



State of State Address Highlights Health, Economy

One of the most difficult things a leader must at times do is speak of pride through pain. That was the task inherited by Governor Joe Manchin for his State of the State Address on January 11, 2006.

The Governor began his speech with remembrance and tribute to the 12 miners of the Sago Mine who perished, and the remaining miracle survivor (sadly, two more miners died in Logan County just nine days later).

"It has been a difficult week," the Governor began as he spoke of the men's pride ... pride in providing for their families, in being West Virginians, and of how their work helped keep America strong. He spoke of his own pride in the miners and their families, and in the citizens of our State for how they have rallied in support. Manchin also promised continued assistance for the families,

reform measures, and moves to thwart the growing methamphetamine problem. He spoke of how the reforms made in the State's Workers' Compensation system allow us to provide protection to workers while restoring confidence in our economy. More highlights include insurance reforms, which netted consumers \$70 million in premium reductions, and a one percent reduction in the food tax, estimated to save taxpayers \$25 million. Manchin has pledged to work at reducing the

Just Call Me George?

State employees will honor former presidents Washington and Lincoln on President's Day, February 20. But did you know that the title of "President" was a debated issue?



It seems impossible to think of our Chief Executive as anything but "the President," but in 1789, John Adams had other ideas. After

George Washington was unanimously elected the nation's first leader, Congress had to decide on his title. When "President of the United States" was suggested, Vice President-elect John Adams disagreed, saying that the title was not dignified enough – after all, he argued, even fire companies and cricket clubs had presidents. Instead, he believed that the leader of the United States needed a grander title and humbly suggested "His Most Benign Highness." His peers, including Washington himself, no doubt thought that Adams' grandiose suggestion was too reminiscent of the titles of English royalty and insisted on the more down-to-earth "President of the United States."

From The Old Farmer's Almanac



Governor Joe Manchin was interrupted several times by approving applause during his State of the State Address on January 11.

including a \$100,000 contribution from the Governor's Contingency Fund to provide educational opportunities, and a thorough investigation into the explosion. "We cannot know the purpose of this tragedy – but I assure you we will discover the cause."

The Governor moved ahead, stating that, "While the hearts of West Virginians are grieving, the State of West Virginia remains strong." He reminded us that many important issues were addressed over the previous year, including Healthy Lifestyles legislation, substantial ethics

tax in a responsible fashion over time until it is eliminated completely.

Regarding our economic and job picture, Governor Manchin says that the State has accepted the challenges and worked together to resolve them, resulting in an improved outlook in these areas, as well as in the State's overall financial picture. West Virginia ended last Fiscal Year with a significant surplus, which allowed unfunded pension liabilities to be paid down. On an even brighter note,

Smoke Detectors – More Important Than Ever This Winter!

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

It's no secret that an increase in home fires usually comes along with the cold weather each fall and continues until late spring. Last year

Clearing the Air About Smoking

For the most part, we've been blessed with mild temperatures this winter, but we're almost certain to experience some frigid days before spring arrives. When those cold days occur, it sometimes results in individuals seeking shelter from the cold and elements to smoke. So, where can State employees smoke?

Employees are governed by both the West Virginia Division of Personnel's Smoking Restrictions in the Workplace (Smoking Policy) policy (DOP-P1: www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empres/POLICIES/Nosmoke.pdf) and the smoking regulations of their county health departments. The DOP's Smoking Policy prohibits all smoking in areas such as offices or work areas, waiting rooms/receiving areas, employee lounges/restrooms, conference rooms/classrooms, cafeterias, hallways, and any other enclosed space. Also included are elevators, vehicles, stairwells, **and parking garages**. Generally, areas designated for smoking are located **outdoors** in accordance with the appropriate county health department regulations. Other areas may be available - ask your supervisor to be sure. *Kanawha County prohibits smoking within 15 feet of any building entrance/exit, as well as any operable windows or ventilation intakes.*

County health department contact information can be found online at www.wvdhhr.org/wvlocalhealth/lhd_profiles/lhdreport/index.asp. Let's all make the effort to be respectful of the rules and each other!







alone, West Virginia suffered over 7,000 reported fires and 69 fire-related deaths, with many of them occurring between November and March.

With people spending more time indoors, the number of fires caused by careless smoking, misuse of heating and electrical equipment, and unattended cooking is expected to rise, as they unfortunately do every year.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), West Virginia's 1997-2001 average fire death rate ranked 8th highest in the U.S.

Although *everyday fire prevention* is the most important thing you can do to keep your family safe, keeping a working smoke detector in your home is essential as well. Detectors can give you the early warning you need to escape a deadly fire—they *can double your chances of getting out alive*.

