

## Governor Directs Formation of PROMISE Study Committee

In consultation with the Legislature, Governor Joe Manchin has directed the chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission, Brian Noland, to form a committee to study all aspects of the PROMISE Scholarship, including but not limited to: future funding issues; the impact of the current student standards on PROMISE participation; and whether a work requirement can be reasonably included for the program, and what the details of such a requirement would need to entail. The committee will include among its members representatives of both houses of the Legislature.

“The main point in introducing PROMISE legislation this year was to raise awareness of the issues that we’re facing with PROMISE, both now and in the future, to a level that would at the very least start a substantive discussion about the program and how best to move forward with it,” Manchin said. “It is clear that this discussion has begun and what is now needed is more information. I am confident that Chancellor Noland will be

able to compile that information by bringing together an inclusive group that will look not only at data and trends, but will also receive input on PROMISE from across all segments of the State.”

Due to the formation of this committee, Manchin has asked the Legislature to withdraw his current PROMISE bill from consideration.

Noland will report the committee’s findings to the Governor and the Legislature by the end of the year for potential legislative action.

## Senator Rockefeller Receives McManus Hi-Y Service Award

During a ceremony held in the State Cultural Center on February 21, 2008, U.S. Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV was presented with the 2008 Lewis N. McManus Service Award.



*U.S. Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV (left) was the recipient of the 2008 Lewis N. McManus Hi-Y Service Award. The Senator is pictured with Governor Joe Manchin III. Photo courtesy of Steve Rotsch.*

The Ohio-West Virginia YMCA, which sponsors the Hi-Y Leadership Center and West Virginia Youth in Government Program, presents the annual award to an individual deemed to have given exemplary and outstanding service to the State of West Virginia and its citizens.

Hi-Y Youth in Government began in 1958, and has allowed over 8,000 State teens to participate. It provides these teens with the opportunity to build a foundation in democracy and responsible citizenship.

In 2002, former POW Jessica Lynch was the first McManus Award recipient, and it was Rockefeller who presented the award to her.

For more on the Hi-Y program, visit:  
[www.hi-y.org/hiy-yg.html](http://www.hi-y.org/hiy-yg.html)



**3rd Annual  
Easter Egg Hunt**

Please join  
**Governor Joe Manchin**  
 and  
**First Lady Gayle Manchin**  
 for their 3rd Annual  
**Easter Egg Hunt**

**Saturday, March 15**

**1-3 P.M. on the Capitol Grounds**

**Eggs and Prizes for Kids  
 Refreshments for Everyone**

**Easter Egg Hunt - 2:30-3 PM**  
**Ages 3-6 West Lawn**  
**Ages 7-10 East Lawn**

**Tickets are needed and are  
 limited to the first 1,000 children**

**Call 558-3588 for tickets and info**

## CPD Applauds Commitment to AP Program

Edited and reprinted from the Center for Professional Development's website: [www.wvcpd.org/news/news\\_description.aspx](http://www.wvcpd.org/news/news_description.aspx).

West Virginia is one of a few states allocating special funding and setting aggressive policy to improve student achievement through the Advanced Placement Program (AP), according to a recent report by the College Board. In its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual AP Report to the Nation, the College Board released information on student AP performance and provided data on the aggressive steps West Virginia and select other states are taking to affect positive change in the AP program. The West Virginia Center for Professional Development's (WVCPD) Vertical Team Challenge Fund and WV State Board of Education Policy 2510 are part of the State's commitment to increase access to AP and improve student performance in the program.

The report provides a good comparison between West Virginia and the nation. Advanced Placement courses are vital because research reveals that 66 percent of students who take two or more AP classes and exams graduate from college in

four or fewer years. According to the report, our State is one of 22 that has provided significant financial support for teacher professional development to improve student success in AP. West Virginia is also one of nine states recognized for demonstrating a commitment to college readiness through targeted policy that directly impacts student participation in the program.

West Virginia's financial commitment can be seen in the Governor's and the Legislature's funding of WVCPD's enhanced AP Initiative. A major part of this is the Center's AP Vertical Team Challenge Fund. This effort allows middle and high school teachers and principals to collaboratively build access to AP. Working together, the educators establish a sequence of instruction and courses that begins in middle school to best prepare students for the rigors of AP in high school.

