

## Manchin Urges West Virginians to Come Back Home

As Governor Joe Manchin delivered his fourth State of the State address on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, he provided reason after reason for current residents to stay, and former residents to return.

Proudly boasting last year's lowest unemployment rate in West Virginia's history (4.6 percent), Manchin also cited the highest number of West Virginians working for the same period: 778,269. He highlighted several companies that have either located to or expanded within West Virginia, adding jobs across the State and furthering our growing reputation as a place to do business.

The Governor applauded State workers, noting that they are often taken for granted. He gave them credit for improving services while the size of State government was reduced for the second year in a row. Workers were reassured that the State is continually working to make sure funds will be there upon their retirement.

"... we've tackled our State's debts, putting an additional \$1.7 billion toward our retirement systems ...," said Manchin.

Our State's veterans and coal miners were remembered. Manchin pledged to help ensure that returning soldiers will have the resources and counseling they need by working with the Legislature and the West Virginia Council of Churches' Carenet Program. He also described many improvements in the coal industry, including receipt of the first of 308 underground emergency shelters, full compliance with emergency airpack requirements by coal operators, and diligent work toward implementing wireless communications and tracking devices.

Considerable time was spent on education topics. Manchin believes that one of the primary ways to keep West Virginia on the upward track is to focus attention on education issues, and he has several proposals to do just that. Stating his determination to "give our teachers every possible tool they need to *take back their classrooms*," Manchin emphatically told his audience that student bullying must end. He announced a plan to establish a commission to review school bullying policies and make recommendations on how to improve our efforts to identify and stop bullying behavior, and deal with offenders. In addition, the Governor is asking for changes in teen driver's licenses, such as revoking the licenses of students who commit serious offences and requiring that students between 16 and 18 years of age receive passing grades in order for them to retain driving privileges.

Enthusiastically announcing the formation of WVRx, a public partnership between the Governor's Office and several other private and State agencies, Manchin informed his audience that uninsured working West Virginians would now have access to free prescription medications at West Virginia Health Right. And while helping our citizens gain access to needed



*Governor Joe Manchin III.  
Photo courtesy of Steve Rotsch.*

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the  
West Virginia  
University  
Mountaineer  
Football Team

**2008  
Fiesta Bowl Champions!!**

Like the background graphic above?  
It's one of many free downloads  
available for WVU fans on the school's  
website. There are several types of  
free WVU downloads available at  
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terms of use agreement!!

## Perdue Urges Employees to Consider WV Retirement Plus Plan

The following letter to State employees is published at the request of State Treasurer John D. Perdue.

Dear State Employees,

As we begin a new year please take a few moments to think about your future by asking this question: Am I saving enough for retirement? Unfortunately, many State employees may find that their pension, social security, and other personal savings are not enough to reach their retirement goals.

As a fellow State employee, I realize that preparing for retirement in today's changing economy can be intimidating due to inflation's impact on



State Treasurer John D. Perdue

the cost of living, not to mention concerns over the future of Social Security. One thing is for sure – in retirement, you'll need each and every dollar to live comfortably.

When you think about it, what's more important than an investment in your future? If you don't plan for your own retirement, no one else will. Keep in mind the old maxim "every little bit helps." Here's where the West Virginia Retirement Plus 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan can benefit you.

This extra savings alternative is similar to a 401(k) Plan in which you choose your own investment

options. In addition to supplementing your State Pension and Social Security, participating in West Virginia Retirement Plus lowers taxable income, offers federal tax credits for certain income brackets and provides financial education and retirement planning services.

The plan also offers a variety of quality investment options based on your retirement goals and risk tolerance. Another important benefit: you won't pay taxes on your investment earnings until you retire, and at retirement you can withdraw your funds prior to age 59½ without penalty.

As you probably are aware, my office has made several improvements to your West Virginia Retirement Plus Plan. These changes include, but are not limited to, an upgraded investment menu of quality mutual funds, the addition of two more local ING representatives to better service your account, and the creation of a contribution matching program.

Also, keep in mind that contributing to West Virginia Retirement Plus is very easy. Your contributions are managed via convenient payroll deductions and could potentially be a valuable investment for your future. Remember, regardless of your age or investment expertise it's never too late to enroll in West Virginia Retirement Plus.

If retirement is in sight for you, and you haven't been saving so far, you can still take full advantage of West Virginia Retirement Plus for as long as possible. Even a couple of years of saving could put you ahead of where you'd be if you'd done nothing at all. Not to mention, by joining today, you can take advantage of our contribution matching program where you could receive a maximum of \$400 deposited into your retirement account.

