

Stateline

A Newsletter For West Virginia State Government Employees

May 1998

Volume 9 Number 5

PSRW Makes Another Appearance in West Virginia!

The weatherman cooperated for the opening of the 1998 Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) festivities. Many employees found their way to the Capitol Complex Fountain area to enjoy music, good food, and a bit of pleasant, sunny weather. This year's celebration ran from May 4 to May 8.

PSRW is celebrated nationally to honor those who work in public employment to provide needed services. The event is sponsored by the Public Employees Roundtable and the President's Council on Management Improvement.



(L-R) Greg Morris, Bill Murray, and Matthew Taylor of the Division of Highways take in the sights and warm weather.



(L-R) Funnel cakes were the order of the day for Diana Lightner and Pat Givens of the Department of Education.



In line at one of the food vendors are (L-R) Thelma Hughes and Angie Richardson of the Governor's Office.

From the Governor's Desk ...

Reprinted from a weekly column by Governor Cecil H. Underwood and provided at the State's Internet website (www.state.wv.us).

During this year's legislative session, the House and Senate passed 352 bills. I signed 340 of them into law, and in this column, I want to share a few thoughts about some of the bills that will have the most effect on your lives and our State.

Some key legislators, several teachers, and a few classes of school children joined me for a signing ceremony for 3 such bills recently. Those bills will give teachers and school service personnel a pay raise and allow West Virginia to provide Medicaid coverage for thousands of uninsured children.

The Children's Health Insurance Bill authorized the State to participate in a new federal program to draw down \$24 million in order to provide insurance for low income children who do not have health insurance but whose parents make a little too much money to qualify for Medicaid under

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Get a Handle on Your Performance Review – Before, During, and After

Whether it comes in spring, summer, winter, or fall, your annual performance evaluation or review ranks in pleasure right under a root canal. For the little comfort it offers, your manager probably doesn't enjoy it either. There are, however, a few things *you* can do to make it a positive experience.

BEFORE:

At the beginning of the rating period, conduct a self-evaluation and work to change obvious shortcomings. Keep a notebook in which to jot down compliments, criticisms, accomplishments, and failures. Some career counselors recommend refreshing your boss's memory with a preview memo summarizing your accomplishments and what you're doing about your weak points.

An unexpected negative review may mean that *you* haven't been monitoring how your boss feels about your performance. Work with your boss during the year on setting your goals. Check back now and again to see if they are being met.

DURING:

Never lose your cool about criticism. It's the boss's job to outline areas for improvement. If it's minor, acknowledge it and comment on how you can improve.

If you have real reasons for any shortcomings, tell them briefly and accept responsibility. Lay out an improvement plan and invite your boss to offer suggestions. Taking notes will show you take the comments seriously.

Try to end the meeting on a positive note. Bring the conversation around to where your boss is looking at your total contribution.

Devise a specific plan with measurable goals to reach in the coming year.

AFTER:

If you've had serious criticism, set up a second meeting. This gives you time to cool off, decide if the criticism is valid, and respond. Try to counter the criticism with facts, not arguments. "Be assertive but respectful," says Dr. Paul Baard of Fordham Graduate School of Business, "you are not trying to win a debate."

In all aspects of performance evaluation, self-assessment and communication are 2 key components. Sit back and take an honest look at your performance, and take steps to correct areas that need attention. Also, if your supervisor isn't providing you with the feedback you need to properly assess yourself, take the initiative and ask. Knowing where you stand can make all the difference.



Making an honest self-assessment of your work performance can help you obtain a positive performance evaluation.

And the Bake-Off Winners Are —

*... Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog ...*

From Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

The 1998 Public Service Recognition Week Bake-Off was held at the Capitol on Tuesday, May 5. Fortunately for our judges, the above recipe wasn't among the entries!

