

Stateline

A Newsletter For West Virginia State Government Employees

May 2006

Volume 17 Number 5

After a Decade, Toyota's Impact on West Virginia Immeasurable

Governor Joe Manchin's Weekly Column for May 26, 2006 (www.wvgov.org/FullColumn.cfm?id=301).

Earlier this week, I traveled to Putnam County to join Toyota Motor Corporation officials in celebrating the tenth anniversary of Toyota Motor Manufacturing of West Virginia's operations at Buffalo, WV.

For the 1,050 team members who keep Toyota's operations moving forward in Putnam County, this week's celebration was truly a mark of their success and productivity. It is no coincidence that once Toyota discovered West Virginia, the automotive giant decided to expand here five times during the past decade. That says a lot about Toyota's faith in West Virginia, and we encourage and welcome future expansions here in our State.

Historically, one of the key elements in Toyota's success worldwide has been loyalty: the loyalty of its team members to "The Toyota Way" of manufacturing; the loyalty of Toyota to the communities it serves; and, the loyalty of consumers to a quality product. As this automotive leader knows, you won't find a more loyal, well-trained and quality-driven workforce anywhere else in the world.

For three years running, Toyota's Buffalo plant has been ranked as the most productive engine manufacturing facility in North America by the Harbour



Governor Joe Manchin speaks at Toyota's 10th Anniversary celebration. Photo by Steve Rotsch.

Consulting Group (emphasis added). The automotive leader's impact on the West Virginia economy goes beyond its employee and consumer relationships, touching approximately 80 local suppliers who benefited from the \$41 million that Toyota put back into the State's economy with purchases during the past year.

Just as vital as its economic commitment is Toyota's commitment to the community, through investments in programs to help the communities it serves address their needs. Whether it is donating vehicles to community non-profit organizations, providing funding to refurbish ambulances and emergency services equipment or partnering on education programs with local schools, Toyota is very much an appreciated stakeholder in our West Virginia communities.

I am most grateful that Toyota has recognized the advantages of doing business in West Virginia, with West Virginians. Toyota's investments in the Mountain State represent a commitment to quality, a commitment to community, and a commitment to people. We are excited about what the future holds for this partnership.

Together, with corporate partners like Toyota, we are building a brighter future for West Virginia. On every level, Toyota has set the gold standard for other West Virginia companies to follow and truly represents everything West Virginia wants a corporate and community partner to be.



Toyota of West Virginia's Main Entrance. Photo by Jane Fouty.

Ethics Comm. Adopts Guidelines for Retirement Parties/Gifts

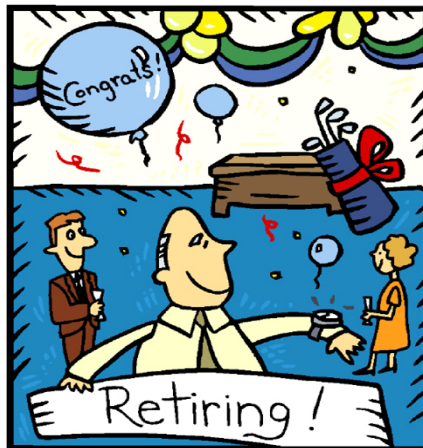
Contributed by Theresa Kirk of the West Virginia Ethics Commission.

In the workplace, it is customary to recognize a colleague who is either changing jobs or retiring by hosting a social function or giving a gift. Recognizing the dedicated service of a departing public servant serves a public purpose; however, there are limitations in the Ethics Act which govern these events.

Over the years, the Ethics Commission staff fielded numerous inquiries concerning the organization and planning of retirement parties. To give all public employees definitive guidance on this issue, the Commission has officially adopted *Guidelines for Retirement Gifts and Events*. A general overview of the guidelines follows.

An important restriction, which is also consistent with accepted social

etiquette, is that a public servant may never solicit his or her own gift or party. If a co-worker decides to organize an event for a departing colleague, the guidelines state that requests for contributions should be disseminated in a general announcement to all employees using such methods as an internal memo, E-mail, bulletin board notice, or staff meeting announcement. Any such announcement should clearly convey that participation is



voluntary. If there is a request that fellow employees contribute money towards a gift, the maximum amount which can be suggested is \$5.00. A public servant may contribute more, or less, if he or she so desires. **No retirement gift from fellow employees may exceed \$1,000.00.** A limit was imposed due to the size of various agencies: in some agencies, if all employees contributed \$5.00, the monetary value of a gift would be, in the opinion of the Commission, excessive.

