

Open Enrollment is a Time for Making Choices

During spring each year, the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) conducts an Open Enrollment period during which you can make changes to your health and/or life insurance coverage, and opt in or out of the Premium Conversion Plan. This is a very important time – it's the only period during the year that you can make these kinds of changes. This year's Open Enrollment for Plan Year 2005 will run from April 5 through May 7, 2004.

WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES CAN YOU MAKE?

The circumstances and situations of our lives change all the time. That's why you should review what's transpired since you last updated your

insurance program, and anticipate what may happen this year. During Open Enrollment, you should think about things like:

- ? Do I need to switch plans to better suit my needs or finances?
 - ? Should I opt in or out of the Premium Conversion Plan?
 - ? Do I need to add or remove dependents?
 - ? Do I need to add, remove, increase, or decrease life insurance for me or my dependents?
- NOTE: Increasing life insurance requires a medical information form to be completed.**
- ? Has my tobacco use status changed?

Wise Signs ATV Legislation Into Law

Upon signing House Bill 4022, the All-Terrain Vehicle Regulation legislation, Governor Bob Wise remarked that West Virginia had just become a safer state. The new law requires anyone under age 18 to wear a helmet while riding an ATV, whether on public or private property. It also prohibits "double riding" for children under age 18, unless the driver has a license, and requires that by 2005, anyone under 18 who wishes to operate an ATV must obtain a safety training course certificate.

The Governor signed the bill on March 9, 2004 in the presence of legislators, safety advocates, and a number of children and youth. Wise emphatically believes in this new law. During the signing, he stated, "Nothing is more important than protecting our youth."

Insureds who are tobacco-free enjoy the benefit of reduced premiums. To qualify for the discount during the upcoming Plan Year, you must be tobacco-free as of January 31, 2004. You must also complete the tobacco affidavit that will be mailed to you during the Open Enrollment period. The affidavit must be submitted by May 7, 2004.

PEIA will hold benefit fairs during the month of April. Watch your mailbox for announcements and forms, or flip over to Page 2 for dates, times, and locations.

For more, you can visit PEIA's newly updated website at www.wvpeia.com/ – please note that you will need to create an account online at the website in order to access additional information.

Your registration information is for PEIA purposes only and will not be used by or sold to other sites or users.



ABOVE: Governor Bob Wise signs House Bill 4022 into law.

RIGHT: Wise displays the signed law along with a sample helmet. Asked if he rides ATV's, he responded, "I will ... as soon as I buy a helmet."



WVU, Marshall U. Offer Joint MPA Program

Information contributed by Blair Taylor of the State Treasurer's Office.

There is good news for Charleston-area government and public service employees – you can now pursue a fully accredited West Virginia University (WVU) Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA) in Charleston! Created and operated jointly by the Division of Public Administration at WVU and the Department of Political Science at Marshall University, the extended Charleston-MPA Degree Program is now being offered in a student-friendly format in late afternoon and evening classes at the Kanawha Valley Graduate Center.

The MPA degree is designed as a 45 credit hour program, including a semester-long internship (students who qualify as “public service professionals” are allowed to apply for a waiver of the internship). The core coursework includes Public Management Theory and Practice, Legal and Political Foundations of P.A., Public Financial Management, Public Budgeting, Public Human Resource Systems, Quantitative Methods in P.A., and Applied Methods in P.A.

Additional courses are available for elective credit, including newly added classes from WVU’s healthcare management track. Two classes are taught each semester by WVU and Marshall faculty with doctoral education in the field. Summer coursework is also offered. The program is now in its second year of operation and the first students are set to graduate in May. The degree awarded is the WVU Master of Public Administration Degree.

A new cohort of approximately 30 students is now being recruited for the coming Fall semester. The application process is com-

petitive. Information may be obtained from State agency personnel/human resource offices, or by calling the Division of Public Administration in Morgantown (Dr. Christopher Plein, Associate Chair or Office Manager Deborah Koon, 293-2614) or the WVU Extended Learn-



(L-R): Sammy Gray (WV Senate), Ben Shew (Department of Education), Ashleigh Goode (Development Office), and Alison Wilson (Women’s Commission) are only a few of the State employees currently taking advantage of the Charleston-MPA Degree Program.

ing Office in Charleston (Pamela Cutright, 558-3471).



OPEN ENROLLMENT BENEFIT FAIRS

Mark down the date, time, and location for your area and take advantage of the information provided at PEIA’s Benefit Fairs. Staff will be available as listed below to help answer your questions so you can select the best options for you and your family.

