

## Governor Tomblin Gives First State of State Address

This article is a brief summary of Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's first State of the State Address. Many of the agenda items have already been introduced and/or had action taken on them. For the complete speech, visit:

[www.governor.wv.gov/Documents/State%20of%20State%20%202011.pdf](http://www.governor.wv.gov/Documents/State%20of%20State%20%202011.pdf)

On January 12, 2011, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin delivered his first State of the State Address before a combined audience of West Virginia legislators, other dignitaries, and guests. He opened his speech by stating that it is everyone's obligation to do the work of the people, and asking all to put West Virginia first by putting aside any personal or political agendas.

Continuing, Tomblin spoke of his intention to make jobs a top concern, citing three priorities that involve improving our business climate to attract, retain, and create good jobs in the private sector; improving and reforming our educational system so our citizens are better prepared for the workforce; and reinventing, simplifying, and making government more efficient and responsible to both people and businesses.

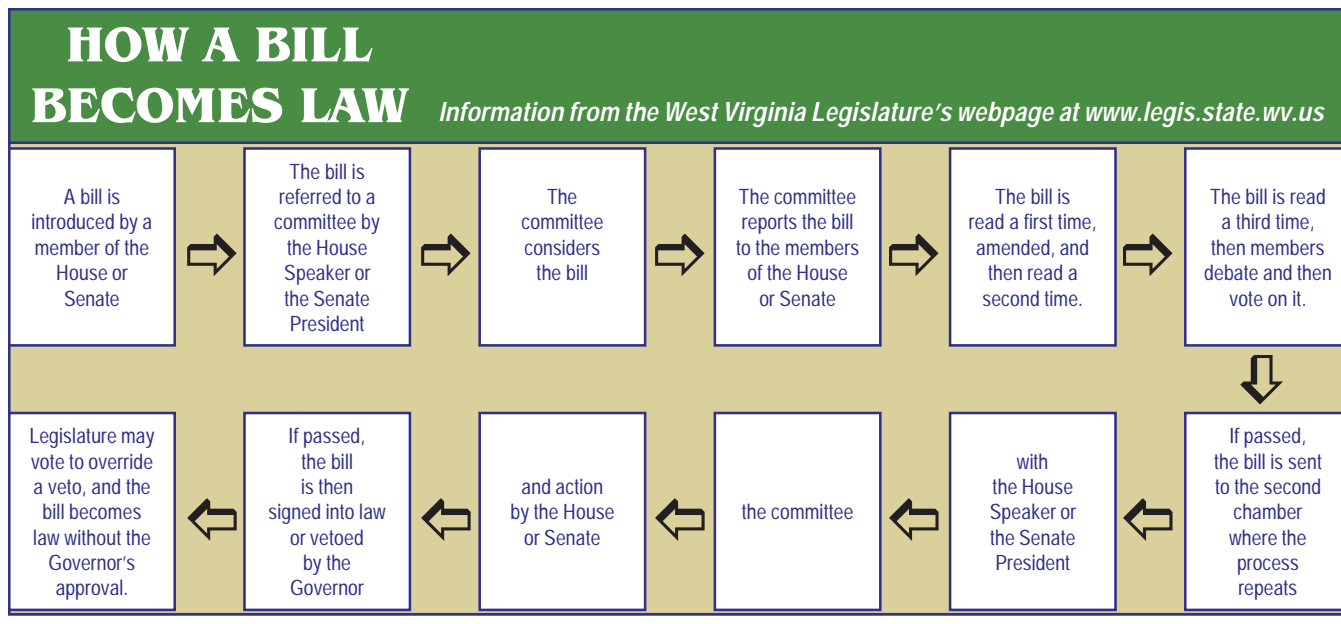
While speaking on the State's budget, the Governor acknowledged that the hardships born from the worldwide recession were both real and long-lasting. He further acknowledged that difficult choices made over the past few years allowed West Virginia to come through those hard times in better shape than most other states in the country. With that, he presented a budget that was not only balanced, but contained no new fees, no teacher or gov-



*Governor Earl Ray Tomblin*

ernment layoffs, no cuts to entitlement programs, and no reliance upon the Rainy Day Fund.

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## ADDRESS – Continued from Page 1

“Every little bit counts,” said Tomblin, as he referred to his proposal to cut another penny from the State’s food sales tax, dropping it from three cents to two cents. He elaborated further, stating, “ ... it is my intention to eliminate the entire food tax over the next few years.”

