

Forestry and DNR ask hunters to assist as —

Forest Fires Damage Mountain State

The Divisions of Forestry and Natural Resources (DNR) have had their hands full this summer and fall. Forest fires raged throughout West Virginia during what were very dry summer and autumn seasons. Since July 1, 2001, 74,486 acres have been burned by 826 fires. Only 21 of those happened between July 1 and September 30 - the remainder have occurred since October 1. During October, 339 fires were responsible for charring 36,737 acres, prompting









A line of fire burns in West Virginia. Since July 1, 2001, more than 74,000 acres have been destroyed by forest fires. Photo provided by Steve Young of the Division of Forestry.

Governor Bob Wise to issue a state-wide outdoor burning ban on October 28 (the ban was lifted in late November). Despite the ban, 466 fires burned 37,672 acres from November 1 through 28.

Although the ban has been lifted and we've finally received some soaking rains, outdoor burning restrictions are still in place through December 31, 2001. Any outdoor

burning must be done after 4:00 P.M. Fires must be attended at all times, and a 10-foot area around the fire must be cleared down to the mineral soil.

DNR received a number of calls prior to the opening of firearms deer season from hunters wondering if the dry conditions would affect the season's opening or even prompt cancellation. According to DNR Director Ed Hamrick, the season has been closed due to dry conditions only once in the past 20 years. Hamrick says that he believes the vast majority of hunters are responsible people, and even feels their presence in the woods could be a deterrent to would-be arsonists. Because there are several hunting seasons, Forestry and DNR officials are asking hunters to take extra precautions and to be proactive in preventing forest fires. The Division of Forestry offers the following reminders:

-  Be aware of burning bans in place and abide by them.
-  While the use of liquid-fueled gas fire stoves, grills, and lanterns is permitted, campfires and charcoal fires are not.
-  Thoroughly and completely extinguish all smoking materials; refrain from smoking if possible.
-  Make sure equipment is functioning properly, including ATV exhaust pipes.
-  Remind other hunters (including those from out of State) about any bans and other rules.
-  Watch for and report arsonists, and report forest fires to local 911 centers as quickly as possible.

"We are asking the citizens of West Virginia to help ensure the safety of our forests by taking every precaution to protect them from fire. One spark can lead to the loss of thousands of acres of valuable land," said Coy Mullins, Fire Supervisor for Forestry.

The Office of Air Quality joins Forestry in recommending that debris piles be limited in size so that they will burn out before dark. Fires should not be allowed to burn or smolder overnight.

To report suspicious fires, call the State's Arson Hotline at 1-800-233-FIRE. Information leading to an arson conviction may be rewarded up to \$2500. Anyone convicted of arson faces 1-5 years in prison and/or a fine up to \$3000.

**FOREST
FIRE
FACTS**



The 2 leading causes of forest fires are debris burning and arson, and arson accounts for 1/3 of these.

Caring State Employees Give Hope to Cancer Research

Each year, the American Cancer Society holds its *Relay for Life*, a 24-hour walking and running fundraising event which raises money for cancer research, services, and education. The event is held in various locations across the country, including locations here in West Virginia. This year, 2 agencies in different parts of the State assisted their areas in raising a total of over \$175,000.

Employees from the Braxton County Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) Office, accompanied by several of their family and friends, participated in the

event with their *Celebrate Life in America* team. During a 24-hour period on June 8 and 9, team members walked and ran their way to assisting Braxton County in raising over \$40,000.

The event was held in Charleston on June 29 and 30. The West Virginia Health Care Authority had 2 teams – *Along Came Mary I and Along Came Mary II* – both named after Mary Jones, a beloved co-worker who lost her battle with the disease earlier this year. Together, the Along Came Mary teams raised \$10,180, boosting the overall total to \$135,000. Three team members

won individual fundraising honors – Kay Myers, Suzanne Trowbridge, and Beth Marquart placed second, fourth, and fifth respectively in individual fundraising.

Plans are already underway for the 2002 *Relay for Life*. Anyone who would like to participate on the planning committee or form a team should call The American Cancer Society at 746-9950.