With this in mind, the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office offers these important tips about smoke detectors:

-  Always follow manufacturers' instructions for your detectors. They will show you proper placement procedures and explain how to take care of them.
-  Have at least one detector for each level of your home. Install at least one smoke alarm in or near sleeping areas. If you sleep with your bedroom door closed, place one detector inside your room and another in the hallway.
-  **NEVER** take batteries from a smoke detector unless you're replacing them. Many fire fatalities happen because the detector had its battery removed. Also, a good time to replace batteries is when you set your clocks for *Daylight Savings Time*. Test detectors once a month and **replace detectors that are 10 years old or more**.
-  If your home has a hard-wired (electrical) smoke alarm system, it's also a good idea to supplement with battery-operated detectors in case of power outages or equipment malfunction.
-  **Did you know ... having smoke detectors is the law!** WV Code §29-3-16a requires that an operational smoke detector be installed in the immediate vicinity of each sleeping area in all one- and two-family dwellings, including mobile homes. Home owners shall provide, install, and replace required smoke detectors; however, the occupants are responsible for maintaining them (batteries, cleaning and testing) and notifying the owners if replacement is needed.
-  Under the same State Code, a person who is deaf or hearing-impaired has the right to submit a written request to the property owner to provide and install a smoke detector that uses a light signal sufficient to give warning in case of fire.



For more information about fire safety, contact:

WV State Fire Marshal's Office, Public Education Division
(304) 558-2191, ext. 223 OR cnolte@wvfiremarshal.org

Shuttle Service to Run Daily January 9 through March 11



On January 9, 2006, the Capitol Shuttle Service began running daily, Monday through Friday, every 10-15 minutes to and from Laidley Field, with its usual stops along the route. The shuttle starts at 7 AM and makes its last run to Laidley Field at 5:30 PM. Please note that the shuttle **WILL NOT RUN** daily from 11-11:20 AM, nor on Saturdays, Sundays, or State holidays. This all-day service ends on March 11, 2006.

New Parking Ticket System Expects to Save \$50,000

Article and photo reprinted from *Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes* (January 2006), the Department of Administration's newsletter.

A new parking ticket system has recently been implemented, which provides more accuracy, efficiency and, an added plus, cost savings. Although issuing parking violations is only one aspect of a parking guard's responsibility at the State Capitol, it is a necessary evil.

Approximately \$82,000 are owed in uncollected parking violations. The department anticipates with this new system to improve the way fines are collected, while, at the same time, better utilizing the parking guards.

Prior to implementing this new system, other parking systems in the State, such as Marshall University, West Virginia University, and the City of Charleston, were researched. After competitively bidding the system, a contract was issued to Clancy Systems. The new system is expected to save the State about \$50,000 annually.

The savings will result from changing how the ticket and payments are processed. Previously, the guards would inspect all parking lots and manually ticket illegally parked vehicles. The tickets would go through a tedious posting process in the Finance Division, which was time-consuming.

The guards now have PDAs (personal digital assistant devices), in which they enter necessary information and instantly print out a ticket to be placed on the vehicle's windshield. At the end of the day, the guards bring their PDAs to Parking Assistant Shelia Gray, who downloads the information onto her computer. "It is so easy, with the click of a button, to find out information. I can search by date, citation number,

or by license number. It's all done in this office with no extra personnel needed," Gray said.

The previous system required one ticket to be processed by up to four different individuals. Since all of the information is accessible to Gray, she no longer needs to rely on another agency should questions arise.

Since all of the information is entered into the PDA, there is more accuracy in the data collected. Handwriting tickets in the winter or on rainy days often made the tickets illegible. This new system eliminates that factor.

Another new aspect to the guard's process is taking photographs of illegally parked vehicles on questionable circumstances. The most challenged tickets are high-dollar violations.

The Leasing Office, which oversees the collection of fines, is actively collecting unpaid parking violations. There are some misconceptions, one being that the agency can only go back a certain length of time, which is not true. Another misconception is that late fees cannot be collected in Magistrate Court, which is also not correct.

Individuals who owe \$1,000 or more in parking fines will pay no less than \$100 a month. This arrangement will expedite the closure of these violations, should the individual not be able to pay the fines off in one payment.

Thus far, the new system has proven to be successful in generating savings. The system costs about \$300 a month, including the PDAs, maintenance, and technical support.

With the prior system, meter runs alone (formerly performed by employees of the Finance Division) cost about \$2,700 a month. Now, the guards will have time to make those runs as part of their daily tasks.