Broaching the subject of jobs, the Governor spoke of a stable government, talented workforce, and a business climate that continues to improve.

“I am so proud of the fact that the world is finally starting to understand that West Virginia is a great place to do business,” he said.

Tomblin boasted that in November 2010, workers compensation rates dropped by another 2.7 percent, and premiums have decreased 43.7 percent. Additionally, he noted that jobs have been created all over West Virginia, including:

**Caiman Energy  
Marshall and Wetzel Cos.**

**Brookfield Renewable Power  
Glen Ferris**

**Armstrong World Industries  
Jackson Co.**

**Cleveland Cliffs  
Logan County**

It was with great pride that he spoke of how, after becoming one of two finalists out of 160 possible sites for Macy’s Inc.’s new online fulfillment center, West Virginia won out over New York. The Berkeley County center will offer 900 full-time, 300 part-time, and 700 seasonal jobs.

To avoid borrowing money from the federal government or increasing business taxes, Tomblin said he would propose legislation allowing the Unemployment Compensation Fund to borrow up to \$20 million from the State’s Rainy Day Fund. By doing this, businesses will be assured they won’t see tax increases during this time, and workers can be confident that they will have benefits.

As he spoke about coal and other natural resources, Governor Tomblin cited recent studies which show that coal means 63,000 West Virginia jobs, and over \$25 billion to our State’s economy. He also pointed out that the U.S. relies on coal for nearly half of it’s electricity.

“We all know that coal keeps the lights on,” said Tomblin. “But we cannot forget – or let others ignore – that it is vital to the economic and national security of our country to utilize West Virginia’s natural resources.”

While strongly touting West Virginia’s coal industry, the Governor hasn’t ignored the fact that there are safety issues and environmental concerns that need addressed. He is open to making changes, including revisiting regulations, but firmly believes it is possible to “burn coal in a carbon-friendly manner.” He emphatically stated that, “We will not rest until we know that we have done all that we can to keep our miners safe ... .”

On the topic of education, Tomblin was clear that the means to getting good jobs in the future is a good education today. He gave the following goals and committed to introducing legislation to accomplish them:

- Using resources efficiently and appropriately;
- Decreasing our dropout rate in both high school and college;
- Eliminating teacher vacancies in certain areas; and
- Focusing on developing vocational skills beginning in middle school.

Pay raises are always a welcome thing. Governor Tomblin recognizes and acknowledges that teachers and State employees work extremely hard and deserve salary increases; however, he also knows the reality of a tough

economy. Working within inherent budget constraints, he proposed a one-time \$800 across-the-board salary enhancement, as well as a similar enhancement for public employees and school service personnel.

Health care accolades include the reduction of medical malpractice fees with the establishment of the West Virginia Physicians Mutual. For example, in 2005, Tomblin said that coverage for an OB-GYN was \$117,000 per year, while today, that coverage is almost half that amount. He also proposed a recommended \$200,000 appropriation for the Bureau of Senior Services to assist with continuing the West Virginia Helpline, a toll-free number where seniors can get assistance and information on programs that can help keep them in their homes. To date, the our seniors have benefitted to the tune of over \$7 million in federal funds.

Toward the end of his address, Governor Tomblin paid tribute to retiring General Allen Tackett, who has served as Adjunct General in West Virginia since 1995. In addition, he remembered our lost miners and military members, as well as our veterans and those who continue to serve, and Senator Robert C. Byrd. As he honored these men and women, he closed by asking the Legislature to focus on improving the lives of all West Virginians, and to help make it a place where the American Dream is achievable every single day.

*Governor Tomblin signed  
the first bill of the 2011  
Legislative Session,  
House Bill 2001, into law on  
February 3. This bill clarifies  
the timing of parole hearings.*

*To find and/or track bills, visit  
[www.legis.state.wv.us](http://www.legis.state.wv.us).*

## Electronics Ban Now in Effect for WV Landfills

We're well past the holiday season, and for many, that means we're enjoying our new electronic devices. That may also mean it's time to get rid of our old pieces of equipment.

As of January 1, 2011, tossing out the old ones to make room for new gadgets isn't as simple as putting them out with the trash. A new law



in West Virginia (Senate Bill 398) requires certain items be recycled.

The purpose of the law is essentially three-fold: to keep electronics out of our landfills, to encourage their recycling, and to help conserve landfill space. In addition to aiding our landfill situation, it's hoped that the ban and subsequent recycling will benefit the State's citizens and wildlife. Electronic equipment has fast become a major part of what goes into our landfills, but equally (if not more so) problematic is the fact that hazardous materials such as lead, cadmium, mercury, and other toxic heavy metals from these items are making their way from the State's landfills into our water supplies.

