

State Fire Marshal's Office: Small Agency, Big Responsibilities

Contributed by Carol Nolte of the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office.

Most people associate the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) with building site inspections, or with the arsons and fire fatalities they see fire marshals investigating covered on the 6:00 news. But in truth, the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office carries out a multitude of public safety operations that directly or indirectly affect the safety of all West Virginians, whether at home, at work, or in the community.

"Most people have no idea the scope of authority the SFMO has, let alone the enormous responsibilities it carries – we tend to be a well-kept secret," states Sterling Lewis, Jr., State Fire Marshal. "That we provide these services to West Virginia with such a limited number of personnel is in my opinion even more impressive." The agency consists of an office staff of 10, and only 29 fire marshals to cover the entire State.

The SFMO is specifically charged under State Code with the enforcement of all laws dealing with fire, arson, and explosives, including powers of arrest. Incidents can range from the storage, sale, and use of explosives or other hazardous substances, to investigation of fires and explosions, both accidental and criminal in nature. Blueprints for new construction and renovations to public facilities are reviewed in-house for compliance with safety codes. The agency oversees licensure of electricians, low-voltage technicians, blasters, and pyrotechnicians. Fireworks permits

for both indoor and outdoor displays are also issued and *stringently enforced* for the protection of the public.

Fire prevention and safety training is conducted by fire marshals for the general public, schools, health care, workplaces, and emergency responders such as firefighters, EMS, and law enforcement. Also, the SFMO administers all incident reporting for the State's 445 fire departments.

A team of FBI-trained Hazardous Device Technicians serves as the SFMO's Special Response Group, responding to reports of actual or suspected explosive devices or materials, and performing render-safe operations when necessary. In addition, these and other fire marshals investigate an average of 1,200 fire and explosives-related incidents a year, most of which are reported to the West Virginia Arson Hotline.

Both the Arson Hotline and Governor's Helpline for Safer Schools are operated on a 24-hour, 7 days-a-week basis by the SFMO. The Safe Schools Hotline handles several hundred calls a year dealing with violence, substance abuse, and other safety issues affecting West Virginia's students.

But for the Fire Marshal's Office, Marshal Lewis says the primary mission continues to be helping West Virginians reduce the incidence of fire.

"We currently rank 5th in the U.S. for having the highest number of fire-related deaths. Our priority remains that of protecting people and property from fire. The one thing we will not be doing is compromising lives by not enforcing the laws we're sworn to uphold."

For more about the WV State Fire Marshal's Office, visit our website at www.wvfiremarshal.org.

While traveling down the West Virginia Turnpike, natives and visitors alike are awestruck at Flat Top Mountain as it looms impressively in the distance.



STING

to Stop Procrastination

Author and recovering procrastinator Rita Emmett gives this advice in her *Procrastinator's Handbook* (Walker & Co.): Think STING!

- S** Select just **ONE THING** to do. Even if it's a small thing, do just that task.
- T** Time yourself. Set a timer. Give yourself a set amount of time to do the job.
- I** Ignore everything. Don't make a phone call, send an e-mail, or read anything else.
- N** No breaks. They make jobs last longer.
- G** Give yourself a reward. Make it something you like or enjoy.

Emmett says doing your most dreaded task first gets it out of the way. The dread of doing something often uses more time and energy than actually doing the task.

Smoking Illnesses Go Beyond Ultimate Price

Contributed by Teresa Mace of the Department of Health and Human Resources.

For every premature death due to smoking, 20 West Virginians will suffer from at least one serious illness associated with smoking. This information comes from *The Surgeon General's Report: The Health Consequences of Smoking*, which was released in late May, 2004.

"The health effects of smoking are more widespread than previously thought," said Catherine Slempp, M.D., State Health Officer. "The list of diseases that the Surgeon General has conclusively linked with smoking has grown even longer. Providing information and education to State residents is instrumental in saving lives and lowering additional health risks that are associated with tobacco use."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), smoking has caused 12 million deaths since the first Surgeon General's report was released in 1964. **On average, adults who smoke die 13-14 years earlier than nonsmokers.** Nationally, the economic toll exceeds \$157 billion dollars each year – \$75 billion in direct medical costs and \$82 billion in lost productivity.

