

Read up! There's a Lot Going On at PEIA!

The following articles are taken and/or reprinted from the December 2005 issue of PEIA News.

It's Time to Be Tobacco-Free!

For Plan Year 2007, which begins on July 1, 2006, PEIA will once again charge premiums for PPB Plan health coverage and optional life insurance **based on tobacco status**. To qualify for the discounted "tobacco-free" premiums, you must be tobacco-free by January 1, 2006, and remain tobacco-free through the beginning of the new plan year.

PEIA offers resources to members who want to quit tobacco. The Quit Line provides counseling and support, including written materials to each program enrollee. PEIA covers both prescription and non-prescription tobacco cessation products for those who have enrolled in the tobacco cessation program.

Nicotine patches provided by the Quit Line are offered free of charge, and the program has expanded this year to offer members one additional course of patches.

Plan members can now receive nicotine patches once each plan year, **up to three times in a lifetime**.

Under the PEIA PPB Plan, PEIA also covers other nicotine replacement therapies for a \$5 copay, as well as Zyban, the prescription drug prescribed to assist with tobacco cessation. Zyban is a preferred drug with a copayment of \$15 for a 34-day supply.

Pregnant participants (employees and spouses only) can receive 100% coverage from PEIA for the tobacco cessation benefit during any pregnancy in the participant's lifetime.

See PEIA – Page 2

Shepherd U. Receives Princeton Review Award

Shepherd University (SU) was selected as a 2006 Best Southeastern College by the Princeton Review.

Any college chosen had to meet Princeton Review standards for academic excellence within its region. The review features an overview of SU that includes items such as admissions, financial aid, student body, academics, campus life, and programs offered. Student comments were also included.

The award is given to increase awareness of schools that are academically excellent but lesser-known for students who desire to study within a specific geographic area.



Latest Suggestion Award Recipient is WCC's Cheryl Moore

(Photo provided by Denny Rhodes)



Governor Joe Manchin (third from the left) presents Cheryl Moore (third from the right) with her suggestion award check.

West Virginia's latest Employee Suggestion Program award recipient is Cheryl Moore of the Workers's Compensation Commission. Ms. Moore realized that when mail is returned because of insufficient or wrong addresses, the addresses are corrected and remailed to every vendor involved in the claim when only one remail is necessary. She suggested that the agency modify its computer program to include an option for resending only one letter instead of mailing out a new letter to each vendor. The suggestion was implemented in March, 2003 and resulted in between 50-80 reductions in resent mail per day, saving the agency approximately \$4,550. Ms. Moore received a check from Governor Joe Manchin for \$910 at a ceremony held in early December.

For more details on the Tobacco-free Discount, see page 26 of your Summary Plan Description. For details of the Tobacco Cessation benefit, see pages 51 and 74. To contact the Quit Line, call toll-free 1-877-966-8784.

Sign Up for Open Enrollment

PEIA will offer online open enrollment again this year. To qualify to do your enrollment online, you must complete and submit the sign-up form on the agency's homepage at www.wvpeia.com.

Premiums Increased Jan. 1

PEIA's premiums have been frozen at the Plan Year 2005 level for six months until January 1, 2006. At that time, a premium increase for active employees of State agencies, county boards of education, State colleges and universities, and for all retirees is effective.

Medical ID Card Update

At the request of policyholders, PEIA will now issue Medical ID Cards bearing a unique patient identifier instead of the policyholder's Social Security Number. New members will initially receive cards in this manner; cards for current members will be mailed throughout the coming year.

Visit PEIA online often for changes and up-to-date information: www.wvpeia.com.

NEW E-MAIL FOR GRIEVANCE BOARD The Education and State Employees Grievance Board has changed their Charleston e-mail addresses. The main Grievance Board address e-mail is now wvgb@wvgb.org. E-mail sent to the old addresses prior to January 1, 2006 automatically forward to the new account; however, e-mail sent to the old addresses after January 1 will not – the old account is shut down as of that date. Please change your address books.

Certified Arts Community Program Announced

The State Division of Culture and History (WVDCH) has recently announced the implementation of The West Virginia Certified Arts Community (CAC) Program.

Eligibility for a CAC designation requires that the community support arts organizations through volunteer governance, financial contributions, and audiences for arts programming; by adopting a resolution recognizing the importance of the arts to economic development, educational quality, and civic involvement; and by demonstrating a successful collaborations between arts, humanities, and heritage groups, as well as

business leaders and jurisdictional agencies.