What items are affected? The legislation calls them covered electronic devices (CEDs). Included are televisions, desktop computers/laptops and video monitors, and video devices with screens larger than four inches (measured on the diagonal).

The banned items require specific handling and cannot be combined with regular trash. This has waste disposal companies in West Virginia dealing with the situation in different ways. If you have electronics you need to dispose of, contact your specific company to find out what to do. More information is available at [www.state.wv.us/swmb/ewaste](http://www.state.wv.us/swmb/ewaste).

## New FICA Tax Reduction Means Personal Savings Opportunity

Contributed by John Fisher of the State Treasurer's Office.

Congress recently approved the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. This Act, in part, calls for a reduction of the FICA (Social Security) withholdings on employee paychecks by 2 percent, dropping from 6.2% to 4.2% in Calendar Year 2011.

How will you benefit? You'll see an increase in your take-home pay!

What should you do with this extra money? You could spend it; however, once you spend a dollar, it's gone forever. Maybe you should consider making an investment in your future? How about taking this year's extra take-home pay and using it to increase your deposits into your WV Retirement Plus 457 Deferred Compensation Plan?

Take a look at the illustration below to see how the FICA reduction affects take-home pay for an employee making \$40,000 per year. **Note: In the example below, an employee who contributes the 2 percent FICA "savings" into his/her WV Retirement Plus 457 Plan actually takes home \$3 more per pay cycle. The actual amount of your savings will depend on your salary.**

Description	Pay cycle @ 6.2% FICA	Pay cycle @ 4.2% FICA	Pay cycle @ 4.2% FICA and additional 457 Plan contribution
Annual Pay	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Gross Pay	\$1,667	\$1,667	\$1,667
Retirement PERS	\$75	\$75	\$75
FICA	\$103	\$70	\$70
State & Fed Taxes	\$143	\$143	\$140*
Add'l 457 Contribution			\$33
Employee (take home)	\$1,346	\$1,379	\$1,349

This is a one-year tax break. In January 2012, the FICA tax rate will revert back to 6.2% – the same as it was prior to 2011. For more information you may refer to the following IRS Notice 1036, which can be found at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/n1036.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/n1036.pdf).

Do yourself a favor. This year, place the "tax savings" into your 457 account and grow the savings for your later years! You'll thank yourself later. You can save by convenient payroll deduction, which reduces your taxable income and allows for tax-deferred earnings growth. In addition, some employees are eligible for federal tax credits for simply contributing to the 457 Plan.

For more information call an ING representative at 877-786-2982 or contact your agency's benefit or payroll coordinator. You can also learn more at [www.WV457.com](http://www.WV457.com).

**RECYCLE CELL PHONES:** Though not included in the electronics ban (see article on this page), please recycle old cell phones, too. A number of companies statewide accept used cell phones to recycle for charitable causes, or you can check with your wireless provider to see if they will accept them.



## PEIA Approves Rate Increase; Offers Discount Opportunities

The Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) Finance Board has approved monthly premium increases of \$14 for active employees and \$4 for retirees to be effective July 1, 2011. **The good news is that PEIA is offering employees a way to receive premium discounts to counteract these increases.** Active employees can receive a \$4 discount by preparing an Advance Directive/Living Will and submitting the affidavit, and an additional \$10 discount by participating in the *Improve Your Score* program.



An Advance Directive/Living Will is something everyone should have, regardless of the discount being offered. It's a legally binding document that lets your medical providers and family know exactly what your wishes are regarding the extent of medical treatments you desire for end-of-life or other care if you are unable at the time to make those decisions yourself. Often, but not always, this information is contained within a Medical Power of Attorney document. You can have a lawyer draw up the form, but you don't have to. You can prepare one yourself. If you still have your PEIA Shopper's Guide, you'll find a West Virginia Combined Living Will and Medical Power of Attorney form in it. Once you've completed your Living Will, you just need to submit the affidavit PEIA mailed you in December, or go online to [www.wvpeia.com](http://www.wvpeia.com) and use the "Manage My Benefits" button to mark your affidavit.