According to Slempp, "There is no need for families to see their futures go up in smoke."

A complete, detailed summary of the Surgeon General's report as well as other related information can be found on the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

Knowing the ABC's of CPR Can Save a Life!

If you've never taken a course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), these simple instructions could help you save a life. If you have taken a CPR course, checking this American Heart Association's procedure will serve as a review of what you learned.

A: AIRWAY. If the person is not responsive, **FIRST call 911.** If there are no head or neck injuries, gently tilt the head back by lifting the chin with one hand and pushing down on the forehead with the other.

B: BREATHS. If the person is not breathing normally, give **TWO RESCUE BREATHS.** Keeping the head tilted, pinch the nose closed and place your mouth around the victim's mouth. Blow two slow, full breaths (about two seconds each), while watching to see if the chest rises each time. After giving the two rescue breaths, check for signs of circulation such as breathing, coughing, movement, or responsiveness to gentle shaking. Place your ear near the person's mouth and listen for breathing.

C: CHEST COMPRESSIONS. If no circulation can be detected, begin chest compressions. Place the heel of one hand in the center of the chest with the heel of the second hand on top. Position your body directly over your hands, elbows locked. Apply 15 compressions, pushing the breastbone down about two inches with each thrust. Allow the chest to return to normal between compressions. Carefully use the full weight of your body; repeat the procedure three times.

Automated External Defibrulators Available at Capitol Complex

The Division of Protective Services (DPS) has 6 Automated External Defibrulators (AED) available at the Capitol Complex. These are small, lightweight devices that can assess a person's heart rhythm, and if necessary, administer an electric shock to restore normal heart rhythm in cases of sudden cardiac arrest.

* TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL FOR USE OF THESE DEVICES *

DPS will provide training for the AED devices. There is a cost of \$13 (\$10 for the instruction book and \$3 for the certification). If you are interested in training, please contact our Capitol Dispensary Nurse, Marsha Francis, at 558-3663.

Call Leads Agriculture Officials to Illegal Snails

Article and photograph from the [Department of Agriculture's website](#).

State and federal agriculture officials recently picked up the first two Giant African Land Snails (GALS) discovered in the State so far, following a phone call from a woman who suspected she had been given two of the animals at a yard sale in Pennsylvania.

"I congratulate the Plant Industries and PPQ staffs, respectively, for working together so efficiently to quickly respond to this call," said Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass. "It pleases me greatly to see this level of cooperation between State and federal agencies."

The discovery was credited to public outreach conducted by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture Plant Industries Division (WVDA-PID) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ) office in Ripley.

"We received a phone call from a Preston County woman who said she was looking at photos on the Department's webpage when she realized she had two Giant African Land Snails," said Gary Gibson, assistant director of WVDA-PID. "PID and PPQ both had personnel in the area, so both agencies responded to the report."

USDA Malacologist Dr. David G. Robinson later positively identified the snails as GALS. GALS have been used in classrooms because their large size makes them easy for children to study. They are also sold at flea markets and swap meets as pets.

However, the snails are considered serious agricultural pests because they can grow up to eight inches long, are voracious eaters, and can fertilize their own eggs. **They can also transmit encephalitis to humans through parasites they harbor.** It is illegal to possess them in the United States, but State and federal agricultural officials trying to locate the prohibited snails are currently working under an amnesty program where individuals who report having the snails and voluntarily relinquish them, are not prosecuted.

"We simply want to find out where they are and deal with them in the appropriate fashion," said Gibson. "Most people who have them don't know they are illegal or the dangers associated with them. They buy them at a flea market or yard sale as a novelty-type pet and never think twice about them being an invasive species."

The snails, two terrariums, and several eggs that had been laid are currently being held at the Department of Agriculture. PID has arranged to clean and return the terrariums to the owner.



Giant African Land Snails such as these may pique your interest, but they have ravenous appetites, carry disease, and are illegal to possess in the United States. If you or someone you know possesses any of these animals, contact the WV Department of Agriculture immediately.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal, and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory, and consumer protection programs, as mandated by State law.

Top 10 Reasons to ...

Locate Your Business in West Virginia

From the [West Virginia Development Office website](#).

