

Ireland Establishes Election Fraud Unit/Hotline

Making good on one of her campaign agenda items, Secretary of State Betty Ireland announced the formation of an Election Fraud Unit and the establishment of a toll-free hotline number to receive fraud tips and information.

“We have been working on our fraud unit since the first day I took office,” said Ireland. In a later statement, she added, **“I want to send a message out to those who attempt to corrupt the election process that we are watching.”**

The Fraud Unit’s goal is to ensure that candidates follow and abide by finance and election laws. According to Ireland’s Chief of Staff, Ben Beakes, investigators will target groups and individuals who are specifically trying to interfere with elections. The unit will investigate every type of voter and/or election fraud, and Beakes says that the unit will pay special attention to those who target senior citizens. In fact, plans are in the works to develop a seniors’ outreach program designed to educate older citizens about voter fraud and how to recognize it.

The unit is brand new, and many of its policies, procedures, and other operating guidelines are still being established. It’s Ireland’s goal to develop a unit that will be long-lasting and continue into the future. At the present time, callers to the hotline must provide their names to avoid anonymous allegations for political purposes. The number will ring directly to a member of the investigation team. Each complaint will be reviewed by in-house attorney Dan



*Secretary of State Betty Ireland.
Photo provided by Ben Beakes.*

Kimble. Those deemed legitimate will be passed along to the unit for a thorough investigation. If evidence of wrongdoing is found, the information will be forwarded to the appropriate local, State, or federal prosecutor.

Several employees are already in place, including an investigator, campaign finance auditor, and fraud hotline administrator, but the search is still on for a skilled, qualified, competent individual to serve as chief investigator and head the Unit.

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WV Ranks First in Arthritis and Related Ailments

Information provided by John Law of the Dept. of Health and Human Resources.

Newly released statistics by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health show that 37% of State adults are diagnosed with arthritis or other rheumatic conditions, which include rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia. **A health survey of adults aged 18+ conducted in each of the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and three U.S. territories found that West Virginia has the highest rate of arthritis-related diagnoses.** Broken down by gender, 39% of State women reported having arthritis as opposed to 35% of State men.

The survey inquired about related limitations in daily and work activities. Results show 36% of State residents have daily activity limitations and 32% report work limitations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that \$750 million was spent on arthritis-related conditions in 1997: \$445 million for direct medical costs and \$305 million for indirect costs. Obviously, the associated costs would be much higher today.

The Bureau for Public Health and the Arthritis Foundation (Ohio River Valley Chapter) are collaborating to develop the West Virginia Arthritis Coalition to address arthritis problems and conditions in the State. The coalition is open to any organization or individual interested in assisting with this endeavor.

For more information, contact Germaine Weis at 304-558-0644 or germaineweis@wvdhhr.org.

Jury Duty: Be Ready and Willing to Serve

Source for the basic information in this article is "How the Jury Process Works" which appears on the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals website (www.state.wv.us/wvsca/juryinfo/newsletter05.pdf).

On May 2, 2005, West Virginia courts, including the State Supreme Court, celebrated Law Day. The theme for this year's event was *The American Jury: We the People in Action*.

Two words that often strike fear in the hearts of men and women alike are "jury duty."

"Why me?" they ask, followed by, "How can I get out of this?"

The fact is, without you, the jury, our legal system would be hard-pressed to function properly.

In West Virginia, citizens can be called upon to serve on circuit court grand juries or petit juries, magistrate court juries, or municipal court juries. A **grand jury** is made up of 16 jurors who listen to evidence and arguments presented by the prosecutor and determine whether it is sufficient to issue an indictment for a criminal trial. A **petit jury** is an actual trial jury, which hears both criminal (12-member jury) and civil cases (six-member jury). In **Magistrate Court**, the jury consists of six members who hear misdemeanor cases and civil cases of \$5,000 or less. **Municipal Court juries** generally have six members. The term

of service depends on the type of jury and the length of any case for which the juror is chosen.

