

Governor Forms Team to Review SSN Privacy

Contributed by Tracy Christofero of the West Virginia Health Care Authority.

Governor Wise's concern about the privacy of personal information for both citizens and State employees prompted Executive Order 7-03 Privacy Management Team (an interdepartmental group assigned by the Governor to implement the provisions of the Executive Order) to look at the receipt, storage, and transmission of Social Security numbers; their appropriate use and disclosure; and privacy policies and procedures within the State's Executive Branch.

When Social Security was created in 1935, its sole purpose was to track earnings so wages could be properly credited. For the first few decades after its inception, Social Security cards even carried the following warning: "Not to be used for identification." Unfortunately, there were never laws passed instituting this protection. The Social Security number (SSN) has become an essential component of an individual's

identification. Protection of Social Security numbers has become the focus of the 2003 Executive Order efforts.

According to the California Office of Privacy Protection (www.privacyprotection.ca.gov), there are ways you can help protect Social Security numbers while on the job:

- ❶ Be aware of when you collect Social Security numbers and ask yourself: Are you required by law to include it? If not, is it truly important to the purpose of your collection? Would another type of unique personal identifier suffice?
- ❷ Do not put SSNs on documents that are widely seen by others, such as on ID cards, badges, rosters, bulletin boards, etc.
- ❸ When sending SSNs in an envelope, place it where it cannot be seen through the envelope window. Design any return envelope in the same fashion.
- ❹ On forms, where possible, leave the SSN field blank and have the recipient fill it in.
- ❺ Do not send SSNs via the Internet or e-mail unless you are sure that the connection is secure or the message is encrypted.

See PRIVACY – Page 3

State Employment & Political Activity

In this issue of *Stateline*, you'll find two important articles (Pages 2 and 3) about State employment and political activities. While these articles provide general guidelines, the issue of what's permissible and what isn't can be complicated. If you need more information after you read our articles, visit www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/emprel/policies/polactact.pdf on the internet or call the Division of Personnel at 558-3950, ext. 511.



The Check's Not in the Mail - It's for the Mail!

Congratulations to the latest Employee Suggestion Program Award recipient, Andy Jensen, from Workers Compensation. Jensen noticed that a large amount of outgoing mail was being metered rather than sent through Interdepartmental Mail. He began pulling mail for agency couriers to pick up, and then contacted several area law firms, resulting in their mail being picked up as well. Two full tubs of mail are pulled each day. Jensen's efforts have saved time and nearly \$150 a day. He was recognized by Governor Wise at his State of the State Address, and again on January 28, 2004, when Wise presented him with his award check for \$8,196.86.

WV State Parks Offer Many Get-Away Deals

Looking for a nice in-state get-away? Many of West Virginia's State parks are offering winter deals and other special rate events.

Dial 1-800-CALL-WVA or check out the West Virginia State Parks website at:

www.wvstateparks.com

Be sure to scroll down the webpage to take the online survey and qualify to win a Hawks Nest trip!



BEP Recovers Fraudulent Unemployment Benefits

In mid-January 2004, the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) announced a 2003 fourth-quarter recovery of \$69,527 in fraudulently obtained unemployment compensation benefits.

BEP's Unemployment Compensation Division found 118 individuals had filed fraudulent claims. In all cases, the claimants were penalized, and BEP requested warrants on 34 of those individuals. Penalties include a 52-week disqualification period for future benefits, repayment of the money they received, and/or possible fines, jail time, and/or civil suits.

Warrants were issued for claimants who reside in the following counties: Cabell, Grant, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monroe, Nicholas, Pendleton, Preston, Raleigh, Upshur, Wetzel, and Wood.

Election Time is Just Around the Corner

Be 'Politically Correct' In Your Activities

As State citizens, you are encouraged to participate in West Virginia's upcoming elections; however, as State employees, you must also adhere to specific guidelines and restrictions concerning your political activities.

