's Joe Thomas who has achieved the International Public Management Association-Human Resources Certified Professional status. He joins a select group of public sector professionals who have been certified at this level.

**Baby News!...**Finance's Elizabeth Perdue welcomed her baby, Tanner Joseph, on September 1. He weighed 8 lbs., 2 oz. and was 21 inches long. Our best wishes to the Perdue family!

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY...in October

2	Scott Padon ..... Purchasing Diana Tittle ..... PEIA	17	Monroe Gillespie ..... IS&C Lynn Schillings ..... Personnel
3	Carla Bright ..... IS&C Jacquelyn Custer... Grievance Board	19	Ross Taylor ..... Finance
4	Peggy Adkins ..... CPRB Andrew Fizer ..... Finance Shelia Gray ..... Leasing	20	Gary Gillispie ..... IS&C Bobby Mitts ..... BRIM
5	Diana Arden ..... IS&C	21	Barry Arthur ..... IS&C Steven Bratchett ..... Gen. Svcs.
6	Carla Kennedy ..... CPRB	22	Lisa Trump ..... CPRB
7	Sandra Deel ..... IS&C	23	Jennifer Ayers ..... IS&C Heather Connolly ..... Sec. Office Sharon Lacey ..... IS&C John Wimmer ..... IS&C
9	Larry Chancey ..... PEIA Scott Dobson ..... IS&C Ginny Fitzwater ..... Personnel	24	Michael Campbell ..... Personnel Joselyn Casto ..... Finance Hilda Gravely ..... CPRB
10	Mark Mull ..... IS&C	26	James Casto ..... Gen. Svcs.
11	Joe Thomas ..... Personnel	27	Andrew Mitchell ..... Gen. Svcs. Russell Cook ..... Public Defender James Roberts ..... Gen. Svcs.
12	Melody Duke ..... BRIM Paul Griffith ..... Gen. Svcs.	29	Amy Langenbrunner ..... CPRB
14	Katherine Blizzard ..... Personnel Mary Bonham ..... CPRB Chris Cline ..... Gen. Svcs.	31	Charity Cole ..... Pros. Atty. Inst. Tammy Scarberry ..... PEIA
15	Roger Paxton ..... Gen. Svcs. John Poffenbarger ..... Sec. Office		

