

Combined Campaign in Full Swing After Early Start

The annual West Virginia State Employees Combined Campaign (WVSECC) got an early kick-off this year. On August 23, Governor Cecil Underwood spoke, along with Steve McGowan, Campaign Chairman, United Way and Diana McGinnis, United Way State Coordinator, to remind everyone about the crucial assistance provided by United Way agencies to the State's citizens.

The WVSECC is the only State-sanctioned fundraising effort in which employees can use payroll deduction. Employees who opt to give can spread their contributions

throughout the year by deducting only a few dollars a month. Donations may also be tax deductible, and contributors can feel confident knowing that 90¢ of each dollar donated goes to the agencies they specify on their donation forms.

The event was set to be held outdoors, but bad weather forced it inside to the Capitol's Main Rotunda. Fortunately, the poor weather didn't hamper spirits. Several agencies participated with creative strategies to raise money. Nearly \$600 was raised at the kick-off from flea market item sales, hot dog and drink sales, bake sales, and other ventures.

Department of Administration Cabinet Secretary Jack Buckalew is again serving as the State's Campaign Chairman. Said Buckalew, "Our goal last year was \$100,000 and we surpassed that by raising \$109,000! The money went toward helping 37 United Way agencies."

This year, the goal is once again \$100,000. Are you looking for some incentive aside from that of helping needy West Virginia citizens? How about a year's free parking on the first floor of the new parking building! Making a donation of \$2 per pay period (a total of \$48 a year) or more will put your name in the drawing hat for the free parking.

McGinnis graciously thanks the many people who assisted with the kick-off activities, including special thanks for Pam Staats (Department of Transportation), Fred Mixer (Bureau of Employment Programs), Marsha Dadisman (Department of Health and Human Resources),

Annagayle Stevens (Department of Administration), and Raymond Prozzillo and the General Services Division employees. Sincere appreciation is also extended to Anthony Thaxton of General Services for pro-



Anthony Thaxton of the General Services Division delighted event participants with his musical talent.



Top and bottom: State employees enjoy the offerings from the State Employees Combined Campaign kick-off.



viding musical entertainment during the event.

The drive continues through the end of October. Anyone with program or payroll deduction questions may call McGinnis at 558-4489.

Delightful, Delovely Degaussing

Excerpted from Shared Logic, The IS&C Data Center Newsletter.

And what, pray tell, is a degausser (pronounced de-GOUSE-er)? Let's explain the madness by explaining the method. Degaussing is the de-

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Social Security Amendments Affect Retirees/Earnings

In today's world, many workers who retire under Social Security opt to continue working in supplemental jobs. Recent amendments in the Social Security Act have prompted a number of telephone calls to the Division of Personnel asking questions about restrictions to the Social Security benefits of retirees who continue to work. From these calls, 3 questions have been asked most frequently.

1. When can I receive full Social Security retirement benefits?

The age at which you can receive full benefits is determined by the year you were born (see Table 1).

2. If I take early retirement under Social Security, what happens to my benefit?

Your benefit will be **permanently** reduced. Some people mistakenly believe the reduction remains in effect only until they reach the age of full retirement; however, this is not the case. **The reduction is permanent.** The amount of reduction depends on just how early you retire.

3. What happens if I continue to work while I am receiving Social Security retirement benefits?

The answer depends on when you retire. If you retire at your full retirement age, you can work with NO reduction to your Social Security benefit. But, if you take early retirement, your **already-reduced** benefit will be subject to additional reduction based on your earnings (see Table 2). This is true until you reach the age of full retirement. At that point, your Social Security benefit will remain **at the initial reduced rate**, but your earnings from your employment will not result in any further reduction.

BIRTH YEAR	AGE FOR FULL RETIREMT.
1937 or Earlier	65
1938	65 and 2 months
1939	65 and 4 months
1940	65 and 6 months
1941	65 and 8 months
1942	65 and 10 months
1943 - 1954	66
1955	66 and 2 months
1956	66 and 4 months
1957	66 and 6 months
1958	66 and 8 months
1959	66 and 10 months
1960 and Later	67

Table 1 (above) spells out the age at which you can receive full retirement benefits from Social Security, based on the year you were born. Table 2 (below) represents the earnings-based reductions on benefits if you take early retirement under Social Security.