Our thanks to Kay Myers of the West Virginia Health Care Authority and Jennifer Facemire of the Braxton County DHHR Office for providing us with the information and photographs.



The West Virginia Health Care Authority's Along Came Mary I and II teams raised over \$10,000 in the 2001 American Cancer Society Relay for Life.



The Braxton County Department of Health and Human Resources' Celebrate Life in America team added to the \$40,000 raised in that county.

CPRB ONLINE BENEFIT ESTIMATOR

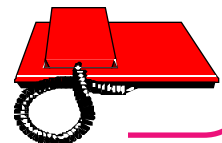
Thinking about retirement anytime soon? Wondering how much you'll bring in from your State retirement? The Consolidated Public Retirement Board offers an online benefit estimator at:

<http://www.state.wv.us/admin/cprb/bcalc.htm>

HOTLINE HELP

Alcoholics Anonymous	1-800-333-5051	Poison Center	1-800-642-3624
Environmental Health	1-800-368-4358	STD/AIDS	1-800-642-8244
Family Matters	1-888-983-2645	Tuberculosis Control ..	1-800-330-8126
Immunization Program	1-800-642-3634	WIC Program	1-888-WVFAMILY
Pediatric Health Services ..	1-800-642-9704	WV CHIP Program.....	1-877-982-2447

There are more program hotlines available. For a complete list, visit the Department of Health and Human Resources' website at www.wvdhhr.org/hotlines.htm.



State Tourism Office Relocation To Be Completed January 1

Contributed by Matt Turner of the Division of Tourism.

The Division of Tourism will be moving to a larger, consolidated building in South Charleston at the end of December. All Charleston office employees will be in one building, including the Fulfillment Center and Photography Lab.

Charleston office employees will be moving Dec. 27-29. Tourism administration officials have scheduled communication system relocations so the 1-800-CALL-WVA call center will operate without interruption during its normal hours. By the start of 2002, the office relocation should be complete.

The new address is:

90 MacCorkle Avenue, SW
South Charleston, WV 25303-1412

New Director for European Trade Office Announced

Press release issued by the West Virginia Development Office.

David Satterfield, executive director of the West Virginia Development Office, has announced the hiring of Jack Gocke as the Director of the European Trade Office in Munich, Germany.

"Jack brings valuable marketing and business development skills to the table," Satterfield said. "His proven initiative and his experience in negotiation will serve West Virginia's interests in international business recruitment and trade development."

Gocke, a Morgantown native, is an Assistant Vice President in business development for Marsh, Inc., a Marsh & McLennan company that provides global risk management, corporate insurance and employee benefits consulting and transactional services. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in international studies from West Virginia University and studied abroad at the University of Bamberg, Germany. Gocke served in the U.S. Army from 1986 to 1990, completing his last 2 years with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

West Virginia operations in Munich were established in March of 1999 in Amerika Haus. The West Virginia Europe Office is a point of contact for European firms that are considering investments in West Virginia and serves as a catalyst in the expansion and development of cultural, educational, and social partnerships among West Virginia and countries throughout Europe. Staff members also work with West Virginia companies to expand export opportunities for West Virginia-made products in Germany and throughout Europe.

GOOD NEWS! Economic experts predict swift and strong economic recovery by mid-spring 2002.

PUBLIC TV UPGRADING FOR BETTER SERVICE

Shawn Patterson of WV Public Broadcasting (WVPB) advises that thanks to a \$2.4 million special allocation from the State Legislature, WVPB is embarking on an extensive upgrade project that will better serve listeners and viewers throughout the State. New transmitters and antennas are being installed throughout our system to improve delivery and prepare for digital television service, beginning with Buckhannon/Weston and Huntington. Work on this first phase was completed at the end of November. A second phase is scheduled to be implemented this coming Spring.