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## BSC to Participate in Nat'l Nursing Study

Contribute by James Nelson of Bluefield State College.

The Bluefield State College (BSC) School of Nursing and Allied Health has accepted an invitation to participate in a nationwide study designed to help increase the number of highly qualified nurses, with specific emphasis on increasing the number of highly qualified African-American nurses entering the profession, and in meeting the nation's need to overcome health disparities and improve minority patient health.

Coordinated by the Winston Salem State University "Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Health Disparities," the National Strategy Study



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## Attention College Students Looking for Summer Work!



For more information and to apply, visit the WVGIP website at:

**[www.wvgip.org](http://www.wvgip.org)**

Need more details? Call or e-mail  
Pat Quinlan, Program Coordinator  
304-558-3950, ext. 241  
[patrick.s.quinlan@wv.gov](mailto:patrick.s.quinlan@wv.gov)

The West Virginia Governor's Internship Program (WVGIP) may just be the answer!

The WVGIP assists college students seeking meaningful employment during their summer breaks. Eligible students work in 9-13 week paid internships and are paid minimum wage. The program strives to place students in internships by matching their interests with the needs of private businesses and State agencies.

The program is open to students of accredited West Virginia colleges/universities and West Virginia residents who attend accredited colleges/universities elsewhere. Students must have completed at least one academic year of accredited study by June 2006 and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students selected for interviews MUST present, at the time of interview, a current transcript (official or unofficial) and **two letters of recommendation** from people who can provide program suitability recommendations.

Students interested in WVGIP summer employment should **visit the WVGIP website as soon as possible** for complete program guidelines and to submit an application. **Don't wait! The intern process is highly competitive and the time frame in which to submit applications is short.** The application is available on the website and must be submitted online no later than March 31. **Please note that not all students will be interviewed, nor does an interview guarantee employment.**

# Comm. Douglass: Recall Poses Minimal Health Risk

Edited and reprinted from the Dept. of Agriculture's website: [www.wvagriculture.org/news\\_releases/2008/2-21-08.html](http://www.wvagriculture.org/news_releases/2008/2-21-08.html).

West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass is reassuring West Virginia consumers that beef recently recalled from a California slaughter plant is not a threat to human health in the Mountain State.

"Effectively, the recall was a revocation of USDA's seal of inspection for violations of required procedures, and without that seal – or one like it from West Virginia – that product cannot be distributed," said Commissioner Douglass. "There has been no direct indication that any of this meat was contaminated, nor have there been any reports of illness in relation to this recall."

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) received some of the recalled beef through its Food Distribution Program, which manages government-purchased food destined for school lunch and nutrition assistance programs.

West Virginia received 1,323 cases of beef taco product from JTM Food Group, which processed the commodity beef. All but about 240 cases have already been consumed. Of those remaining cases, 200 cases were at the WVDA's central warehouse, and approximately 40 cases were identified in schools. Recalled products were not used in any other food programs.

The 200 cases at the WVDA warehouse were destroyed this month. Schools must throw away the meat they have, but will be compensated.

Commissioner Douglass said the recall was necessary to ensure that meat processors adhere to procedures that protect animal welfare and minimize the chance of unwholesome meat entering the human food supply.

"I tell all the Department's inspectors, 'If you see something somewhere that you wouldn't want to eat, pull it, because I don't want to find it on my plate – or anyone else's,'" he said.

"While downer cattle don't pose a definitive risk, these are animals of questionable health with possibly weakened immune systems. It's simply a chance we don't need to take."

**WVDA inspectors visit State meat-production facilities daily to enforce State processing and welfare regulations, and there has never been a recall of State-inspected products since he implemented the meat inspection program early in his career, Commissioner Douglass added.**

The federal recall was ordered after it was revealed that workers at Westland/Hallmark Meat Co. in Chino, Calif., had abused "downer" cattle – those having difficulty walking or that could not stand – in violation of USDA regulations. In response, USDA ordered the recall of 143 million pounds of beef, dating back to February 1, 2006.

The Flu Bug  
has hit West Virginia

PREPARE and PROTECT  
YOURSELF

Eat right, get plenty of sleep, and  
WASH, WASH, WASH your hands!

## Two Big Changes for PEIA Open Enrollment

The Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) has announced two major changes for its upcoming Open Enrollment Period.