If you're a younger worker, the sooner you start saving, the better. By having time on your side and investing early in your career, you'll enjoy the benefits of tax-deferred growth potential and compounding of interest for

decades to come. You'll be taking steps to open up a world of possibilities for yourself later, perhaps including early retirement, travel, an alternative career, etc.

Contact our local ING representative Steve Kerns to find out if West Virginia Retirement Plus is right for you. Steve can be reached at 304-341-0708 or toll-free at 800-422-7498. He'll be glad to schedule a "one on one" meeting with you or send you an informational packet. To learn more, simply visit my office's webpage for this program at [www.WV457.com](http://www.WV457.com).

Sincerely,  
**John D. Perdue**

John D. Perdue  
State Treasurer

### New State Travel Guide Out!

The 2008 State Travel Guide is now available!

In it, you'll find 240 pages of information on West Virginia's attractions, along with suggested itineraries, a year-long calendar of events, and background information on the State's nine regions.

According to Liz Chewing, State Travel and Marketing Director, "The guide highlights some of the most-sought places, as well as the hidden gems, by its use of great editorial content and brilliant photos."

Secretary of Commerce Kelley Goes agrees, stating, "The State travel guide is one of the best ways to show potential visitors and vacation planners the best our State has to offer."

The Division of Tourism provides free guides to thousands of callers and internet visitors, as well as distributing them at welcome centers and travel shows.

Get Your Travel Guide at:

1-800-CALL WVA ♦ [www.callwva.com](http://www.callwva.com)

## Capitol Food Court Now Open!

Enjoy breakfast, morning snacks, and lunch at the all-new Capitol Food Court, which opened for business on January 10, 2008.

The food court offers a variety of healthy food choices at several food stations, including:

**Capitol Deli:** Fresh made-to-order deli sandwiches and paninis.

**Blackwater Coffee Bar:** Espresso Bar of specialty and flavored coffees.

**Blue Ridge Grill and Pizza:** Variety grill selections and flatbread pizzas.

**Panhandle Market:** Chef's action station for omelettes, sautéed side dishes, and stir-fry lunch items.

**Wild and Wonderful Greens:** Continental breakfast items and a soup and salad bar.

The newly renovated dining area offers a pleasant, comfortable atmosphere that seats 260, and the facility is staffed by friendly, helpful people.

Coordinating with Governor Joe Manchin's healthy lifestyles initiative, the offering of healthy food choices is a major goal of the facility.

According to First Lady Gayle Manchin, "The Capitol Food Court is an excellent eatery for our State employees and visitors, and thus, by promoting healthy food options, we are creating an important awareness to a large group of individuals. In turn, these patrons may then pass along healthy eating practices to their children."

The food court is open from 7-9:30 A.M. for breakfast, 9:30-11 A.M. for morning snack, and 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. for lunch.

## Concord U. to Celebrate Charter Day at State Capitol on February 28

*Contributed by Anita Moody of Concord University.*

Concord University will celebrate its "Charter Day" on February 28, from 9 A.M.-Noon, at the West Virginia State Capitol, and the public is invited!

In the 1840s, to attract settlers, Colonel Henderson French established a land company in Mercer County. The early settlers felt the need for a church, and, in 1858, Colonel French gave land for this purpose. Captain William Holroyd, a licensed Methodist preacher, helped build the church, and French asked Holroyd's wife, Sarah, to name it. On the day of dedication, she said: "This church is where all denominations shall worship together in harmony, sweet fellowship, and concord, and it shall be named 'Concord Church.'" The settlement also was called "Concord Church."

A post office was established after the Civil War, and the University got its name when, on February 28, 1872, the West Virginia Legislature passed "an Act to locate a Branch State Normal School, in Concord Church, in the County of Mercer."

Since 1872, Concord University has established a distinguished legacy of a quality education for many generations of families.

"Cake will be served, and we hope you'll join us as we celebrate and thank the Legislature for their support!" stated SGA President, Jessica Cook, from Cyclone, W.Va.

Concord will be celebrating Charter Day at the Legislature's "Higher Education Day," an annual event at the State Capitol.



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medications, he hasn't lost sight of his ongoing goal to eradicate the use and sale of illegal drugs. He praised the work of the State Police, noting that their hard work is an integral part of our receiving \$44 million to fight the drug problem. The Governor proposed using these funds to help further drug prevention programs in our schools, expand our State's drug courts, and enhance our police efforts with additional personnel and equipment.