There are no restrictions on voting – in fact, **all** citizens are encouraged to exercise their voting rights. In addition, State employees are permitted to express opinions as private citizens, attend rallies as spectators, and make lawful, voluntary political contributions. Running for political office and/or campaigning may have restrictions. Please note the following guidelines:

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES MAY VOLUNTARILY:

-  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.
-  Sell tickets to political affairs to individuals other than employees of the classified service, or attend political dinners, rallies, and dances.
-  Erect or post campaign signs on private property, as long as the property is not used as a State office in any way.
-  Serve on campaign committees for a candidate as long as no compensation for the service is received.
-  Be a candidate for local partisan or non-partisan elective office by taking a leave of absence without pay commencing with the filing date.
-  Make a monetary contribution to a political party or candidate, not to exceed the limitations established by law.
-  Place a campaign sticker on a personal vehicle as long as the vehicle is not used for State business.
-  Wear campaign buttons or apparel with political logos or endorsements, or display bumper stickers, during non-worktime, off State property, and out of State-issued uniforms.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES MAY NOT:

-  Serve as a ballot commissioner or election official working inside the polling place, or as a campaign financial agent or treasurer.
-  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.
-  Be a member of any local, State, national political party committee, or hold any paid, elective public office.
-  Solicit or receive any assessment, subscription, or contribution from employees in the classified service, or sell tickets to political affairs to classified service employees.
-  Use any official authority or influence to interfere or influence an election or nomination for office.
-  Post or distribute campaign literature in a State office building, including union bulletin boards.
-  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.
-  Wear campaign buttons or apparel with political logos or endorsements during work hours, if their position requires they be observed by, or come into contact with, the public.

PRIVACY – Continued from Page 1

- ① Use logs or electronic audit trails to monitor access to records with Social Security numbers.
- ① Clean your desk and work area to secure files with SSNs when you leave.
- ① When discarding files with SSNs, protect the disposal via shredding.
- ① Avoid sharing SSNs with other companies except where required by law. If sharing is mandated:
 - Prohibit 3rd parties from disclosing SSNs, except where required by law.
 - Require 3rd parties to use effective security controls on their SSN records.
 - Hold them accountable for compliance with the restrictions you impose.

To help protect your own Social Security number:

- ① Always check your credit card statements carefully to assure charges are yours.
- ① Run a credit check on yourself at least annually. The three major credit check organizations are: Equifax (www.equifax.com), TransUnion (www.transunion.com), and Experian (www.experian.com). In addition to being able to check and correct each of these three individually (you'll want to check each, as it is likely that they are reporting differently), each site gives you the option to check all three at a discounted rate.

The Privacy Management Team will continue to look at how we use and disclose Social Security numbers within West Virginia's Executive Branch. In the meantime, please be aware of how and to whom you provide yours. For additional information regarding the Governor's Executive Order or how to protect your Social Security number, contact the Project Management Office (PMO) at 558-5164.

Additional Info on Political Activities

Employees who work in federally funded programs or certain State agencies are covered by specific laws which apply to political activities:

Federally Aided Programs

(Hatch Act for State and Local Government Employees):

The Hatch Act applies to anyone employed by State or local agencies whose principal employment is connected to a federally aided program. Because the Hatch Act is a more restrictive federal law, employees covered by this act cannot be a candidate for any public office in a partisan, primary, or special election. For more information about the Hatch Act, call the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1-800-872-9855.

Division of Highways Employees (WV Code § 17-2A-5):

Employees in the Division of Highways are specifically prohibited from taking leaves of absence without pay to be a candidate for or hold any public office, nor can they be a member of any political party committee.

Division of Rehabilitation Services Employees (WV Code § 18-10A-11):

Division of Rehabilitation Services employees are prohibited by State law from participating in any activity relating to a political campaign.

Bateman Hospital Receives Accreditation

Contributed by Joseph Thornton of the Dept. of Health and Human Resources.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, has received word of accreditation for Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Hospital from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Hospital, a State-supported psychiatric hospital located in Huntington, is a training site for future health care professionals who attend over 20 colleges and educational institutions in the tri-state area of southwestern West Virginia, southeastern Ohio, and northeastern Kentucky.

