

State Govt. Closes Fiscal Year 2000 with Surplus

Information taken from *The Governor's Weekly Column*.

Governor Cecil H. Underwood announced in his July 7, 2000 weekly column (posted on the internet), that the State of West Virginia finished Fiscal Year 2000 with a surplus of \$10.9 million!

In January of this year, the amount of revenue that State and local governments could expect from coal companies was placed in doubt. This fact, coupled with difficulties faced by the State's steel industry, prompted the Governor to order a 3% reduction in State spending, which then resulted in a savings of approximately \$35.6 million and allowed us to end the year with the surplus.

Half of the \$10.9 million surplus is by law committed to a rainy day fund. Half of the additional \$5.45 million (\$2.725 million) is being considered to help local school boards cope with transportation costs, which have risen dramatically due to increased fuel costs.

Underwood stated that West Virginia is now at a crossroads. West Virginia government, both at the State and local levels, currently relies heavily on revenues received from the coal industry. Fortunately, to offset problems that could have occurred, State government gave its spending belt a tug without sacrificing services to the citizens. In addition, West Virginia has seen significant job growth over the past 3 years. This growth in non-mining industries has helped to ease the burden and has provided an increase in tax collections.

Feeling confident that we are headed in the right direction, Underwood recently ordered the State spending reduction lifted.

The governor cited his concern that a spending rollback would have a harmful effect on higher education, which has streamlined operations during the past 5 years under Senate Bill 547 and now is facing reform as the result of the passage this spring of Senate Bill 657. In addition, by not insisting now on the rollback, the colleges and universities will have greater opportunity to carry out their responsibilities.

See **SURPLUS** – Page 2



Governor
Cecil H. Underwood

DMV Program In Running for Award

Information and graphic contributed by Mary Jane Lopez of Motor Vehicles.

The Division of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) Children's ID Program is a semifinalist in the The Council of State Governments' Annual Innovations Award.

The program provides identification cards, which were developed by the DMV in cooperation with Polaroid, for children ages 2-15 years. They are valid for 2 years, expiring on the child's birthday, and feature the same award-winning, fraud-proof digital imaging technology used for State driver's licenses. Each individual card is imprinted with the child's name and picture, date of issuance, expiration date, and a toll-free number for the State Police Missing Children Hotline. If the child's parent or guardian wishes, the child's digital fingerprint can also be stored in the card.

The Children's ID Program is the first of its kind in the U.S. Its selection as a semifinalist means the agency and the program are among a group of 10, which was narrowed down from 240 candidates.

To obtain a Children's ID card, you must provide the child's original birth certificate and social security card. There is a \$5 fee. Call Motor Vehicles at 1-800-642-9066 for the nearest location.



**SAMPLE
CHILD'S ID**

Clothing Vouchers Issued Early by DHHR

The Department of Health and Human Resources recently had good news for families that use school clothing vouchers. Vouchers were issued in July this year, a month earlier than usual. Governor Cecil Underwood requested the change to allow families more shopping time before the school year begins.

Only one other state besides West Virginia issues clothing allowances. The program is widely supported by parents, teachers, and retailers who say it promotes attendance during the opening weeks, which helps to improve the chances of success for children in lower income families.

Each eligible child in West Virginia receives a \$150 voucher that can be used to purchase clothing and sewing materials. Non-clothing items such as hair accessories or school supplies cannot be bought with the vouchers. The vouchers are good through October 31, 2000.

Underwood states that the program uses federal funds to benefit both our children and our businesses. "The school clothing allowance meets 2 essential needs of our children: it assists them in purchasing clothing and helps eliminate the stigma that children often face as the result of the financial circumstances of their families."

Last year, 48,531 children benefited from the program.

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A careful review of State tax revenue receipts shows that we are close to meeting revenue projections. Underwood believes the State can meet its obligations without too many risks as long as State officials keep a close watch on receipts and expenditures. He cautioned that he will closely monitor revenues to make certain the State stays in the black. He has asked each and every department head to monitor his or her agency's expenses.

From the Director of Personnel ...

Improve Your Skills; Learn to Learn

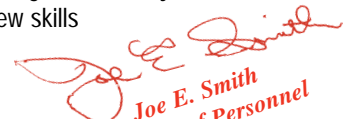
We see it all around us – from electronic tax returns to computer-generated animations. The world is changing, and changing faster all the time. The world of work is changing too. The big question is, what are we doing to keep up with these changes?

There are few workers who don't need to acquire supplementary or additional skills. The fact is, the demand for higher-skilled employees is nothing new. It's been the trend for the past half century, and it's gained momentum with each passing year.