Consistent with other provisions in the Ethics Act, specific restrictions also apply to receiving gifts from interested persons. Interested persons are those who: (1) Seek or do business with the public servant's agency; (2) Are engaged in activities regulated or controlled by their agency; or, (3) Have financial interests which may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of their official duties. Limiting the value of gifts from interested persons is a basic foundation of any ethics law. These restrictions historically were implemented to eliminate the practice of political favoritism in return for financial rewards to public servants – a practice sometimes known as “pay to play.”

Pursuant to the plain language in the Ethics Act, an interested person may never be solicited for a gift, even a gift of meals and beverages, unless it is for a charitable purpose. This restriction was established be-

Treasurer's Office Assumes State 457 Program

Information and photo provided by Greg Stone of the State Treasurer's Office.

As a result of legislation passed during the last regular session, State Treasurer John Perdue's office will begin oversight and management responsibilities for the West Virginia State Employee 457 Retirement Plan, effective July 1, 2006.

Perdue intends to aggressively market the plan and work closely with the fund manager, ING, to expand the number of investment options available to employees.

“State employees need flexibility in retirement investing, particularly in these uncertain times. We feel we can increase both the number of plan participants and the variety of choices available through ING,” said Perdue.

Perdue has tabbed John Fisher, a former Unclaimed Property Division supervisor, to head the program. According to Perdue, “John has consistently shown he can handle responsibility. I anticipate more of the same.”

A brochure regarding the 457 Plan changes and contact information is being prepared and will be distributed soon to State employees with their pay stubs.



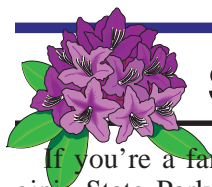
John Fisher

IT'S THE VACATION SEASON!



It's the vacation season! Don't let the excitement of getting away from it all dull your sense of security. One way to help keep your home safe while you're away: don't "advertise" that you're leaving. If possible, pack up out of direct sight. Back up your car or van inside your garage or into an out-of-view location.

See RETIREMENT – Page 4



State Parks and Forests Sponsors Essay Contest

If you're a fan of the West Virginia State Parks and Forests System, this contest may be for you!


My West Virginia State Parks: What They Mean to Me is the name of the contest being offered by the West Virginia State Parks and Forests (Parks). It's a free contest – no entry fee required – that's open to anyone, anywhere (with the exception of contest judges, employees of Parks, or members of their immediate families), ages 6 and up.

Essays must describe what West Virginia State Parks and Forests mean to the writer. This means drawing from memories, experiences, and feelings, and putting them into your own words. Handwritten documents will not be accepted; all entries must be typed or computer generated, double-spaced, and must include an entry form. By submitting an entry and form, you are indicating that you are the original author of the paper. Work composed by someone else or work that is copyrighted is

not eligible for submission. Entry categories are divided into age groups, and each age group is assigned a word limit, as follows:

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>LIMIT</u>		<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>LIMIT</u>
Children 6-8	075 Words		Teens 13-17	450 Words
Children 9-12	400 Words		Adults 18 and Over	450 Words

All eligible entries will be judged, within the appropriate age groups, by a panel of judges appointed by Parks. The judges will select first, second, and third places, and honorable mention in EACH age category. Winners will be notified by mail and will receive the following prizes:

First Place	A week at a West Virginia State Park cabin	
Second Place	Two nights at a Cass Scenic Railroad State Park cottage and four train tickets to Whittaker Station	
Third Place	A West Virginia State Parks Collectors Edition MONOPOLY Game	
Hon. Mention	An autographed book, <i>Jewels in Our Crown</i> , by Maureen Crocket	

Only one entry per person will be accepted. Entries must be postmarked by September 10, 2006 and mailed to:

West Virginia State Parks and Forests Essay Contest
 Capitol Complex, Building 3, Room 709  Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dust off that keyboard and let the words flow! Better yet – give the kids a fantastic summer project that might win a nice prize for the family! For questions or forms, e-mail essaycontest@wvdnr.gov today. For complete contest information and guidelines, visit the Parks website at www.wvstateparks.com/essaycontest.htm.



WIC Approved Foods List Available Online

A helpful resource is available to participants in the West Virginia Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC). The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Office of Nutrition Services maintains an online list of WIC-approved foods.

The list specifically identifies what foods, brands, and quantities may be purchased, and it's not just the commonly known items like milk, eggs, cereal, and juice that are permissible. Also included are foods like tuna, dried beans and peas, peanut butter, and cheese. The key is that program participants must follow the set guidelines – a task which is now made easier by the availability of the online list.