How do "they" get your name as a jury member candidate? **Just like voting or driving a vehicle, serving as a juror is both a right and privilege; therefore, it only makes sense that the pool of names comes from a master list of registered voters and licensed drivers.** "They" are ... is ... the county circuit court,

which randomly selects names without regard to race, creed, gender, color, national origin, or economic status. Aside from complying with the law, this works well, since a "jury of your peers" doesn't mean all Hispanic females if the defendant happens to be one, or all African-American nurses, or all American Indians,

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Associate Degree Program for State Workers

Contributed by Jan Young of the WVU Tech Community and Technical College

The Community and Technical College at WVU Tech is providing non-traditional delivery for the Public Service option of its A.S. in General Studies at three locations in southern West Virginia. Persons located within in reach of Charleston, Montgomery or Oak Hill will find the required courses for this degree offered on a regular basis at night, on the web, or on television. **The General Studies: Public Service Option is a program designed for working adults in the public sector who wish to work toward a degree but must do so as part-time students.**

For example, during the Fall 2005 semester, three required courses in the program are scheduled for evenings in the Charleston area, three in Oak Hill, and four in Montgomery. In addition, students in any location will have access to two required courses on the web and one on television. Each course for this degree will be offered every two to three years in each location depending upon student demand. Students who complete the A.S. degree may transfer the coursework directly into a B.S. in Public Service Administration at WVU Tech without any loss of credit.

Potential students should initially contact Jan Young at (304) 465-0546 or Jeanne.Young@mail.wvu.edu. In-person advising is regularly available in Montgomery and Oak Hill and by arrangement in Charleston.



"You will soon receive a large sum of money."

According to the West Virginia Lottery, approximately 90% of national Pick 5 record lottery winners use the numbers from their chinese fortune cookies as their picks.



Patty Keys, an Environmental Specialist I with the WV Department of Environmental Protection, reviews her Fall 2006 class schedule with Cathy Stevenson, Administrative Secretary Sr. at West Virginia Tech's Oak Hill Center. By taking one or two courses each semester since Spring 2003, Patty has earned 34 of the 65 hours required for General Studies: Public Service Option degree. Upon completion, she plans to pursue a B.S. in Public Service Administration.

Gas Prices Got You Down? Consider Ride Share!!

Contributed by Kelly Bragg of the West Virginia Development Office.

The Ride Share Program, offered through the Energy Efficiency Program of the West Virginia Development Office, helps State government employees who commute to and from the Charleston area.

The division maintains a list of participants and information on each ride sharer, such as days and times

of regular working hours; agency name, phone number, and street address; and the participant's geographical area.

All participants must register in the Ride Share Program, enabling maintenance of a searchable database. Ride sharers use the database to find matches within their areas.

As gasoline costs continue to rise, interest in the program is growing. The chart below can help you calculate how much you can save by carpooling.

Contact Marie Butler at 558-0350, ext. 760 or mbutler@wvdo.org if you have questions or need more information.

The Ride Share Program is FREE - Register at: www.wvdo.org/community/rideshare.html

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO COMMUTE – AND HOW MUCH CAN YOU SAVE?

Miles Commuted to Work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enter total annual miles driven _____ miles 2. Enter total daily round-trip miles to work _____ miles 3. Enter number of days worked per week _____ days 4. Enter number of weeks worked per year _____ weeks 5. Total annual commuting miles to work (Line 2 x Line 3 x Line 4) _____ miles
Annual Commuting Costs <i>Based on 2005 AAA Estimates</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Calculate annual commuting costs. AAA estimates 2005 driving expenses at 56.1 cents per mile. This includes gasoline, oil, maintenance & tires, insurance, depreciation, finance charges, license, title, taxes, registration & plates (2005 statistics from America Automobile Association). (Line 5 x .561) \$ _____
Total Annual Driving Costs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Driving cost per mile \$ _____ .561 8. Calculate total annual driving costs (Line 7 x Line 1) \$ _____
Total Commuting Costs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Calculate annual commuting costs (Line 7 x Line 5) \$ _____ 10. Add annual fees for parking at work, tolls, etc. \$ _____ 11. Calculate Total Annual Commuting Cost of driving ALONE to work (Line 9 + Line 10) \$ _____
Total Ride Share Savings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Calculate SAVINGS when Ride Sharing with just ONE person (Line 11 ÷ 2 x 1) \$ _____ 13. Calculate SAVINGS when Ride Sharing with TWO people (Line 11 ÷ 3 x 2) \$ _____



