



DHHR Region II Unveils New Promotion Gazebo

What's shaped like a hexagon, weighs 227 pounds, is 11 feet 10 inches at its widest point, and stands 9 feet tall? If you guessed the portable gazebo now owned by the Department of Health and Human Resources' (DHHR) Region II Office, you're right!

The gazebo is being used at fairs, festivals, ball games, and other events to recruit potential foster and adoptive parents for West Virginia children who are in DHHR custody, and who are in need of stable families and home lives.

DHHR as a whole received adoption incentive funds from the federal government as the result of completing a high number of adoptions statewide for older children, sibling groups, and children with special needs (DHHR completed 381 adoptions statewide – the most ever! – with 109 of them from Region II). The money was divided between the various regional offices within DHHR. When the Region II Office received its share, they wanted to find a special way to spend the money – a way to reach and help a large number of people.

Gary Barker, a supervisor at the Region II Office, is credited with the initial idea for the gazebo. "I first saw one for the State Treasurer's Office at a fair in Boone County. I noticed it attracted a large number of visitors, and I thought it would be a great way to attract potential parents for our program."

Barker, the other office supervisors, Charlie Harkins and Sue McDowelle, and Program Manager

Beth Cook discussed the idea and presented it to Regional Director Jim Kimbler, who gave approval for the project. Cook says the project had wide support from the Region II staff. "Everyone has been very enthusiastic about the gazebo, and we are all hopeful it will improve our ability to find foster and adoptive parents."

The gazebo is large enough to accommodate four to six staff members and is made of durable weatherproof material. Inside the structure, there is a counter/writing space to display promotional items and program information. The unit is highly mobile – it fits in six carrying cases that are easily transportable in a van or truck, and assembly takes 30 minutes or less. It will be manned by Region II personnel, and everyone will take turns.

According to McDowelle, staff members have high hopes for visibility the gazebo will provide. "We have so many children in need of loving, caring homes. With the gazebo, we hope to reach out to the public and encourage them to consider becoming foster or adoptive parents."

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Proudly displaying their new portable gazebo are: Taunja Hutchison (as the bear); back row (l-r): Kelly Booton, Melanie Curry, Beth Cook, and Matthew Pettry; outside right (l-r): Charlie Harkins and Amy Lawson Booth; front row (l-r): Drema Welch, Gary Barker, Vanessa Brunty, and Sue McDowelle.



Enjoy
FREE MOVIES
offered by
and at the
West Virginia Cultural Center
Dec. 11 thru 30
2 Showings: 1 and 4 P.M.

Dec. 11 A Child's Christmas in Wales
Dec. 18 Dinosaurs; Princess Furbal; Animal Holiday; The Adventures of Prince Achmed
Dec. 27 Hidalgo
Dec. 28 Singin' in the Rain
Dec. 29 Dinosaurs; Luxo Jr., Red's Dream, Tin Toy; The Cabinet of Jan Svankmajer; All Nothing (Tout Rien); The Man Who Planted Trees; and The Adventures of Prince Achmed
Dec. 30 The Star Spangled Banner; Power of Time; and Faust

For more information, call 558-0220 or visit www.wvculture.org/museum/freefilms.html

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Cook says there is a great need for people willing to take older children and large sibling groups, as well as those with special needs. “These kids have been waiting and waiting for a family. Some have been waiting for a long time.” She adds, “Reaching out to the public doesn’t mean ‘the public’ in terms of how we usually interpret it as State employees. In this case, we’re talking about *anyone* who would like to be considered – including older parents, single parents, or non-traditional families, and we encourage interested State employees to apply.” (Application and website information appears as a separate box item below.)

The gazebo’s first appearances will be during a variety of holiday parades and events this month. Another part of the promotion is, as Barker calls it, “our big bear.” A life-size character bear will accompany the gazebo to events and will be portrayed initially by staff members Mike Lucas, Matthew Pettry, and Taunja Hutchison. “But,” says Barker, “we have a dilemma. Our bear doesn’t have a name!” With that in mind, Region II is conducting a “Name Our Bear! Contest” – for information on suggesting a name ... and the incentive for trying ... see the box item on this page.