ANNUAL EARNINGS LEVEL	REDUCTION ON BENEFITS	SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT
Up to and including \$10,080	None	None
\$10,081 through \$17,000	\$1 reduction for each \$2 of earnings	\$1 reduction for each \$2 of earnings
Over \$17,000	\$1 reduction for each \$3 of earnings	\$1 reduction for each \$3 of earnings

The Social Security Administration publishes a number of leaflets and fact sheets to help individuals understand procedures and the most recent changes in the law. If you have any questions about Social Security, you should call or visit your local office. You can also call them at 1-800-772-1213 or visit their website (www.ssa.gov).

WHAT'S OFFERED AT THE PECU?

Looking for a place to manage your funds? The Public Employees Credit Union offers a wide variety of services, including but not limited to:

<p><i>Individuals and family members who meet one of the following are eligible for membership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Active/Retired State Employees ✓ Employees of Political Subdivisions of the State Retirement System or PEIA ✓ Employees of West Virginia County Boards of Education 	Payroll Deduction Checking Accounts New Auto Loans Home Equity Loans Savings Secured Loans MAC ATM Cards Loans by Mail Loan Insurance Notary Services	Direct Deposit Family Accounts Used Auto Loans Personal Loans VISA Cards Computer Loans Money Orders Traveler's Checks Car Value Guide	Savings Accounts (3.03% APY) Christmas Clubs (4.06% APY) IRA's (12 mos., 6.00% APY) IRA's (24 mos., 6.25% APY) IRA's (>\$10,000, 12 mos., 6.50% APY) IRA's (>\$10,000, 24 mos., 6.75% APY) Certificates (12 mos., 7.00% APY) Certificates (24 mos., 6.25% APY) Vacation Clubs (3.55% APY)
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WVU Conducts Master Gardner Program

Summer has passed. It's time to put away your hoe and fertilizer and assess how happy you are with the way your garden turned out this year. Did you have worm-free corn? Enough tomatoes to can? A good crop of half-runners? Maybe things weren't as nice as you'd hoped, or perhaps you're very happy with the way your garden produced and would like to share your knowledge with others. In either case, you should consider signing up for the Master Gardner Program offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service through the county extension offices. It's a volunteer educational program designed to meet the horticultural needs of citizens of West Virginia.

The training provides gardeners with the opportunity to improve their horticultural knowledge and skills, and then share their experience with the public through organized volunteer activities. Topics covered include: botany, plant problem diagnosis, soils, ornamentals, pest management, fruits, vegetables, and plant propagation.

Members also volunteer their time and expertise toward local gardening ventures. For example, in Kanawha County, Master Gardeners have been involved in a number of activities at Cookskin Park since their program began in 1994. The park allowed Master Gardeners to use its clubhouse as a meeting place for classes. The first Master Gardener programs were held in the park's family resource center. During these sessions, the park was used as an "outdoor" classroom where members practiced pruning and planted a temporary demonstration garden.

In Preston County, the Master Gardeners planted gardens on the courthouse lawn with help from 3 county employees and funds from the County. Members also conducted a Youth Garden Grant Program in Preston County Schools. Eighty-eight 3rd grade students planted plants donated by the Preston County High School Ag-Ed program in our community garden. The County Commission provided space for the garden on the county farm.

The West Virginia Master Gardeners, along with the WVU Extension Service Center for Agricultural and Natural Resources Development and West Virginia University, will host the Northeast Regional Master Gardeners Conference in Wheeling at Oglebay Resort and Conference Center October 7-14.

Workshops, tours, and various speakers are planned for the gathering and new members are encouraged to attend. For more information, e-mail John W. Jett, Horticulture Specialist, WVU Extension Service, at jjett2@wvu.edu.



State employee political activity rules were posted in the April issue of *Stateline*. To view it on the web, go to: www.state.wv.us/admin/personnel/empcom/Apr2002.pdf. You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader installed to view this document. It's a free program and there is a link to it on the DOP webpage.

If you have U.S. Savings Bonds at home and want to check their current value, maturity date, etc., log on to www.savingsbonds.com. Have the bonds handy so you can key in the type, serial number, and date.

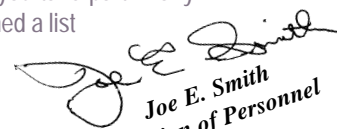
From the Director of Personnel...