Ride Share Program participants Marie Butler (left) and Teresa Bishop (right), carpool to Charleston from Parkersburg. They, along with others we spoke with, fully advocate the program. Most alternate driving duties, and there is no problem with people not showing up on time. Most participants have a 5-10 minute wait period. Anyone who fails to arrive on time understands that transportation becomes his or her own responsibility for that day. Aside from the obvious savings on fuel expenses, other benefits listed included less wear and tear on personal vehicles, and a more pleasant, relaxed trip because of time shared with good company.

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or even all white atheist males. It simply means a panel of people from your area or community who can make a fair, open-minded decision based on the evidence presented.

Most circuit courts in West Virginia use either the jury wheel (39 counties) or the jury box (11 counties) method of selection. A jury wheel is any electronic device (even a computer) in which names are entered into a data file and randomly selected when the need arises. A jury box is a non-electronic device such as an actual box or rotating enclosed wheel (similar to a bingo wheel) that holds either paper ballots or numbered balls that correspond to names.

Jurors are the backbone of the American court system. It's not as frightening as people imagine. It's a chance to learn, meet people, and provide a vital, valuable community service. You, as a juror, are not on trial – as referenced above, your only requirements are the ability to listen and make an honest, fair, open-minded decision based on the evidence presented in the case. In fact, there are only six basic steps to a jury trial:

Jury Selection

Presentation of Opening Statements by Both Sides

Presentation of Evidence by Both Sides

Instructions to the Jury by the Presiding Judge

Final, Closing Arguments by Both Sides

Jury Deliberations and Issuance of a Verdict



State employees covered under the Division of Personnel *Administrative Rule* are entitled to paid leave for jury duty (see Section 14.10 under Attendance and Leave). For those in agencies not covered by the *Administrative Rule*, check with your agency Human Resources or Payroll Office.

Still don't think you want to serve? Remember that even though you believe you have mitigating circumstances (undue hardship, extreme inconvenience, or public necessity), there are no automatic "outs." If you truly have circumstances that make jury service impossible for you, you may submit your reasons to the judge; however, judges take jury service quite seriously and do not rubber stamp exemptions. Also, we never know when we or someone we know will end up in a court situation. Wouldn't we all feel better knowing our jurors are ready and willing to serve? If you ever sit on a jury, you can rest assured that everyone involved feels the same way.

"Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent."

Eleanor Roosevelt

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According to Beakes, unit investigators will have the authority to arrest, but the primary goal isn't to put people in jail. "We don't want to be looked upon as a policing authority, we want to be ... a unit that can better secure the election process in West Virginia," he said.

If you are aware or think you know of any kind of voter or election fraud, the hotline number to report it is **1-877-FRAUD-WV (1-877-372-8398)**.

Pencil In ...



Are your children already, or about to go, online? Are you wondering how to keep them safe?

GetNetWise is a good place to start. (www.getnetwise.com).

It's an easy-to-navigate website that discusses child safety, virus, spam, security, privacy, etc. You can even sign up for their newsletter.



Become a skilled babysitter. Teens aged 11-15 can take the **American Red Cross Babysitter's Training Class** on June 23, from 9-4, at the Elk Valley Branch of the Kanawha Co. Public Library. Participants will learn safety skills and receive a handbook, instruction, certificate, and first aid kit. Cost is \$40 - registration is required. Call 965-3636.



On **June 20, West Virginia** will celebrate its **142nd birthday**. It's also the day the **Great Seal of the United States** was adopted in 1872.