The Region II Office employs 20 people who provide services to citizens in Boone, Cabell, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, Mason, Putnam, Roane, and Wayne counties. The staff of Region II wishes to sincerely thank Lynn Lorentz, Community Services Manager for Boone County, who graciously found room to store the gazebo during non-use periods; Cheryl Garnes of the DHHR Communications Office, who assisted with obtaining permissions for logos and artwork; and Anna Bailey, DHHR Regional Comptroller, who worked diligently on purchasing and funding.

DOH Roadways Cover a Lot of Territory

Winding along West Virginia’s mountains, valleys, rivers, and farmland is a complex system of roads, byways, highways, and bridges. According to the [Division of Highways’ website](#), the DOH maintains:

- 37,370 miles of public roads
- 34,610 miles of State highway
- 88 miles of the West Virginia Turnpike
- 549 of the country’s 46,068 miles of interstate highway
- 1,736 of the country’s 158,920-mile National Highway System
- 6,343 bridges, of which 32% are more than 100 feet in length
- 2 national and 8 State scenic byways



How does a scrumptious meal at Allie’s Restaurant, located in the Charleston Marriott, sound? All you have to do is come up with a catchy name for the Region II Bear in the

NAME OUR BEAR! CONTEST

If your suggestion chosen, you’ll win a gift certificate to Allie’s. Send entries to:

Name Our Bear! Contest
DHHR - Region II
Post Office Box 970
Danville, WV 25053

Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2005 for consideration. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent?

Visit the Department of Health and Human Resources’ website at: www.wvdhhr.org/oss/adoption/ where you can find answers to questions, view photos and read information about specific children, view policy and procedure information, and access forms.

WVSECC – When, What, Why, and How

Contributed by Judy Howard of the Bureau of Employment Programs.

It's now the time of year to seriously think about our responsibilities as families, friends, and neighbors. It's coming upon a time of giving. Yes, this was an election year, and traditionally, charitable gifts are less than in non-election years. And even though there are good times, over the past few years, we've seen turmoil, disagreement, disillusionment, vast differences, and a country torn. Many people wonder how are we can heal this rift.

How about through financial support for *any* of the different charities associated with our West Virginia State Employees Combined Campaign (WVSECC)?

Give to the USO and Red Cross to support our troops overseas. Did you know the Red Cross will find your soldier in a time of family emergency, and get your soldier in contact with you? Give to the Salvation Army or one of the other local human care agencies that are helping military families and other families in financial straits stay afloat. A few dollars a month goes so much farther than you can ever imagine.

Give to the Children's Therapy Clinic while it continues to bring

the delight of success to special needs children, while their parents wipe tears of joy from their eyes. With a waiting list of over 70 children, don't you it's a worthwhile cause? These are only the children with the most need; many others aren't on the list, but could benefit from help. The Children's Therapy Clinic was started in Charleston over 70 years ago, and today still struggles to get by because it operates on donated dollars. Each time giving declines, so do the hopes of those families awaiting services.

Donate to Kanawha Hospice. Though it would be wonderful if they were never needed, this is what they do: Hospice steps in when families of terminally ill individuals are hanging on by a thread. Hospice steps in and removes all the burdens of juggling medications, doctor visits, and long, sleepless nights spent caring for the loved one. Hospice allows the families to use those last remaining days or weeks just spending the precious time left with the patient. Hospice also allows your loved one to pass in his or her own home, or the home of a family member, with dignity and in peace.

Though we all have our struggles and problems, many in our State feel they are beyond hope. Those are the people who it seems are never seen, never heard, never "important" enough and, unfortunately, never matter. As one large, committed, cohesive unit, State government employees have the ability to help the needy and unfortunate realize they do indeed matter. We can make them important – to us. So, when you receive your pledge sheet that gives you the opportunity to bring us, as a State, back together in support of such important causes, think, listen to your heart, and act.