Be 'Politically Correct'

As a citizen, you have rights surrounding the upcoming November elections. If you are an employee within the Division of Personnel classified service, you have certain restrictions placed on the political activities in which you can participate. In essence, classified employees are permitted to campaign and vote for candidates, sell tickets to and attend political activities, make monetary donations, and wear buttons or display bumper stickers. The key is that these things must be done **voluntarily and on personal time**. For instance, it's not permissible to wear campaign buttons during work time or on State property, nor can you wear them **at anytime** on State-issued uniforms. Campaigning must also be conducted on your free time and off State property. You must be sure that you **NEVER** use State equipment or supplies for political purposes.

In addition to complying with these restrictions, certain activities are expressly prohibited. Classified State employees may not serve as ballot commissioners or election officials working inside polling places. There are also prohibitions against running for office and serving on political party committees. Lastly, classified employees in the Division of Highways, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and other federally-funded programs are covered under other specific laws which govern political activity.

You are urged and encouraged to participate in the upcoming election; however, be sure that you check out what you can and cannot do before you take part in any political activity. In the April 2000 issue of *Stateline*, we published a list of both allowable and prohibited activities [see NetGain (above) for the website address]. If you have additional questions, call the Division of Personnel's Employee Relations Section at 558-3950, ext. 511.


Joe E. Smith
Division of Personnel

How to Make Better Decisions

When you are faced with any decision, it's best to consider what you really need instead of what you may want.

In his book, *"Yes" or "No": The Guide to Better Decisions* (HarperCollins), Spencer Johnson, M.D. says there is an easy way to determine the difference between needs and wants. Consider what you would like to have done when you look back at this decision later on.

The next determining questions should be: "What would happen if I did this, and then what would happen after that?" Thinking through your options can be very helpful.

Dr. Johnson, who also co-authored *The One Minute Manager* with D. Kenneth Blanchard, says the following qualities lead to making better decisions:



INTEGRITY - If it's an important decision, put ego aside and get advice from someone you admire. Then ask yourself if this is what you would advise a good friend to do.



INTUITION - Reviewing past decisions and their consequences is a good idea; but sometimes, there is no given pattern. Only intuition will tell you if a decision is sound. It can make you see the answer more clearly and less stressfully.



INSIGHT - Without it, you may go with a decision that isn't the best one. Insight involves knowing yourself, believing you can succeed, and knowing you deserve to succeed.

The right decision lets you answer "yes" to many important questions such as, "Does this decision meet my needs? Have I considered all options? Am I being honest with myself? Do I trust my intuition, and know that I deserve to succeed?"

DEGAUSSING – Continued from Page 1

struction of data by neutralizing the magnetic field of the media on which the data resides.

Degaussers are table-top sized machines with 2 powerful electromagnets mounted at right angles to each other. The notion is to pass media – reel, cassette, cartridge, hard drive, whatever – through the machine, and the electromagnets erase the data in seconds. It's the electromagnetic equivalent of the neutron bomb: the media is still standing but the data is dead.

IS&C's Data Center purchased a small deguasser in April to erase the data on old cartridge tapes. Security guidelines and common sense dictate that media should not be disposed of without first destroying the data on that media. Now that IS&C has degaussed some 40,000 tapes in just over a month, they're willing to let other State agencies put it to good use. Many State offices are probably jam-packed with disused media, and many other offices have space on their racks and window sills only because they are in the dangerous habit of trashing their old media on clean-up day. How much of that data is sensitive or confidential in the eyes of State or federal government? And what about product tapes loaded with source code?

Here's the deal. Send your media – cartridge tapes, round tapes, cassettes, diskettes, etc. – to IS&C's Data Center and they will be degaussed free of charge. You can't beat that! If you would rather your own employees use the machine out of security concerns, that can be arranged too. The only restriction is the delightful, delovely degausser cannot leave the Data Center. Call Phil Nicholas at 558-6380 to find out how to get started.

Pencil In ...



Clear your calendar for October 29-30. That's when the **14th Annual Governor's Conference on Worksite Wellness** will be held at the Charleston Marriott. The keynote address to be given by Ron Goetzel, a nationally-recognized expert in the field of health management, data analysis, and applied research. Call the Wellness Council of West Virginia at 766-2696 for fees and registration materials.



If you can't win, make the fellow ahead of you break the record.

~ Anonymous ~



**Daylight Savings Time Ends
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