This year's winners are:

FIRST PLACE

- Peggy Armstrong, Employ. Progs.
Mandarin Orange Cake
- Ethel Chaplin, Employ. Progs.
Lemon-Lime Pie
- Marilyn Grubbs, Tax
Potato Chip Cookies
- Marie Edwards, Personnel
Brownies
- Nancy Corrie, Governor's Office
Nut Cookie Candy

SECOND PLACE

- Nancy Corrie, Governor's Office
Butterscotch Cake
- Ann Kautz, Rehabilitation Serv.
Lemon Meringue Pie
- Susan Kincaid, Special Education
Cookies
- Kim Shamblin, Tax, *Brownies*
- Marie Edwards, Personnel, *Fudge*

THIRD PLACE

- Kim Rowley, Natural Resources
Chocolate Eclair Cake
- Jane Bittle, Education
Blueberry Pie
- Ethel Chaplin, Employ. Progs.
Baklava
- Tracie Belcher, Tax
Candied Apples

After the judging, employees were able to sample the entries.

Many thanks to our judges: Edison Casto, Ron Wright, Danny Jones, Candace Kraus, Debra Hart, Tim Phillips, Glen Gainer III, Captain Carl, and Natalie Tennant.

More Tips on the Safe Use of OTC Medications

Following is the second part of an article that was edited and reprinted with permission from Well Informed, a publication of the Wellness Councils of America.

In our April issue, we began an article on the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. The focus of the original article centered on 3 major points: reading the label each time you open a new medicine package, paying attention to drug interaction information, and using medications with caution when pregnant or nursing. In the following paragraphs, you'll find additional useful information for safe, intelligent use of OTC medicines.

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST TAMPERING: OTC medicine manufacturers seal virtually all of their products in tamper-evident packaging to help protect against criminal tampering. This special packaging works by providing visible evidence if the package has been disturbed. But no product is 100% tamper-proof. Consumers must help protect themselves by inspecting the outer packaging before purchasing the product and checking the medicine at home.

Never buy an OTC drug if the packaging is damaged, and don't use any medicine that looks discolored or unusual in any way. If something looks suspicious, be suspicious. Return the product to the store where it was purchased.

SPECIAL NOTICE ↗

The Division of Personnel has received the needed approvals to amend its Administrative Rule. One significant amendment involves changing the accrual of annual and sick leave to the end of each payperiod rather than on an hourly or daily basis. The change is effective June 1, 1998.

Information on additional amendments will be published in next month's issue.

↖ SPECIAL NOTICE

KIDS AREN'T JUST SMALL ADULTS: OTC medicines rarely come in one-size-fits-all dosages. Always follow age limitations on the label. Talk to a doctor when questions arise. Don't estimate the dose based on the child's size, and never increase the dose because your child is really sick. Read the label and follow the dosing instructions carefully. The following are a few guides for treating children with OTC medicines:

-  Don't let children take medicine unsupervised. Always watch your child take medicine so that you know exactly what kind and how much was taken.
-  Many medicines come in child-resistant containers. Be sure to re-lock the cap after each use, and do not transfer the medicine to another container.
-  Always store medicines – including vitamins and supplements – where children can neither see nor reach them. Never call medicine 'candy' when giving it to children. They need to know that medicine is medicine and that it cannot be eaten like candy.
-  Know the difference between TBSP (tablespoon) and TSP (teaspoon). A tablespoon is 3 times as much as a teaspoon.

SELF-CARE FOR OLDER AMERICANS: Increased access to OTC medicines is especially important for our maturing population. The fact is, today's nonprescription medicines offer greater opportunity to treat more of the aches and illnesses most likely to appear in our later years, such as arthritis pain, insomnia, and constipation. It's no surprise that older Americans use at least 25% of the medicines for self-care while making up less than 15% of the population. Many of the common-sense rules about self medication are especially important for seniors:

-  Always read the label and take medicines in a well-lighted room. If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses for reading, use them to read medicine labels. Don't guess if you still can't read the information. Ask a friend or family member to read the label to you.
-  Check your medicine supply once a year and throw away all medicines that are past the expiration date. It's printed or stamped on the label or container.
-  Keep all medicines in their original containers. Doing so will help ensure that no one takes the wrong medication. If you have trouble with child-proof caps, ask someone else to open the medicine. Check with your doctor or pharmacist about other solutions.
-  Store all medicines in a cool, dry place and out of the reach of children.