An application is necessary and must include any required supporting documentation such as letters of support, resolutions of governing authorities, etc. Each application will be reviewed by the WVDCH arts section; successful applications will be forwarded on to the West Virginia Commission on the Arts for final approval.


For more details or an application packet, call Richard Ressimyer at 558-0240. Applications are also available at www.wvculture.org/arts/grants.html on the internet.

Women's Day at the Legislature 2006

Women's Day at the Legislature for 2006 will be held on January 31. Don't wait! Get your registration forms from the West Virginia Women's Commission internet website at www.wvdhhr.org/women/WomansDayLeg/day_at_the_legislature.htm, by calling 558-0070, or by e-mailing wvwc@wvdhhr.org.



First Lady Gayle Manchin (top left) enjoys the day with participants from last year's event. Mrs. Manchin provided the keynote address. (Photo from Women's Commission website)

CARING FOR YOUR POINSETTIA 

You received a beautiful poinsettia over the holidays ... and now you have to care for it. Just how do you do that?

If the pot is wrapped in foil, punch holes in the bottom so the roots don't stand in water. Place the plant in a saucer to collect excess water.

Always use room-temperature water so you don't chill the roots when giving your plant a drink. Add water slowly until it drains out the bottom. When do you water? When the top ¼-inch of the soil is dry; generally every 3 days. Fertilize it once a month with a water-soluble fertilizer, following the label directions.

WV Offers Tax Credit for Alternative Fuel Motor Vehicles

Contributed by Mark Muchow of the State Tax Department.

Individuals are concerned about the recent spike in gasoline prices. One way to reduce gasoline costs is to buy a hybrid vehicle. West Virginia offers an income tax credit of as much as \$3,750 for most individuals to cover the cost of any price differential between a hybrid car and the same model conventional car.

West Virginia provides a credit for the purchase of a new motor vehicle that runs on an alternative fuel or for the conversion of a traditionally-fueled motor vehicle to an alternatively-fueled motor vehicle. Alternative fuel types include compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, liquefied petroleum, methanol, ethanol, coal-derived liquid fuels, electricity, solar energy, and fuel mixtures containing at least 85% alcohol.

The credit may not exceed the actual cost of converting the vehicle, the actual cost of retrofitting the vehicle, or the difference between the cost of the new alternative-fuel mo-

tor vehicle and the cost of a comparably equipped vehicle that uses traditional fuel. In no event may the maximum total credit allowed exceed the following amounts:

Gross Vehicle Weight Maximum Credit

- 10,000 pounds or less \$3,750
- 10,001 to 26,000 pounds \$9,250
- More than 26,000 pounds \$50,000

For buses seating more than 20 adults, the maximum credit is \$50,000. A taxpayer who is otherwise entitled to a credit for a vehicle that operates exclusively on electricity is entitled to an additional credit of 10%, provided the incremental credit does not exceed the actual incremental cost for the alternative-fueled motor vehicle.

The credit is claimed against up to 100% of the taxpayer's annual liability for State income taxes (i.e., Corporation Net Income Tax or Personal Income Tax). A maximum of five vehicles per taxpayer may qualify for credit in any one year. The credit allowance is prorated over a period of three years at a rate of one-third per year. There are no tax credit carry-overs beyond this three-year proration period. Excess credits are forfeited.

The credit may not be claimed by any taxpayer under any federal or State obligation to convert to alternative-fuel vehicles.

Interested? Hurry – the credit is set to expire on June 5, 2006!

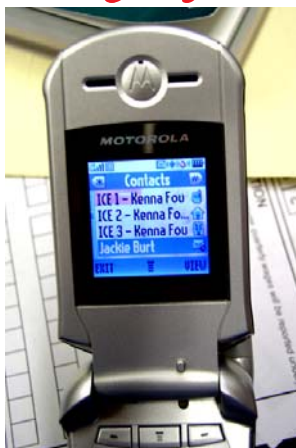
Hybrid cars aren't just for "the common folk" – there are several types of hybrid cars, and the Toyota Prius is driven by environmentally conscious stars like Julia Roberts, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Larry David.

In Case of Emergency, Just Add ICE!

Ice makes us cautious in the winter and cools us in the summer, but did you know that ICE can provide valuable information in an emergency situation?

Emergency personnel such as police officers, EMTs, and rescue workers across the country are now trained to look for an ICE listing in a victim's cell phone if the victim is unconscious or otherwise unable to provide necessary information.