The *Improve Your Score* program is designed to alert you and your health care provider to individual health risks, including problems with cholesterol, blood sugar, hypertension or other blood pressure problems, and waist circumference. Those who participate will receive a color-coded card that depicts grades of healthy (green), moderate risk (yellow), and high risk (red). The card will also show a combined color-coded score. **NOTE: Receiving the premium discount is contingent upon participation in the program, NOT on the score you receive.** The deadline for participation is April 30, 2011. You can participate in one of the following ways:

- ❖ Attend a Pathways to Wellness worksite health screening by April 30, 2011. [Those who've already done so during Plan Year 2010 or 2011 (July 1, 2009 to the present) will be credited as having participated and do not have to rescreen.] Results are reported automatically. You don't need to do anything else.
- ❖ Register in advance, then visit a participating LabCorp facility in Beckley, Fairmont, Huntington, Lewisburg, Morgantown, Parkersburg, Princeton, or South Charleston by April 30, 2011 for a Saturday screening. LabCorp offers these screenings on the second Saturday of each month. To register, you must do so online

at [www.peiaphways.com](http://www.peiaphways.com). You cannot register directly with LabCorp.

- ❖ If you've already had this work done by another health care provider, print off a reporting form at [www.wvpeia.com](http://www.wvpeia.com). Click "Members" under "Forms and Downloads" on the left side of the page. Have your health care provider complete the form and mail or fax it using the information on the document.

Active employees covered by PEIA PPB Plans A, B, or C are eligible for both discounts. Retirees covered by PEIA PPB Plan A, the Special Medicare Plan, or Humana are eligible for the \$4 discount only. The Health Plan HMO members will not receive the \$14 premium increase and are not eligible for the discounts.

For more details, see PEIA's website ([www.wvpeia.com](http://www.wvpeia.com)). Click on the "News Center" link on the left side of the page, then click on the "PEIA Offers Premium Discounts."

### Lost World Caverns:



Photo from [www.lostworldcaverns.com](http://www.lostworldcaverns.com)

### A West Virginia National Landmark

Did you know that West Virginia is home to a National Natural Landmark that holds a world record?

Lost World Caverns in Lewisburg, WV has held old tales of prehistoric bears and Bat Boys for decades. Passages of over a mile long wind through the caverns, some reaching 235 feet below the surface. The world record comes from the Guinness Book of World Records. In 1971, Bob Addis of Parkersburg sat atop the 28-foot-tall "War Club" stalagmite for nearly 16 days!

You can download a brochure from Lost World Caverns at:

[www.lostworldcaverns.com/Lost%20World%20Caverns\\_ebrochure.pdf](http://www.lostworldcaverns.com/Lost%20World%20Caverns_ebrochure.pdf)

## A Birthday Cake for George?

When we celebrate President's Day each year in February, we honor the birthdays of our first and 16th presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. What, however, would a birthday be without a birthday cake? You might be interested in baking one that Martha Washington often made at Christmas, and may well have been prepared for George on his special day.

One of her favorite recipes, *Martha's Great Cake*, is most definitely big enough to feed the largest party. Here's her recipe with original spellings:

Take 40 eggs and divide the whites from the yolks & beat them to a froth then work 4 pounds of butter to a cream & put the whites of eggs to it a Spoon full at a time till it is well work'd then put 4 pounds of sugar finely powdered to it in the same manner then put in the Youlks of eggs & 5 pounds of flower & 5 pounds of fruit. 2 hours will bake it add to it half an ounce of mace & nutmeg half a pint of wine & some fresh brandy.



When modern-day staff at Mount Vernon (the Washington's home along the Potomac River) decided to make the cake, they followed Martha's recipe almost exactly, although they did have to make some decisions and one alteration. Because the recipe left out exactly which fruits were used, the curatorial staff used one pound of currants, two pounds of

raisins, and two pounds of apples. The wine used was cream sherry. The original cake was baked as one very tall layer, but since no pan like that exists today, two 14 inch layers were used. The layers were baked at 350° for 1½ hours.

The original icing consisted of a very stiff egg-white base flavored with rose water and orange water. Once again, here's Martha's original recipe:

Take two Pound of double refin'd Sugar, beat and sift it very fine, and likewise beat and sift a little Starch and mix with it, then beat six Whites of Eggs to Froth, and put to it some Gum-Water, the Gum must be steep'd in Orange-flower-water, then mix and beat all these together two Hours, and put it on your Cake: when it is baked, set it in the Oven again to harden a quarter of a Hour, take great Care it is not discolour'd. When it is drawn, ice it over the Top and Sides, take two Pound of double refin'd Sugar beat and sifted, and the Whites of three Eggs beat to a Froth, with three or four Spoonfuls of Orange-flower-water, and three Grains of Musk and Amber-grease together: put all these in a Stone Mortar, and beat these till it is as white as Snow, and with a Brush or Bundle of Feathers, spread it all over the Cake, and put it in the Oven to dry; but take Care the Oven does not discolor it. When it is cold paper it, and it will keep good five or six Weeks [sic].