"This accreditation is a testament to the type of professionals we employ at the facility," said DHHR Secretary Paul L. Nusbaum. "I congratulate everyone at Mildred Mitchell-Bateman for their efforts to provide high quality care for those they serve on a daily basis."

The accreditation is effective from November 2003 and will remain current for three years for all services surveyed by the accrediting team.

State Credit Union Can Provide Liaison Officer for Meetings/Events

Jamie Cope has joined the State Credit Union to work as its Agency Liaison Officer. Cope's role is to provide information about the credit union and explain the benefits of membership.

If your agency is sponsoring a meeting/event and would like Cope to provide information, contact him at 558-4808 during regular hours.

Visit the State Credit Union online:
www.wvpecu.com

Governor's Internship Applications Being Accepted

West Virginia college or university students or West Virginia residents attending accredited colleges or universities elsewhere who meet all of the eligibility requirements may apply to the 2004 Governor's Internship Program.

Students must have completed at least one academic year of study at an accredited college or university by June 2004 and have a cumulative college/university GPA of 3.0 or greater. Any student selected for an interview *must* present a current (official or unofficial) transcript and two letters of recommendation from people who can evaluate the student's suitability for this program at the time of interview.

The Governor's Internship Program offers eligible college students the opportunity to work in paid internships during the summer. The program strives to place students in internships by matching their interests with the needs of private businesses, State agencies, and non-profit organizations. For additional information regarding program guidelines and to submit an application, students interested in summer employment should visit the www.wvgip.org website. *Applications must be submitted by April 2, 2004.*

Employers are invited to participate in the Governor's Internship Program. This can be a very beneficial experience for both the employer and the student while being very cost-effective to the employer. While earning money through this paid internships program, students are given the opportunity to contribute their talents in a working/learning environment. At the same time, the employer gains the benefit of fresh knowledge and ideas. This program also encourages students to remain in West Virginia after they graduate.

Many employers who have previously enjoyed hosting a summer intern continue to do so year after year. Employers will have the opportunity to review applications and select students based upon student qualifications and employer needs, interview the selected candidates, and make the hiring decision. Employers who are interested in hosting an intern may also visit the www.wvgip.org website for more information regarding the program and instructions on how to request an intern, or they may call 304/558-5946 ext. 260 or 270 for assistance. *Employers interested in participating in this program should submit their request no later than April 16, 2004.*



Pencil In ...



Cats get many of the same types of cancer as humans; frequent exams can help detect it before it's too late for treatment. You can get more information on what to watch for at:

http://petplace.netscape.com/articles/artshow.asp?artID=4582&cb=ns_

Looking for a new or additional internet search engine? Give **Teoma** a try (www.teoma.com). Teoma claims to analyze the web as it is organically organized – in naturally occurring communities that are about or related to the same subject to determine which sites are most relevant. It's powered by Ask Jeeves.



Culture and History has issued a call for [juried quilt and wall hanging entries](#). Entries must be post-marked by March 29 and received by March 31. Call Stephanie Lilly (558-0220, ext. 128) for more information.



DMV Posts New Duplicate Title Requirements

Effective February 2, 2004, all applications for duplicate titles submitted to the Division of Motor Vehicles must be accompanied by a copy of the driver's licenses of the owner(s). This applies to *all* applications whether submitted by mail or in person at any Division regional office. For the regional office closest to your area, call 1-800-642-9066 or visit the DMV website at www.wvdot.com.

Stateline Now Available in Text-Only Format

We are proud to announce the establishment of an e-mail list for readers who wish to receive *Stateline* as a text-only publication. This list will greatly assist readers who are visually impaired. If you or someone you know would like to be included in the text-only e-mail list, contact Jane Fouty at the phone number or e-mail address listed in the box to the immediate right.

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