The Department of Administration continues to look at ways to perform tasks more efficiently and cost-effectively.

Guard Your Social Security Number

Your employer and financial institution will likely need your Social Security Number (SSN) for wage and tax reporting purposes. Other businesses may ask you for your SSN to do a credit check, such as when you apply for a loan, rent an apartment, or sign up for utilities. Sometimes, however, they simply want your SSN for general record keeping. You don't have to give a business your SSN just because they ask for it. If someone asks for your SSN, ask the following questions:

- ? Why do you need my SSN?
- ? How will my SSN be used?
- ? What law requires me to give you my SSN?
- ? What will happen if I don't give you my SSN?

Sometimes a business or government agency may choose to not provide you with the service or benefit you're seeking if you don't provide your SSN. Getting answers to these questions will help you decide whether you want to share your SSN with the business or agency. Remember – the decision is yours.

Edited from a Federal Trade Commission security tip.

**Success is the sum of the details.
Harvey S. Firestone**



Pictured above is General Services Parking Guard Freda Cogar.

MANCHIN – Continued from Page 1

the State should finish this Fiscal Year with another significant surplus. Manchin is committed to fiscal responsibility and has given the Legislature a five-year forecast of projected revenues and expenditures. “Our State’s traditional shortsightedness has to end. We must ensure that the decisions we make today are right for tomorrow”

Calling for the making of responsible decisions, and asking lawmakers to “look beyond the next election and work together in a bipartisan way,” Manchin outlined many goals for the legislative session.

Although the Governor has declared that West Virginia is positively “open for business,” he minced no words to make it unconditionally clear that we are closed to illegal drugs and drug dealers. “Wherever you are and wherever you may be hiding or hiding your illegal drugs, our Troopers are coming – and they will find you!” He intends to commit an additional \$1 million to the State Police to bolster and improve their current efforts to rid drugs from the State. He has also prepared legislation to increase penalties for sex offenders and child molesters, and to enhance the ability of law enforcement to track these individuals upon completion of their sentences.

Addressing healthcare, Manchin is proposing two new private healthcare projects. The first, called the Preventive Care Clinic-Based Plan, will allow those enrolled to access services such as office visits, x-rays, and lab work for a single monthly fee. Although not an insurance program, nor does it cover specialists or hospitalization, the plan would provide basic preventive care starting as low as \$1 per day. The second proposed plan is the Affordable Insurance Initiative, which would provide affordable insurance for those who are able to afford broader range coverage. If approved, this plan will offer coverage through private insurance firms beginning at \$99 per month. In addition, the Governor is proposing that State agencies be permitted to join with multi-state purchasing contracts for medications, forecasting a savings of at least 20%.

Turning his focus to jobs and the economy, Manchin lauded West Virginia workers – “... when you give a West Virginian a chance to have a good job, you’ll not find a harder, more productive worker anywhere else on this planet.” He cited many successes over the past year, stating that 40+ major companies will either locate or expand their operations, including expansion plans for Toyota, Diamond Electric, and A.K. of West Virginia. Also well received were announcements that Chesapeake Energy (out of Oklahoma) will locate its Eastern United States Division in Charleston, and that Appalachian Power has filed with the Public Service Commission to construct a 600-megawatt electric generating plant in Mason County. This Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle plant (IGCC) will allow continued use of our coal while paying attention to environmental concerns.

Ending his speech with reassurance that West Virginia is ready, willing, and able to accept new and expanded business; that we are working toward an even better economic climate; and that government will work responsibly, Governor Manchin also proudly unveiled a new State highway border welcome sign (see photo at the right).

The full text and video of the Governor’s address can be found at www.wv.gov/org/sos2006.cfm.

New welcome signs are slated for West Virginia’s highway borders.



Pencil In ...



The Museum in the Park at **Chief Logan State Park** has **expanded its operating hours** as follows:



Mon.-Wed. : Closed
 Thu. -Fri.: 10 AM - 4 PM
 Sat. : 10 AM - 6 PM
 Sun. : 1 PM - 5 PM
 Call 558-0220, ext. 172 for more details.

Congratulations to **Dr. Matt Scanlon** of Fairmont State University for his “fun” **climb of Mt. Kili-manjaro** in Tanzania this past summer! The mountain is Africa’s tallest at 19,340 feet and the ascent climb takes 7½ days ... the descent takes only 1½ days! Read more about his climb at www.fairmontstate.edu/news/news_archive.asp. Scroll down to article dated 1/19/2006.



This February, as we celebrate **Black History Month**, we will also mourn the **loss of Coretta Scott King**, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mrs. King died January 31, 2006.