Know someone who is considering opening a business? Entice them to do so in West Virginia. Here are the Top 10 reasons to locate a business in West Virginia:

10. Choices abound – for work, home, and play – giving West Virginians the opportunity to fashion lifestyles uniquely their own.
9. Centrally located, West Virginia is within overnight trucking distance of more than 60% of the U.S. population and more than a third of the Canadian population.
8. West Virginia has the fourth-lowest industrial electricity rates in the nation and the eighth-lowest industrial natural gas costs.
7. West Virginia has the second lowest cost of living rate in the U.S., according to the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association.
6. For five consecutive years in Education Week's *Quality Counts* analysis, West Virginia's public schools have scored among the best education marks of any other U.S. state.
5. West Virginia consistently enjoys the lowest incidence of violent crime in the nation.
4. West Virginia's web of fiber optic networks and 100% digital switching of offices allow for state-of-the-art voice, video, and data transmission services. The State's citizens and businesses enjoy an uncommon ability to communicate with each other and the rest of the world, thanks to advances in point-to-point wireless, satellite services, broadband deployment, and peer-to-peer technologies.

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Rehabilitation Services/Rehabilitation Center Foundation Dedicates New Hospital Rooms

Article and photograph from a Division of Rehabilitation Services press release.

On May 19, 2004, the State Division of Rehabilitation Services and the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center Foundation dedicated newly renovated patient rooms at the Rehabilitation Center Hospital in Institute.

"Today we celebrate completion of the Renaissance for Rehabilitation project, which will help us better serve patients of the West Virginia Rehabilitation Hospital," DRS Interim Director Janice Holland said. "Without the help of Gov. Bob Wise, the Legislature, the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center Foundation, and donors, it would not have been possible."

The renovations included replacing communal bathrooms with private bathrooms and making other upgrades to the rooms.

"The work was timely and important to preserve the dignity of the people served here," said Kay Goodwin, cabinet secretary of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts.

Funding for the project came from both public and private sources. Gov. Bob Wise and the 75th West Virginia Legislature appropriated \$300,000 for the project, and the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center Foundation raised over \$230,000 from private sources. The Agency's maintenance staff provided labor for the renovations.

"Renaissance for Rehabilitation was always a partnership from the moment we conceived it," Dr. Sami Ghareeb, President of the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center Foundation, said. "Gov. Wise and the Legislature did their part, we raised over \$230,000, and the agency's facilities maintenance staff put that money to good use by doing almost all the work themselves."

Kitty Kay, a foundation board member whose husband has received treatment at the hospital, said about the project, "While John was an in-patient at the hospital, and now on an out-patient basis, we made up our minds that this would be a philanthropic effort for the rest of our lives."

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3. West Virginia is big enough to offer you every business advantage but small enough that you'll experience a personal touch that our competitor states can't begin to approach.
2. West Virginia's new slate of incentives include the Strategic R&D credit that allows for a 100% tax offset for R&D projects. A new Venture Capital Act significantly improves the climate for risk capital by providing \$25 million in State money to be leveraged with up to \$75 million of federal money.

And the No. 1 reason to locate your business in West Virginia ...

1. West Virginia's workforce has earned an incredible reputation for dedication and loyalty, as well as for low absenteeism and turnover. When the Harbor Report North America 2002 named Toyota Motor Manufacturing, West Virginia, Inc., the No. 1 four-cylinder engine manufacturing plant in North America, General Manager David Copenhaver said, "This proves just how good our West Virginia folks are."

Pencil In ...



K-12, Higher Education, State agencies, and the business community are sponsoring the **WV Statewide Technology Conference** at the Charleston Civic Center, August 2-4, 2004. For more, visit www.wvnet.edu/wvconf2004 on the internet.



Among the newly remodeled hospital rooms was one dedicated to Coach Pat Vance of Nitro, who received rehabilitation services following a stroke a few years ago. Funds for renovating the room dedicated to Vance were contributed by the Nitro Moose Family Center and Vance's classmates in the Nitro High School Class of 1961.

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Bob Wise, Governor
John Poffenbarger, Acting Cabinet Secretary
Max Farley, Acting Director of Personnel

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/