

West Virginia Gets Funds for Safe Routes to School

Contributed by Rebecca Davison of the Division of Highways.

West Virginia school children will soon have safer ways to walk and bicycle to and from school with the start of the West Virginia Safe Routes to School Program. The Safe Routes to School Program is designed to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to and from school; to make walking and bicycling to and from school safe and more appealing; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects that will improve safety, while reducing traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

The Safe Routes to Schools Program is a federal aid program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. The program was created by Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Act. The legislation makes available \$612 million in federal funds. Each state will receive a portion of the funds based on its percentage of the national total of school-aged children in grades K-8, but not less than \$1 million each year. West Virginia will receive a minimum of \$1 million each year for a total of at least \$5 million dollars.

The Safe Routes to School Program will be administered by the West Virginia Division of Highways. Applicants include any State, local, and regional agency, including non-profit organizations that demonstrate

an ability to meet program requirements. School principals, teachers, school boards of education, non-profit organizations, law enforcement agencies, city and county governments, local transportation officials, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Regional Development and Planning Councils are encouraged to collaborate on projects and activities that promote walking and biking to and from school. The program is 100% federally funded, and grants will be awarded through a statewide competitive process.

Eligible activities for funding under Safe Routes to School include Infrastructure-Related Projects and Non-Infrastructure-Related Activities. Examples of Infrastructure-Related Projects include sidewalk improvements; traffic calming and speed reduction improvements; pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements; on-street bicycle facilities; off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities; secure bicycle parking facilities; and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. Examples of Non-Infrastructure-Related Activities are public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders; traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools; student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment; and funding for training of volunteers.

For more information, contact Rebecca A. Davison, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, West Virginia Department of Transportation, Planning and Research Division, Building 5, Room A-863, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25305-0430, or call 304-558-9600 or Email rdavison@dot.state.wv.us.



HATS ... UMM ... GOLF CAPS OFF!

Congrats to the following winners in June's Public Employees Golf Tournament

Ladies Low Gross	Betty Cutlip (Tourism)
Ladies Low Net	Billie Morefield (Education)
Mens Low Gross, 1st Place	Billy Mullens (Retired)
Mens Low Gross, 2nd Place	Bill McClanahan (IS&C)
Mens Low Gross, 3rd Place	Jeff Boyles (Education)
Mens Low Net, 1st Place	John Anderson (Retired)
Mens Low Net, 2nd Place	Tom Oxley (Forestry)
Mens Low Net, 3rd Place	William Nichols (Rehab Services)



Manchin Calling Special Session to Deal with Tax Issues

On October 30, 2006, Governor Joe Manchin officially received the 2006 West Virginia Tax Modernization Project Report from the Department of Revenue. With receipt of this report, Manchin outlined his plans for a November Special Session of the West Virginia Legislature to consider recommendations detailed in this comprehensive report. Copies of the report were also delivered to members of the State Legislature.

The Governor announced that he will call the members of the legislature into Special Session beginning November 9 to begin work on tax modernization. He also intends to establish a foundation for these efforts that will continue through the regular session in January, as well as in the months and years to come.

“Several months ago, I asked the West Virginia Department of Revenue to embark on an exhaustive study of our tax system looking at how we could not only modernize our current system, but also give our taxpayers some relief, so that we could continue to make our State more attractive to both businesses and citizens alike,” the Governor said. “Last week, after conducting exhaustive research, holding numerous meetings statewide, and speaking with leaders from every constituency, the members of the West Virginia Tax Modernization Project completed their report.”

Highlights of the agenda for the Extraordinary Session include: Continued responsible reduction of the Food Tax by two percent over the next two years, **effectively cutting the tax in half from its 2005 level of six percent to a more manageable three percent**; creation of a Low-Income Family Tax Credit that removes any disincentive to work by **eliminating West Virginia Personal Income Tax on families with incomes below the federal poverty level**; and, **increasing the Refundable Property Tax Credit for seniors** by doubling the value available for the credit from \$10,000 to \$20,000, thus providing relief to West Virginia seniors within 150% of the poverty level.