Internet info ... a byte at a time

**Check Out
2002 Holiday/
Payday Calendar**

It's easier to plan for meetings, conferences, and even vacation time when you know the dates of official State holidays. You can view and print a copy for yourself at:

<http://www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empinfo/default.htm>

Scroll down the page to find the Holiday/Payday Calendar and click on the 2002 link. The document is in PDF format and can be viewed and printed through Adobe Acrobat Reader.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE PERSONNEL BOARD 2002 MEETING SCHEDULE

Below are the dates for the monthly West Virginia State Personnel Board meetings. Meetings are held the third Thursday in the month (unless otherwise noted) at 2:00 P.M. in Building 6, Room 425.

January 17	July 18
February 21	August 15
March 21	September 19
April 18	October 17
May 16	November 21
June 27*	December 19

* The June meeting is moved because June 20 is a State holiday.

WV Unemployment Level Falls to Record 3.9%

Taken from a press release issued by the State Bureau of Unemployment.

Last month, the West Virginia Bureau of Unemployment advised that West Virginia's unemployment rate continued its several-month decline by falling four-tenths of a percentage point to 3.9% in October. This is the lowest unemployment rate for any month since calculation of unemployment statistics under the present system began in 1976. The number of unemployed State residents declined 3,800 over the month to 31,100.

Unemployment has declined 9,600 since October 2000, when 40,700 were jobless and the rate was 5%. West Virginia's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate fell five-tenths of a percentage point to 4.4% in October, while the comparable national rate rose five-tenths of a percentage point to 5.4%. This is the lowest seasonally-adjusted State unemployment rate on record, and the first time that West Virginia's unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate by a full percentage point.

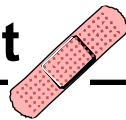
Non-farm payroll employment rose 3,100 over the month, with goods-producing industries adding only 100 jobs and service-producing industries contributing 3,000 jobs to the monthly total.

Within the goods-producing sector, construction added 200 jobs while mining slipped by 100 over the month. Employment in manufacturing was unchanged in October. The service-producing sector saw a seasonal gain of 2,100 jobs in government, and 1,500 jobs in services, as public and private educational facilities returned to full staffing. Transportation and public utilities increased 100, while trade lost 700 jobs over the month. Employment in finance, insurance, and real estate exhibited no change in October.

Over the past year, West Virginia's economy has declined by 1,900 jobs. Gains include 4,600 in services, 1,500 in mining, and 300 in finance, insurance and real estate. Over-the-year losses include 3,300 in manufacturing, 3,100 in trade, 800 in government, 600 in construction, and 500 in transportation and public utilities.

What's the coldest temperature ever recorded in the U.S.? That honor goes to Prospect Creek, Alaska, where on January 22, 1971, the mercury fell to -80°!

News From the Medical Front



USE HORSERADISH TO OPEN UP A STUFFY NOSE

Well, it's winter. That's stuffy nose season, and doctors at the University of Kentucky Medical Center's Department of Otolaryngology offer a quick, natural fix.

When you have nasal congestion caused by a cold, allergy, or sinus problem, try a little horseradish. One or 2 quick sniffs of horseradish, taken 2 or 3 times a day, could do the trick!

Stay 4-6 inches away from the jar because the smell can be powerful, even with a clogged nose. Also, don't breathe into the jar because you risk contaminating it.

Prevention Magazine states that eating horseradish is as therapeutic as inhaling it - just add a teaspoon to a cracker. Looking for a natural antibiotic? The Japanese wasabi horseradish is a natural antibacterial.

Pencil In ...



A reminder to write or send your condolence messages for the **Sept. 11 Condolence Books**. They are located in Building 6, Room 416 or you can send your messages for inclusion to Jane Fouty (see address and email information in the box below). We are extending the deadline indefinitely at this time.




Most of us haven't thought about it, but **home insurance premiums** are expected to rise. Even before Sept. 11, premiums were forecast to increase - the terrorist attacks have only added to the probability. Start saving now to offset the cost.



IS&C will host a **User's Conference** at the Charleston Civic Center on January 29-30, 2002 to educate customers and other interested parties on their services. Call IS&C for more at 558-8889.



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