<p>BECKLEY Apr. 22 3-7 P.M. Tamarack Conference Ctr., Ballroom A One Tamarack Park (I-77, exit 45)</p>	<p>FLATWOODS Apr. 8 3-7 P.M. Days Inn 200 Sutton Lane</p>	<p>MORGANTOWN Apr. 13 3-7 P.M. Ramada Inn U.S. 119 at I-79 and I-68</p>
<p>CHARLESTON Apr. 12 9 A.M. - 3 P.M. State Capitol, Building 7, Conference Ctr. 1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.</p>	<p>HUNTINGTON Apr. 19 9 A.M.-1:30 P.M. Marshall Univ. - Memorial Student Ctr. Fifth Avenue and Elm Street</p>	<p>PARKERSBURG Apr. 20 3-7 P.M. Holiday Inn U.S. Route 50 and I-77</p>
<p>CHARLESTON Apr. 12 3-7 P.M. Charleston Civic Center, Parlor B 200 Civic Center Drive</p>	<p>HUNTINGTON Apr. 19 3-7 P.M. Big Sandy Superstore Arena One Civic Center Plaza</p>	<p>RIPLEY Apr. 21 3-7 P.M. Best Wester - McCoy’s Inn & Conf. Ctr. 701 West Main Street</p>
<p>ELKINS Apr. 15 3-7 P.M. Days Inn 1200 Harrison Avenue</p>	<p>MARTINSBURG Apr. 14 3-7 P.M. Comfort Inn 1872 Edwin Miller Blvd.</p>	<p>WEIRTON Apr. 6 3-7 P.M. Holiday Inn 350 Three Springs Drive</p>
<p>FAIRMONT Apr. 20 9 A.M.-1:30 P.M. Fairmont State College 1201 Locust Avenue</p>	<p>MORGANTOWN Apr. 13 9 A.M.-1:30 P.M. WVU - Mountainlair Mountaineer Room 1550 University Avenue</p>	<p>WHEELING Apr. 7 3-7 P.M. Ramada Plaza City Center 1200 Market Street</p>

Vital Registration Program Keeps Birth/Death Certificates

Where do you go when you need a copy of a birth or death certificate? The answer is the Vital Registration Office in the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

Vital Registration is the official custodian for all birth certificates of people born anywhere in the State from 1917 to present, and for death certificates of anyone who passes away within our borders. In addition, the agency has, completed marriage applications from 1960 to date, information regarding divorces from 1968 forward, and many “delayed” birth certificates for people born in West Virginia before 1917 that were filed after 1917 if they were not already on file in the county.

Generally, only the individual, specific relatives, legal representatives, or an authorized government agency can obtain copies of birth certificates. Relatives include parents/stepparents; children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc., including half- and step-relationships; siblings, including half- and step-

relationships; grandparents or great-grandparents; mothers- or fathers-in-law; sons- or daughters-in-law; or legal guardians. Death certificates will only be issued to the individual’s next of kin or to persons with a legal right to the certificate.

In each case, there is a \$5 non-refundable search fee that covers a three-year period: the year specified plus the year before and after. The fee also entitles the applicant to one copy of the record. Additional copies are \$5 each. If a record cannot be found, the applicant will be notified in writing. Copies can be obtained directly by visiting the Vital Registration walk-in office off the main lobby of the WV DHHR Diamond Building on Capitol Street in Charleston, or by making application through the mail, or for express service, by ordering through VitalChek.

Normal turn-around time for receiving certificates by mail is two to three weeks, although the wait can be longer at peak periods. An expedited service called VitalChek (www.vitalchek.com) is available at an additional charge if time is of the essence. As county clerks in West Virginia are also local custodians of birth, death and marriage records, citizens have local access to vital records and rarely need this service but it is invaluable to those born here and living out of state who desperately need a birth certificate for immediate out-of-country travel. To use this service, you will need a credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express). Print out a copy of the appropriate application form (birth or death certificate) so that you can gather the required information. Have the completed form and your credit card handy when you either use the service online or call them toll-free at 1-877-448-3953.

The Vital Registration Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. For more information, call 304-558-2931 or visit www.wvdhhr.org on the internet and click on the “obtain birth/death records” link under the “How Do I...” sidebar on the left side of the page.

Keep April Fools Jokes Simple – Unlike These Folks

April 1 is the day on which we’re all on the lookout for tricks and pranks. While most are minor “gotcha’s,” some folks have gone out of their way to get a laugh, including corporate America. The following are quoted/edited from *Top 100 April Fool’s Day Hoaxes and Practical Jokes ... of All Time* (www.museumofhoaxes.com/aprilfool) and have been verified by other sources. Laugh and enjoy!

SAN SERRIFFE: In 1977, the British newspaper *The Guardian* published a special seven-page supplement in honor of the tenth anniversary of San Serriffe, a small republic located in the Indian Ocean consisting of several semi-colon-shaped islands. A series of articles affectionately described the geography and culture of this obscure nation. Its two main islands were named Upper Caisse and Lower Caisse. Its capital was Bodoni, and its leader was General Pica. The *Guardian’s* phones rang all day as readers sought more information about the idyllic holiday spot. Few noticed that everything about the island was named after printer’s terminology. The success of this hoax is widely credited with launching the enthusiasm for April Foolery that then gripped the British tabloids in the following decades. In fact, articles on the island appeared in 1978, 1980, and 1999, yet each time, the island changed ocean locations.