When it comes to over-the-counter medications, there's a lot to remember. Hopefully, all this information hasn't given you a headache, but if it did, go ahead and take something. Just be sure to do it properly!

Rx

A PRESCRIPTION FOR PRESCRIPTIONS ...

ALWAYS TELL YOUR DOCTOR, PHARMACIST, OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT ALL MEDICINES YOU TAKE, INCLUDING OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES, TO AVOID POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS.

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the current law. After calling for such action in my State of the State Address, legislative leaders and I formed a joint task force of lawmakers and administration officials to find the required \$5 million in State matching funds and to develop a structure for the program.

The effort to identify funding sources and create the program was a significant accomplishment and a testament to the spirit of cooperation between the Democratically-controlled Legislature and Republican-led executive branch. As a result, we estimate that approximately 27,600 uninsured or underinsured children will receive coverage under this program.

By providing such health coverage and encouraging young people to take advantage of it, we increase the chances that our children will be healthier, happier, and more productive in school. That, in turn, increases the chances that those children will grow into healthy and productive adults.

I went to an elementary school to sign that bill because the 100 students in the audience that day and their counterparts throughout the State are the reason that we enact legislation to invest in our future. Their images must always be in our minds, and their interests must always be in our hearts.

The pay raise bills for teachers and school service personnel I signed that same day also represent an investment in our future. The bills set a \$756 a year pay raise over 3 years. In addition to providing a well-deserved financial reward, these pay raises will also make it easier for us to attract quality people to teach our children, serve our schools, and work in State government. Because of West Virginia's growing emphasis on both quality education and technology in our classrooms, our teachers are being asked to do more. Similarly, because of my administration's push to make government "better, not bigger," State employees also are being asked to do more. As professional demands on our employees in schools and State government increase, I think it fair and appropriate that the people doing the work receive the compensation they deserve.

In addition, I signed other legislation that will:

-  add 25 new troopers to the State Police force;
-  authorize the State to float bonds for much-needed new sewer and water projects;
-  allow the State to take control of several "orphan" roads that no one takes responsibility for now;
-  encourage landowners to manage timberlands for long-term usefulness; and
-  increase money spent on technology in our classrooms.

In many different ways, all of the bills I mentioned above represent important investments we are making now in West Virginia's future.

Mammogram Days Set for June 30; Aug 30

The WV Women's Commission and Strategic Health Services Inc. Mobile Services will co-sponsor on-site mammograms for State government employees on June 30 and August 20, 1998 from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. The screenings will be conducted in Building 7, Conference Rooms B and C.

The cost is \$88. Your health plan can be billed directly if you are covered and have met your deductibles. **Check with your health plan for coverage and to obtain any prior approvals or referrals before reporting for the screening.** Don't wait – call 1-800-676-4882 to schedule a time.

Pencil In ...



Planning a trip out of the country? You can now download and print **passport forms** from the U. S. State Department's Internet website (<http://travel.state.gov>). For more information, you may call 215/597-7480.



June 14 is **Flag Day**. Proudly display Old Glory!

IS&C Offers Website Services

The Information Services and Communications Division (IS&C) offers a number of services to State agencies that wish to create a web existence on the Internet. For any agency that wants to construct its own website, IS&C can provide a location on the State web server at <http://www.state.wv.us>. This site offers unlimited space, guestbooks, site searches, and the ability to be updated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no monthly charge. Databases and CGI scripts are also available from the IS&C Development Center. For more information, call Mike Griffith at 558-1640.



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