The minimum requirements for foods to be included on the WIC list

are defined by the Federal Regulations for WIC. In addition to these requirements, the WIC Program has established additional standards by which to evaluate and establish approved and allowable foods. Although WIC may limit the number of eligible food items within a food category, the program has made every effort to offer a number of alternative choices.

Every two years, the list of approved foods is evaluated and updated by a Food Product Review Committee. The committee is comprised of at least the State Agency Nutrition Education Coordinator, the State Agency Vendor Management Coordinator, a Local Agency Nutritionist, and a Local Agency Vendor Liaison. The latest list became effective May 1, 2005, with the next update slated for release on May 1, 2007.

To review the list of approved foods, details, and pictures, visit www.wvdhhr.org/ons/approved_foodlist.asp. If you have a suggestion, request, or question, please direct your inquiry to the Nutrition Education Coordinator for the West Virginia WIC Program at 558-0030 or sdaubman@bph.wvdhhr.org. All suggestions and requests should be submitted no later than August 1, 2006 to be considered for the next update.

You can view a list of WIC-Approved grocery stores
 for any West Virginia county at
www.wvdhhr.org/ons/approved_stores.asp.

RETIREMENT – Continued from Page 2

cause an interested person who is asked to contribute may feel coerced into giving a gift or monetary donation; therefore, a public employee may not ask an interested party to help underwrite or sponsor an event.

On the other hand, an interested person may *voluntarily* offer to sponsor or co-sponsor a function. Under these circumstances, such participation is permissible. There is no limit on the amount of money which the interested person may expend for food and beverages provided that the interested person is present at the social event. However, a different rule applies to gifts. An interested person may not give a gift in excess of \$25.00. Further, interested persons may not pool their money to give a group gift with a value in excess of the \$25.00 limit.

Last, the guidelines state that public funds may not be used for the gift or event unless there is specific legislation authorizing the public body to make such expenditure. This restriction is consistent with the historical interpretation of West Virginia law which in most instances significantly limits the use of public funds for social events and gifts. While there are exceptions to this rule, a public body contemplating the use of public funds for a social event should first consult with the Ethics Commission and Auditor's Office.

The complete guidelines are available for viewing and downloading at the Ethics Commission website (www.wvethicscommission.org). If you have any questions, you may contact the Ethics Commission at 558-0664.

Is an A.S. in Public Service the Answer for You?

Contributed by Jan Young of the West Virginia University Institute of Technology.

Seven employees from the West Virginia Departments of Health and Human Services (DHHR), Environmental Protection, Administration, Education, Transportation, and Revenue have begun advancing their careers through education by completing coursework toward the Associate of Science (A.S.) in Public Service offered by the Community and Technical College at WVU Tech.

Sharon Pearson, a Trauma Systems Assistant for DHHR reports that she is doing here best to encourage others to join our classes. "Grades are now posted so I just got e-mails from several classmates who are celebrating and looking forward to next fall." She adds, "If I can do it with everything going on in my life, anyone can!"

Courses required in the program are conveniently scheduled in the evenings in Charleston and Oak Hill, and during both day and evening hours in Montgomery. In addition, several of the required courses are available on-line or on television. Featured courses for the Fall 2006 semester are Public Finance in Montgomery, American Federal Government in Charleston, and State and Local Government in Oak Hill. Traditional classroom courses in English, economics, and sociology are also available while courses in math, English, computer applications, and accounting are available on-line.

Students who complete the A.S. in Public Service may apply their credits toward WVU-Tech's Bachelor of Science in Public Administration.

Apply now to start in August! Financial assistance or tuition reimbursement may be available depending upon your circumstances. For more, please contact Jan Young at (304) 465-0546 or Jeanne.Young@mail.wvu.edu. In-person advising and assistance is regularly available in Montgomery and Oak Hill, and by appointment in the Charleston area.

Pencil In ...



Want to whittle down those unsolicited pre-approved credit card and insurance offers you receive? Register with the **Consumer Credit Reporting Industry's Opt-In/Opt-Out Number (1-888-5-OPT-OUT)**. This will keep your name from being sent to companies who use your credit rating to make unsolicited credit and insurance offers to you. You can remove your name for a 5-year period or opt for permanent removal (be sure to listen to the prompts); you can also use the number to add back your name at any time.



In the March issue of *Stateline*, we notified you about using the **Do Not Call** registry. Please note that when you register your phone number, it's now **good for a 5-year period**.



"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."



Thomas Alva Edison