Addressing employment issues, Manchin noted the importance of targeting education and workforce development. He proposes establishment of a one-time \$50 million endowment to the research and development programs at Marshall University and West Virginia University, a major investment to develop two advanced technical centers, and investing in existing allied health fields in order to address serious worker shortages.

Manchin also used his speech to encourage everyone to "go green." In addition to directing State agencies to reduce energy consumption by at least 10 percent, he asked everyone to take conservation measures such as updating heating/cooling systems, insulation, and storm doors, and advocating a switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs.

In closing, the Governor encouraged and invited former residents to "Come Home to West Virginia."

"I'm pretty positive you know the way," he said, "Just take the nearest country road back home to the place where you belong: ... Wild, Wonderful, West Virginia!"

You can read the entire text or view a video of the Governor's speech on the Governor's Office website at:  
[www.wv.gov/org/sec.aspx?id=108](http://www.wv.gov/org/sec.aspx?id=108).

You can also view the FY 2009 Budget Overview document at the same location.

**State Auditor's Softball Team Wins 2007 Season**

**Get Your State Softball Team Together Now!**

*Contributed by Jim McMillon.*

The State Auditor's Office led the Athletics Softball Team, composed of members from the Auditor's Office, Agriculture, Division of Natural Resources and the Department of Administration, who won the 2007 "Capitol League Cup" softball championship. The trophy cup, with its engraved plate listing the winning teams from this and past years, was donated by the Charleston Gold Dome Lions Club several years ago.



*State Auditor Glen B. Gainer III (left) is pictured with Team Captain JC Showalter (center) receiving the cup from Gold Dome Lion and Past District Governor Jim McMillon.*

Will the cup reside in the office of some other State agency after the summer 2008 softball season? Both Gainer and the Lions Club encourage all State workers to establish and support a summer softball team. For good sports and fun, they say everyone should "Play Ball!"

Start gathering your teams now! Anyone interested in learning more about the State worker softball teams may contact Derek Buzzard at the West Virginia Insurance Commission (phone: 558-1966 or e-mail: derek.buzzard@wvinsurance.gov).

**A Reminder to Our Employees Who Smoke ...**

Regarding the State's *Smoking Restrictions in the Workplace* policy, the parking building is considered indoors; therefore, the policy prohibits smoking in these locations. This includes the elevator and stairwells, and inside the building itself. Employees must extinguish all smoking materials prior to exiting their vehicles upon arrival, and prior to entering the parking building when leaving. Please be courteous and observe the posted no smoking signs and the provisions of the policy. For those who wish, the policy can be reviewed at: [www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/emprel/POLICIES/NoSmoke4.pdf](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/emprel/POLICIES/NoSmoke4.pdf).

**February 13 is Arts Day at the State Capitol**

*Contributed by Terri Marion of the Division of Culture and History.*

The West Virginia Division of Culture and History and the West Virginia Commission on the Arts will host "Arts Day at the State Capitol" at the State Capitol Complex, Charleston, on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. The event celebrates the vitality of the arts in West Virginia; the impact the arts has on cultural growth, economic development, and education; and how the arts brings together artists, arts organizations and art enthusiasts from across the State.

This year's event will be held in the lower rotunda of the State Capitol. Several arts groups will present live performances including vocal and instrumental music, poetry readings, and dance and theatrical performances.

For more information about "Arts Day at the State Capitol," contact Rose McDonough, Cultural Facilities and Accessibility Coordinator for the Division, at 558-0240, ext. 152.

**Pencil In ...**



**PEIA Open Enrollment** will be April 1-30, 2008. Start assessing your insurance needs now so you'll be better prepared to evaluate the plans offered. Also, the PEIA board voted not to increase its current rates for active employees and retirees. See PEIA's website at [www.westvirginia.com/peia](http://www.westvirginia.com/peia) for more info.



**January 13 marked the 51st birthday of the Frisbee.** Wham-O, maker of the toy, borrowed the name from a pie manufacturer, and the design emanated from the shape of popcorn tin lids. **Sadly, Wham-O co-founder Richard Knerr passed away on January 14, 2008.**



*Elvis was the only man from northeast Mississippi who could shake his hips and still be loved by rednecks, cops, and hippies.*



**Jimmy Buffett**

Elvis Presley would have turned 73 years old on January 8, 2008.

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