The West Virginia State Employees Combined Campaign is our opportunity to touch the lives of those who lack even the most basic daily life necessities. Our meager donations of a couple of dollars a payday can make an enormous difference in the lives of our neighbors, friends, family, and other West Virginians. We can provide items to make life a bit easier, or to make it livable to those without hope, goals, or tomorrows. How about it? Just a dollar a week can make an indelible mark of hope on so many hopeless hearts.

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

The Alaska Department of Motor Vehicles estimates that for the cost of one impaired driving conviction, a person could take a taxi 11,370 miles – close to half way around the Earth!

**PLEASE ...
Don't drive if you've been drinking or taken any kind of drug or medication.**

Do You Wash Your Hands



PROPERLY?

The single, best thing you can do for yourself to prevent most kinds of illness and disease is to wash your hands, often and thoroughly. But what exactly is proper handwashing technique? According to the Centers for Disease Control and the American Society of Microbiology, follow these procedures:

- ◆ Wet hands in warm, running water; apply soap and lather well.
- ◆ Rub hands VIGOROUSLY for at least 10-15 seconds, making sure to scrub all hand surfaces.
- ◆ Dry hands with a clean towel (cloth or paper). When using a public restroom, use the towel you used to dry your hands to turn off the faucet.

Nominations Needed for 2005 Governor's Arts Awards

Contributed by Ginny Painter of the Division of Culture and History

The West Virginia Commission on the Arts of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History (WVDCH) is soliciting nominations for the 2005 Governor's Arts Awards. All West Virginians are encouraged to nominate individual artists, organizations, and communities for seven categories of awards to be presented at a ceremony on Monday, April 4, 2005, at the Cultural Center in the State Capitol Complex.

"The arts in West Virginia provide both human and economic development for communities and individuals all over the State," said Troy Body, Culture and History Commissioner. "Artists and arts organizations have earned public and official respect. By honoring their invaluable contributions with these awards, we are celebrating the arts as a magnet for talent and business in West Virginia."

Jeanne Mozier, chairman of the Governor's Arts Awards Committee, outlined the process that will determine who will be honored. "All those who will be recognized at the Governor's Arts Awards will come from nominations made by the public. The nominations will be reviewed and rated by an objective process conducted by more than a dozen people both in and out of the State," said Mozier. "We need all parts of the arts community to help by making nominations. Your choice cannot be selected if you don't make the nomination," she added.

The award categories are:

- * **Distinguished Arts Award** for lifetime achievement in the arts.
- * **Arts Patron Award** for individual or organizational contributions of time, effort, or financial resources to the arts.
- * **Arts in Education or Service to Youth Award** for individual or organizational achievements.
- * **Creative Community Spirit Award** for a city, town, or community non-arts organization using the arts for community development or betterment.
- * **Arts Leadership and Service Award** for visionary individual or arts organization leadership and service in the arts.
- * **Artistic Excellence Award** for significant contributions to the arts in West Virginia by either an established or emerging artist.
- * **Arts Innovator Award** for an individual, group, organization, or educator who has successfully executed innovative methods of involving the public in arts experiences.

For more information or to request nomination forms, see the Division's website at www.wvculture.org or contact Debbie Rainey Haught at 558-0240 or debbie.haught@wvculture.org. **The deadline for nominations is January 14, 2005.**

From a Dove Milk Chocolate wrapper:

What if the season to be jolly lasted all year long?



Now here's a sweet thought!



Pencil In ...



Effective January 1, 2005, the **mileage rate for business travel** will increase to 40.5¢ per mile.



Effective November 22, 2004, **Laidley Field visitor's lot parking meters** have been converted to 10-hour meters that will accept quarters only.



Bring out the dust cloth! January 10 is **National Clean Off Your Desk Day!**



January is **National Volunteer Blood Donor Month.**

If you weren't able to donate at the Capitol Blood Drive this month, make an appointment with your local Red Cross Chapter anytime and give the gift of life.



Tempted to remove Internet Explorer (IE) from your PC? Think again. IE is deeply embedded into Windows, so you can't really remove it entirely. And, some websites are tailored to IE, so you might need it to view them.



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