While insurance premiums will continue to be based upon tobacco use status, PEIA will no longer require employees to submit a tobacco use affidavit each year. PEIA will assume that your status remains unchanged from the affidavit you signed last year. Also, since it's no longer required to sign a new affidavit each year, there will be no automatic mailing of the forms. If your status changes – whether you begin or cease using tobacco products – you will need complete a new affidavit. To get the form:

- ❖ Log on to PEIA's Online Enrollment website and follow the instructions for creating an account. You can access the tobacco affidavit from there.
- ❖ If you don't have internet access, you can obtain a form from your agency benefits coordinator.

A second major change involves the elimination of the Carelink and Health Plan PPO options. PEIA reports that there are fewer than 200 policyholders enrolled in these plans; therefore, administering these plans isn't cost-effective. Insureds who are members of either PPO Plan will receive a transfer form during the Open Enrollment period. Anyone who does not complete the transfer form will be automatically enrolled in PEIA PPB Plan A as of July 1, 2008.

Watch Your Mail in Late March for the New Shopper's Guide!



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The State's commitment to college preparedness is reflected in WV Board of Education Policy 2510, which takes effect July 1, 2008. It will require all high schools to offer at least four AP courses in core content areas. West Virginia is one of only nine states in the country that has enacted policy to increase equity and excellence in AP.

The report also indicates that West Virginia students continue to make strides in AP, with 7 percent of high school students taking and passing an AP class before high school graduation. This number is up from 6.5 percent last year.

Although the State has a lot of work ahead to close the gap among the highest achieving AP states, the current efforts are an excellent start. "The Governor, Legislature, and the Board of Education should be commended for their commitment to AP," said Dr. Patricia Kusimo, Chief Executive Officer of WVCPD. "Each has recognized the value of the program and the role it plays in increasing student achievement in the State," she said.

High achieving AP states (i.e., New York and Maryland) have approximately 24 percent of their students passing an AP exam before graduation. These are aggressive goals, West Virginia can close that gap. Dr. Kusimo added, "We can be one of the top performing states in the country. We have shown our commitment to student classroom success, and, together, we are working to change the culture and access to AP so that all students have the opportunity and preparation to take and excel in these classes."

The impact that the program has on college success is key. "The goal should be to dramatically reduce the need for remediation in college. If students took two or more AP courses and exams, it would significantly decrease the remediation rates we see at State colleges and universities," said Dr. Kusimo. "Students would be ready for the rigors of college once they hit campus, and there wouldn't be a need to repeat high school level coursework," she said.

For more about WVCPD's AP efforts, call 558-0539 or log onto [www.wvcpd.org](http://www.wvcpd.org).

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will involve 53 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) including BSC. The nursing shortage in America is exacerbated by the ratio of only one African-American nurse for every 328 African-Americans in the United States. Study organizers note that "African-American patients have better health care outcomes when care is given by African-American providers, making the need to produce more African-American Registered Nurses vitally important."

The National Strategy Study will consider a variety of topics, including curriculum and course development prototype, strategies for teaching at-risk students, conferences to share best practices, consultation with HBCU nursing programs, and reviewing national policies and rules related to National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses.

"A primary goal of this initiative is to develop environments at our 53 HBCU/PBI baccalaureate and associate degree nursing programs that will produce sufficient numbers of registered nurses, and more specifically, African-American registered nurses," noted Dr. Betty Rader, Dean/BSC School of Nursing and Allied Health. "Our participation in this study will provide insight, perspective, and the opportunity for networking and collaboration as we address this important issue."

## Pencil In ...



**United Airlines will begin charging passengers \$25 to check in a second piece of luggage for domestic travel.**

They will charge all customers \$100 per bag for up to four additional bags. For State travel, this is reimbursable **if necessary** and can be claimed as a miscellaneous business-related expense as stated in Section 8 of the Travel Rules. Travelers will need a receipt from the airline if the charge is over \$75.



**Does your agency provide you with a paid cell phone?** If so, you may want to review the Internal Revenue Service's policy and regulations at [www.irs.gov/govt/fslg/article/0,,id=167154,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/govt/fslg/article/0,,id=167154,00.html) to see how its use might affect your taxes.



American Red Cross

The next **Blood Drive at the Capitol** will be March 24 from 9-3. Use the E-Donor system to sign up at [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org).