An ICE entry in the contact portion of your cell phone provides the telephone number(s) for anyone you want called in the event of an emergency. Need to list more than one person and/or number?



Simply add listings in the order you want people called and label them ICE 1, ICE 2, ICE 3, etc.

Bill Carpenter, Chief of Operations for the Kanawha County Ambulance Authority, tells us that his staff is aware to look for ICE entries when necessary. Adding the entry may not only prove important locally, but also when traveling, since this procedure is becoming more widely adopted across the U.S.

Don't put a freeze on your ability to get assistance in an emergency –

Take Time NOW to add ICE!

Would you like to search out more about hybrid cars? You can find information on several models at:

<http://www.hybridcenter.org/>

OR

<http://hybridcars.about.com/>

The above websites are provided for informational purposes only.



MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WV's ATV LAWS

Many West Virginia citizens now own ATVs but are unaware of the laws governing their use. To learn about the laws governing ATVs, download and print a handy and useful brochure at:

www.wvdot.com/6_motorists/dmv/downloads/ATVLaws.pdf

CPRB FAQ's Answered

Edited and reprinted from the Consolidated Public Retirement Board webpage (www.wvretirement.com/news.htm)

Each spring, State employees receive a statement of their contributions and service. Below are the answers to four frequently asked questions:

- The annual statement you received in the spring of 2006 will represent account activity through December 31, 2005. Any reinstatements, purchase of retroactive service, transfer of teachers service, or other changes to your contributing service which transpired after December 31, 2005 will be reflected on your annual statement for the year ending December 31, 2006.
- Interest is only added to monies that have been in your account for one year; therefore, interest for 2005 deposits will be added on your December 31, 2006 annual statement.
- Please note that pay type "S" represents months reported as a salaried employee and pay type "H" represents months reported as an hourly employee. Should you be reported as both an "S" and an "H", you may wish to check with your payroll clerk as to why. These pay types are designated through the payroll locations and we post them to your account as we receive them.
- Members working for West Virginia State agencies will find that the year 1999 salary and contributions have been split into two separate entries. This split is due to the implementation of the EPICS payroll system and will not affect your retirement benefits. When the member is ready to retire, the salary and months of service are combined to give one total for the year.



Winter WOW

We're Your State Credit Union

Get A Remote Start System* Or A \$200 Deposit** Into Your Savings Account Upon Vehicle Purchase!

January 1 - 31, 2006 • Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. & Sat. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

To check out a great selection of vehicles go to our NEW website enterprisecarsales.com.

Enterprise 1.800.car.sales
Happier than buying. Worldwide ownership.

For more information call your Credit Union, or Enterprise Car Sales at 1.800.car.sales.

News From the Medical Front

Take steps NOW to avoid cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Protecting your eyes from the sun is an essential step. Buy sunglasses that protect against UVA and UVB damage. Lutein and zeaxanthin in the retina help to protect the eyes. Vitamins C, D, and beta-carotene chase away cell damaging free radicals. How can you get enough of these? Eat plenty of varied fruits and vegetables. A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that people who consume a high amount of carotenoids from dark green leafy vegetables reduce their risks of macular degeneration and cataracts by 43% and 50%, respectively.

Pencil In ...



January 16 isn't only the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday; it's also **Religious Freedom Day**. It's celebrated to commemorate the adoption of a religious freedom statute by the Virginia legislature in 1786.



Did you earn less than \$37,458 during tax year 2005? Visit www.wveitc.com or call 1-866-WVA-EITC to see if you qualify for the **Earned Income Tax Credit**. You could save up to \$4,400!



January 8, 2006 marks the day the **cost of sending a first class letter in the U.S. raises** from 37¢ to 39¢. The U.S. Postal Service has two-cent stamps available for purchase to add with your leftover 37-cent stamps. This is the fourth postage increase since 1999.



If using a **space heater**, keep it three feet or more from anything else in the room.

Stateline is a publication of the West Virginia Department of Administration, Division of Personnel
 Joe Manchin III, Governor
 Robert W. Ferguson, Jr., Cabinet Secretary
 Max Farley, Acting Director of Personnel

Tari McClintock Crouse, Editor
Jane S. Fouty, Assistant Editor

State Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room 416
 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
 Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0139
 Telephone: 304/558-3950, ext. 206
 E-Mail: jfouty@wvadmin.gov

www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empcom/