Manchin also is proposing relief for businesses as well – especially the lifeblood of the State’s economy, West Virginia small businesses – **so they will be more able to use their financial capital and resources to invest in new jobs and/or healthcare benefits for their employees.**

“As I’ve said many times, our tax system did not develop overnight and, as this report shows, it cannot be fully modernized overnight. However, the findings of this workgroup give us a good place to begin,” Manchin said. He added further that the combination of the recommended changes will “form the next big piece of the puzzle in our Open for Business efforts and show our citizens, our businesses, and our nation that West Virginia is committed to making our State economically competitive.

Most of the revenue enhancements included in this Special Session plan are based upon making sure out-of-State residents who work or profit in West Virginia pay their fair share, eliminating several outdated loopholes or tax credits that are part of our overall tax modernization efforts, and taxing non-healthy food items such as candy, pop, and chips at six percent.



Gov. Joe Manchin III

CAPITOL COMPLEX FLU SHOT CLINICS RESCHEDULED

Adventis, the maker of the flu vaccine, has postponed its shipment to the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department. Consequently, the flu clinics set for the Capitol Complex on Nov. 1 and 2 have been rescheduled as follows:

WED., NOV. 29, 2006

Building 1	Building 4
9 AM - Noon	1 PM - 3 PM
HouseSide of	3rd Floor
Upper Rotunda	Conference Room

THU., NOV. 30, 2006

Building 5	Building 3
9 AM - Noon	1 PM - 3 PM
Room 122	Room 317

In the meantime, flu registrations forms can be printed and completed at www.kchdww.com/fluinfosheets.htm.

Concord Univ. Seeks Holiday Host Families

Concord University is extending an invitation for area residents to open their homes and share this Thanksgiving holiday with an international student.



On Friday, November 17, 2006, the residence halls and food services at Concord University will close for the Thanksgiving break. Host families are needed for international students who have no plans of their own and need a place to stay over the break, which lasts through November 26.

“The students are from a wide variety of countries, including Japan, Bulgaria, and Nepal. International students typically are very open, enthusiastic, and flexible,” said Nancy Ellison, director of multicultural affairs. “The Homestay

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Know the Rules Regarding Political Activity for State Workers

Tuesday, November 7, 2006, is Election Day in the Mountain State. State workers must adhere to certain restrictions concerning political activities which are set forth by a variety of State and federal laws to prevent political pressure in the workplace.

State employees are always encouraged to vote in all local, State, and federal elections. There are no restrictions on voting; expressing an opinion as a private citizen; attending political rallies as a spectator; or

making lawful, voluntary political contributions. Before taking part in any other political activity, check to see if the activity falls within the acceptable guidelines below.

Secretary of State Betty Ireland reminds us that polls will be open from 6:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. on Election Day. Ireland has also recently unveiled a new website, www.wvvotes.com, to provide voting information for the general public. The website contains informa-

tion for voters, candidates and committees, election officials, and poll workers. WVvotes.com is the site voters, candidates and committees, election officials, and poll workers should visit first for all of their basic election needs and questions.

If you're unsure of your rights concerning political activity, call the Division of Personnel's Employee Relations Section at 558-3950, ext. 511.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES MAY VOLUNTARILY:

- ① Campaign for a candidate or party during non-worktime, off of State property, and without use of State supplies or equipment within the provisions of Election Guidelines and Law, so long as they are not paid a fee other than actual expenses incurred.
- ② Sell tickets to political affairs to individuals other than employees of the classified service.
- ③ Erect/post campaign signs on private property, as long as the property is not used as a State office/official State office site.
- ④ Attend political dinners, rallies, and dances.
- ⑤ Serve on campaign committees for a candidate as long as no compensation for the service is received.
- ⑥ Be a candidate for local partisan or non-partisan elective office by taking a leave of absence without pay commencing with the filing date.
- ⑦ Make a monetary contribution to a political party or candidate, not to exceed the limitations established by law.
- ⑧ Display campaign stickers or posters on personal vehicles as long as the vehicle is not used for State or county health department business.
- ⑨ Wear campaign buttons, signs, display bumper stickers, or apparel with political logos or endorsements during non-worktime, off State property, and out of State-issued uniforms.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES MAY NOT:

- ① Serve as a ballot commissioner or election official working inside the polling place, or as a campaign financial agent or treasurer.
- ② Be a candidate for any national or State paid public office or court of record, or be a candidate or delegate to any State or national political party convention.
- ③ Be a member of any local, State, or national political party committee, or hold any paid, elective public office.
- ④ Solicit or receive any assessment, subscription, or contribution from employees in the classified service, or sell tickets to political affairs to classified service employees.
- ⑤ Use any official authority or influence to interfere or influence an election or nomination for office.
- ⑥ Post or distribute campaign literature in a State office building, including employee organization bulletin boards.
- ⑦ Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a State or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.
- ⑧ Wear apparel with political logos or endorsements, or wear campaign buttons during work hours, if their position requires they be observed by or be in contact with the public.

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security makes the following safety recommendation:

Choose an emergency contact person outside your area because it may be easier to call long distance than locally after a local/regional disaster. Take time to contact an out-of-town friend or family member to ask him or her to be your family's designated contact in the event of an emergency. Be sure to share the contact's phone number with everyone in your family. During an emergency, you can call your contact who can share with other family members where you are and your condition.

DPS Offers Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

Contributed by C. R. "Jay" Smithers, Director of the Division of Protective Services.

As the holiday season approaches, the Division of Protective Services would like to remind employees of a few shopping safety tips. Breaking and entering of automobiles is prevalent during the holiday season as thieves walk around parking lots and garages at shopping malls looking for vehicles with packages visibly stored inside of them. Generally, thieves will break a vehicle window to steal packages and/or other items, so you not only lose your packages, but you incur the expense of repairing your vehicle too.

The safest manner to secure your packages is to carry them with you until you are ready to return home. If this isn't possible, place them in the trunk where they won't be visible. If your vehicle is a

hatchback, place packages on the floorboard behind the front seats where they are somewhat hidden and drape a coat or blanket over them.

We often see reports of women leaving their purses in their vehicles while they run into a store for a few minutes, only to return and find their vehicle has been broken into and the purse or the purse's contents stolen. A purse can be stolen in as little time as it takes to walk into a service station to pay for gas.

Please keep in mind that thieves make a living stealing from others and the holiday season is their most prosperous time of year. **Properly securing your packages and personal property will make a thief's job more difficult and your holiday season more enjoyable.**

Pencil In ...



Don't forget: State employees now receive the **Friday after Thanksgiving** as an additional holiday!



In 1997, West Virginia adopted an **official State soil: Monongahela silt loam**, making us one of 12 states with an official State soil.



Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.

John Quincy Adams

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Program at Concord University provides an opportunity for American families to learn about other countries and cultures by having an international student stay in their homes during college breaks. In turn, the international students benefit by being able to practice English conversation and learn about American culture first-hand in the comfortable, friendly environment of American homes."

Each year, local families, and faculty and staff from Concord University graciously open their homes to international students, and the university appreciates those who are willing to welcome students for the holiday.


Contact Nancy Ellison, Director of Multicultural Affairs, for more information on the Homestay Program. Anyone interested may call 384-6086 or 1-800-344-6679 ext. 6086, fax 384-6064, or e-mail nellison@concord.edu.

More on Political Activities for State Workers ...

Other laws related to political activities for those who work in federally funded programs or certain State agencies are outlined below:

- ① **Federally Funded Programs (Hatch Act for State and Local Government Employees):**
The Hatch Act applies to individuals employed by State or local agencies whose principle employment is connected to a federally aided program. Because The Hatch Act is more restrictive than State law, employees covered by this legislation cannot be a candidate for any public office in a partisan, primary, or special election. For more information on The Hatch Act, call the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1-800-85-HATCH.
- ② **Division of Highways Employees (WV Code § 17-2A-5):**
Employees of the Division of Highways are specifically prohibited from taking leaves of absence without pay to be a candidate for or hold any public office, or be a member of any political party committee.
- ③ **Division of Rehabilitation Services Employees (WV Code § 18-10A-11):**
Division of Rehabilitation employees are prohibited by State law from participating in any activity relating to a political campaign.

VETERAN'S DAY OBSERVED – Nov. 10, '06

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Joe Manchin III, Governor

**Robert W. Ferguson, Jr.
Cabinet Secretary**

Billie Jo Streyle-Anderson, Director

**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/