One of the primary reasons behind the need for higher-skilled employees is the advance of technology. Old tasks are being completed in new ways, and this means that workers are required to learn how to learn all over again ... to abandon previous methods, alter their logic and experience-based wisdom, and change established and ingrained habits.

It's no secret that new knowledge is created much, much faster than employees can absorb it. Though most jobs will continue and endure, employed persons will find they must make progressive changes in order to remain on the job. Through 2006, it is projected that employment of professional specialists, which require higher education levels, will grow fastest, with technicians and related support staff following in second place. All occupational groups, however, will notice changes and the need to acquire upgraded skills.

A positive future for both employers and employees requires workers who are willing to expand their horizons to produce better work. Within State government, you have many opportunities. Courses to assist you in learning new skills are offered by the Division of Personnel (DOP), IS&C, your individual agencies, and the Employee Development Center (EDC) After Hours Program. I encourage each of you to take advantage of these opportunities. (See Net Gain – Page 3)



Joe E. Smith
Division of Personnel

New Services Coming to PECU

Some exciting new features are coming for members of the Public Employees Credit Union (PECU)!

- A** Sometime this fall, the PECU, in cooperation with Money Access Service, Inc. and local utility companies, will offer utility payment capabilities for credit union members through the MAC card.
- B** Around the same time, the credit union's website will offer home banking capabilities. The website is still under construction, so we'll let you know the address when it's completed.
- C** In November, the Public Employees Credit Union expects to have the MasterCard debit card available to members who have checking accounts. (Just in time for Christmas shopping!)

In addition to the above, PECU members may continue to access the telephone Automated Response System (ARS) that has been in place for quite some time. The access number is 558-0846; however, prior to using the system, members must sign up and choose a password.

If you need more information about the PECU and its services, or if you want to become a member or register for the ARS, call 558-0566 or e-mail them at WVPECU@aol.com.

August is **SIZZLIN'** at the West Virginia State Fair!

August 11-19, 2000 in Lewisburg

Where can you find the rock band Def Leppard, a draft horse pulling contest, cotton candy, a Hollywood Stunt Show, quilts, sheep shearing, country singer Jo Dee Messina, and a Live Shark Show – all in the same place? At the West Virginia State Fair, that's where!

The State Fair promises to be a thrilling one, with 9 jam-packed days of activities (August 11-19) for the whole family. Special activities include:

- August 11 - Jousting demonstrations - noon
- August 13 - Antique Tractor Pull contest - 10:00 A.M.
- August 17 - Governor's Day - special presentations of The Governor's Cup, the Governor's Cookie Basket, and the First Lady's Candy Box.
- August 18 - Draft Horse Pulling Contest - 9:00 A.M.
- August 19 - Toyota Hollywood Stunt Show - 1:00 P.M.
- August 12 and 19 - Spectacular fireworks show each Saturday - 11:00 P.M.

DAILY ATTRACTIONS:

- Squalas Live Shark Show. Find out how these terrors of the deep survive and how they made it to the fairgrounds.
- Purina's Incredible Dog Team. Enjoy high flying action and fun featuring some talented canines.
- Scheer's Lumberjack Show. Experience nostalgic logging in a fun-filled and educational way.
- James L. Szeles, Hypnotist. Enjoy the fun in the audience or as a participant as this reknown hypnotist performs.
- Swifty Swine Racing Pigs. A crowd pleasing good time as fleet-footed piggies compete in fast action races.
- Bass Tub. Try your skill at catching the biggest fish in this special exhibit which challenges all ages.
- Down on the Farm Petting Zoo & Pony Carousel. Hands-on fun for all with an assortment of animals to be petted and fed.
- Ag-Venture Trail. Follow the Ag-Venture Trail to fun and learning across the fairgrounds. Watch for special signs representing the agricultural events which you won't want to miss!
- Daisy Moo Milk Review. Stop by the Kids Can Do Farm for down home fun at this enjoyable and entertaining show featuring the unforgettable Daisy Moo. Sponsored by the American Dairy Association.

AND DON'T FORGET THE CONCERTS!

- ♪ August 11 - Savage Garden - 8:00 P.M.
- ♪ August 12 - The Statler Brothers and Don Williams - 8:00 P.M.
- ♪ August 13 - Gold City, The Bishops, and The Crabb Family - 6:30 P.M.
- ♪ August 14 - Def Leppard - 7:30 P.M.

- ♪ August 15 - Jo Dee Messina and Brad Paisley - 7:30 P.M.
- ♪ August 16 - LFO, Blaque, & A*Teens - 7:30 P.M.
- ♪ August 17 - Lonestar - 7:30 P.M.
- ♪ August 18 - The Platters, The Marvelettes, and Cornell Gunter's Coasters - 8:00 P.M.
- ♪ August 19 - Alabama - with opening act Johnny Staats and the Delivery Boys - 8:00 P.M.