THE SYDNEY ICEBERG: On April 1, 1978, a barge appeared in Sydney Harbor towing a giant iceberg. Sydneysiders were expecting it. Dick Smith, a local adventurer and



millionaire businessman (owner of Dick Smith’s Foods), had been loudly promoting his scheme to tow an iceberg from Antarctica for quite some time. Now he had apparently succeeded. He said that he was going to carve the berg into small ice cubes, which he would sell to the public for 10¢ each. These well-traveled cubes, fresh from the

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pure waters of Antarctica, were promised to improve the flavor of any drink they cooled. Slowly the iceberg made its way into the harbor. Local radio stations provided excited blow-by-blow coverage of the scene. Only when the berg was well into the harbor was its secret revealed. It started to rain, and the firefighting foam and shaving cream that the berg was really made of washed away, uncovering the white plastic sheets beneath.

BIG BEN GOES DIGITAL: In 1980 the BBC reported that Big Ben, in order to keep up with the times, was going to be given a digital readout. It received a huge response from listeners protesting the change. The BBC's Japanese service also announced that the clock hands would be sold to the first four listeners to contact them, and one Japanese seaman in the mid-Atlantic immediately radioed in a bid.

LIFE DISCOVERED ON JUPITER: In 1996, America Online (AOL) subscribers who logged on were greeted by a news flash announcing that a "Government source reveals signs of life on Jupiter." The claim was backed up by statements from a planetary biologist and an assertion by AOL president Ted Leonsis that his company was in possession of documents proving that the government was hiding the existence of life on the massive planet. The story quickly generated over 1,300 messages on AOL. A spokesman for the company later explained that the hoax had been intended as a tribute to Orson Welles's 1938 Halloween broadcast of the *War of the Worlds*.

NAT TATE: A lavish party was held at Jeff Koons's New York studio in 1998 to honor the memory of the late, great American artist Nat Tate, a troubled abstract expressionist who destroyed 99% of his own work before leaping to his death from the Staten Island Ferry. At the party, superstar David Bowie read aloud selections from William Boyd's soon-to-be released biography of Tate, "Nat Tate: An American Artist, 1928-1960." Critics in the crowd murmured appreciative comments about Tate's work as they sipped their drinks. The only catch was that Tate never existed. He was the satirical creation of William Boyd. Bowie, Boyd, and Boyd's publisher were the only ones in on the joke.

THE LEFT-HANDED WHOPPER: In 1998 Burger King published a full-page advertisement in *USA Today* announcing the introduction of a new item to their menu: a "Left-Handed Whopper" specially designed for the 32 million left-handed Americans. According to the ad, the new sandwich included the same ingredients as the original (lettuce, tomato, hamburger patty, etc.), but all the condiments were rotated 180° for the benefit of their left-handed customers. The following day Burger King issued a follow-up release revealing that although the Left-Handed Whopper was a hoax, thousands of customers had gone into restaurants to request the new sandwich. Simultaneously, according to the press release, "many others requested their own right-handed version."

Everyone likes a good joke, but if you're thinking about an April Fools trick or prank, take care to keep it simple, and think it through long and hard to be sure it won't harm the intended victim or anyone else in any way. Remember, the best jokes are those where the victim laughs the hardest. If there's any possibility the victim or another person will be offended, be considerate and don't take the chance.



It's time – time to lose an hour by turning the clock ahead for Daylight Savings Time which begins on April 4, 2004.

DNR Junior Conservation Camp

Children ages 11-14 can spend a week of their summer learning about conservation and the environment and how to become good stewards of our natural resources by attending the Division of Natural Resources Junior Conservation Camp. The camp will be held June 21-25, 2004, at Cedar Lakes near Ripley. Cost is \$117 per camper (includes food and lodging). Registration deadline is May 1. For more, visit www.wv.dnr.gov/2004news/04news048.shtm or call Vickie Hash at 558-3370.

Pencil In ...



If you think cash will run short over the weekend, consider **getting cash back when you buy something with your debit card.** You could avoid paying ATM fees when you aren't near a branch of your own bank, which can be especially difficult when traveling. Supermarkets offer up to \$50 cash back, and some merchants allow as much as \$200.



QUIT SMOKING with FREE HELP! The YNot-Quit Program offers PEIA insureds, Medicaid recipients, and uninsured State residents an opportunity to quit smoking with the help of free booklets and coaching, and a **FREE 8-week supply of nicotine patches.** The program is acceptable for anyone, including pregnant women, teens, and users of smokeless tobacco.



**MAKE THE CALL TODAY:
1-877-966-8784**



is a publication of the West Virginia Department of Administration, Division of Personnel

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