This cake is the kind typically served on January 6, the last of the 12 days of Christmas and known as Epiphany ... and also the date of George and Martha's 1759 wedding.

## WVOT Maintenance Schedule Announced

The West Virginia Office of Technology (OT) performs updates and maintenance automatically on our computers – things like system patches, software deployments, server reboots, etc. In an effort to minimize the impact of those updates, OT implements the majority of their maintenance on the week-ends. Below is the maintenance schedule for the remainder of 2011 (please note that it may be necessary to change or add dates as situations warrant):

Mar. 19	Jun. 25	Oct. 22
Apr. 23	Jul. 23	Nov. 19
May 21	Aug. 20	Dec. 17
	Sep. 24	

If you have any questions or concerns, call OT at 304-558-9966 or email them at [servicedesk@wv.gov](mailto:servicedesk@wv.gov). Please be sure to follow your agency's protocol regarding calling the Office of Technology.

## Archives and History Library Hosts Monthly Genealogy Club

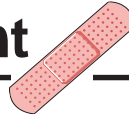
For anyone interested in Genealogy, the Archives and History Library of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History holds monthly meetings. The club, which meets in the library at the State Culture Center, offers programs that focus specifically on genealogy-related topics. **All sessions are free and the public is invited to participate.**

The club meets the second Thursday of each month, and it's not necessary to be a member – visitors are encouraged to attend. Advance registration is not required, but is encouraged to help plan seating arrangements and ensure plenty of supplies and handouts are available. To register, contact Robert Taylor, Library Manager, by calling 304-558-0230, ext. 163, or by emailing him at [Bobby.L.Taylor@wv.gov](mailto:Bobby.L.Taylor@wv.gov). Participants interested in registering by email should include their name, telephone number, and the name and date of the session.



The Archives and History Library is open from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Monday through Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; and 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. on Thursday. The library is closed on Sunday.

# News From the Medical Front



## Know the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

*It was German physician Alois Alzheimer who first recognized the disease named after him. In 1906, he presented his findings after his examination of a patient who exhibited unusual behavior, including short-term memory loss.*

Some memory loss as we age is quite normal, but when it affects and disrupts daily life, it could be a sign of Alzheimer's, a fatal, progressive brain disease. If you notice any of these symptoms in yourself or a loved one, make contact with a doctor as soon as possible. (Information below from [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life.                                 | 6. New problems with words in speaking or writing.            |
| 2. Challenges in planning or problem solving.                            | 7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps. |
| 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure. | 8. Decreased or poor judgment.                                |
| 4. Confusion with time or place.   | 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities.                 |
| 5. Trouble understanding visual images or spatial relationships.         | 10. Changes in mood or personality.                           |

We're not talking about the occasional misplaced object, or the once in awhile bad decision or mood swing. These are normal. If you notice any of these symptoms surfacing in you or a loved one with more frequency that you feel comfortable about, seek medical attention.

For more information about Alzheimer's, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

## Pencil In ...



**ATTENTION ALL SOFTBALL PLAYERS!** The West Virginia State Employees Softball League is a place where players young and old meet up for some friendly competition on the softball diamonds. Open to full- or part-time employees, current interns, legislative per diem employees, State contract employees, and county school teachers. Family members (including in-laws), fiancés, and life partners of eligible employees are also welcome. All must be 18 years or older. Games are played at the Rehab Center fields in Institute. Accepting both new players and full teams. **Deadline is March 31.** For more information, contact Jordan Kirk at 304-558-2261 ext. 2210 or [jordan.kirk@wvsao.gov](mailto:jordan.kirk@wvsao.gov).



**Groundhog Punxsutawney Phil** didn't see his shadow on February 2. That's great news. He's predicting for us an **early Spring!**



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One of the recent snowstorms that hit the State brought out the inner child in someone. At the end of a workday, beneath the Magnolia tree by Building 6 at the Capitol Complex, an adult-sized snow angel appeared, bringing a smiles to workers as they braved the slippery conditions and cold temperatures to make their way home.

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