These activities are just a drop in the bucket! There are lots and lots of other things going on including contests, exhibits, free camping spaces and food, food, and more food! To get more information, or to order fair/concert tickets, call 1-800-CALL WVA, visit the fair website at www.wvstatefair.com, call the Lewisburg Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-833-2068, or make a visit to their website at www.greenbrierwv.com/lewisburg/lewisburg.html.



Gnet GAIN
Internet info ... a byte at a time

Training Opportunities Abound

Looking to gain state-of-the-art knowledge and hone new skills? Try these!

WV Division of Personnel, 558-3950
www.state.wv.us/admin/personel
 *Fall 2000 Training Schedule
 *Educ. Expense Reimbursement Policy

IS&C, 558-6384
<http://intranet.state.wv/train/default.htm>

Employee Development Center After Hours Program, 558-5030
www.state.wv.us/edc

Pick the Right Hearing Protection

In some work areas, hearing protection must be worn throughout the day. In other areas and in some jobs, noise isn't constant; but when it's there, the wise worker practices hearing conservation.

Small tools such as drills, saws, impact wrenches, and air compressors are major sources of loud sound. Though any one piece of equipment may not produce harmful sounds when heard only for a short time, the cumulative effect may constitute excessive noise exposure, says the National Safety Council. Hearing conservation is always necessary when intermittent sound is present throughout the day.

Some people prefer ear muffs, and they have their advantages. They are available in different sizes and styles, and the headband can be adjusted for comfort and fit. Ear muffs are comfortable, easy to keep clean, and seldom come loose during the workday. Their disadvantages? Eyeglass temple bars and hair can reduce the effectiveness of the seal between the head and the muff cushion. In some cases, they even

interfere with other protective equipment.

Another method of protection is ear plugs. They are inexpensive, come in different sizes, can be worn with any hair style, and require little maintenance. The movement of the head is not restricted, and they don't interfere with other types of protective equipment. But there are disadvantages. Some workers may be uncomfortable wearing them all day until they get used to the fit. Ear plugs can also become loose. They are small and easily lost, and they must be replaced periodically.

Examples of occupations for which workers should wear or consider ear protection: highway workers when loud machinery is present, print shop workers, law enforcement officers when firing weapons for practice or qualifying, laundry workers, any mass production job where the noise level is loud and constant, and other similar types of jobs.

Muffs or plugs – it's up to you – just carry them with you and use them at the appropriate times.



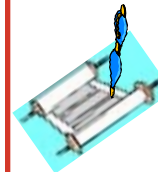
Pencil In ...



The amount an airline will pay for a **lost, delayed, or damaged travel bag** has been increased from \$1,200 to \$2,500 per domestic passenger. If your bag is lost when traveling to a foreign country, you aren't quite so lucky. Airlines are obligated to pay just \$9.07 per pound or a maximum of \$640 per suitcase. They recommend that you carry jewelry and other valuables with you.



On August 14, 1935, the **Social Security Act** was passed by Congress - ironically, that means Social Security turns 65 years old this year.



Speaking of Social Security ... there will be **no reduction of Social Security benefits** for recipients who are 65 or older, retroactive to January 1, 2000. This could encourage some retirees to re-enter the workforce.



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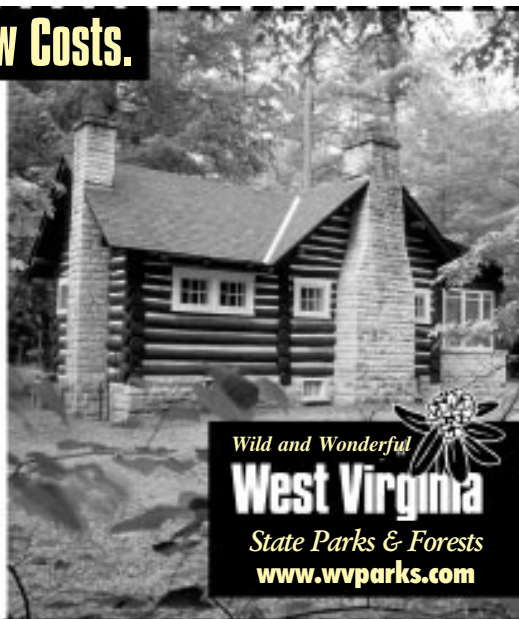
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- available only at participating areas
 - certain restrictions apply
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1-800-CALL WVA

Reserve your spot today!



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