

News & Views online

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The monthly employee newsletter of the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs ♦ Available online at www.wvbep.org/bep/

UC Compliance Unit

By Bob Powell

You might be one of those workers who measure your efficiency by how often you move the stack of paperwork from one end of your desk to another. How about making the stack disappear?

For the staff of the Compliance Unit of the Unemployment Compensation's Audit and Compliance Section, the six Delinquency Control Specialists do just that. It is their job to collect delinquent unemployment compensation taxes from employers.

Each fiscal quarter the DCSs receive printouts of the employers in the state who have failed for two or more quarters to pay their UC taxes.

According to Ed Knapp, program manager for the unit, each DCS is assigned between 300-350 accounts each quarter. A pair of accounting technicians handle an additional 400 accounts.

"The worksheet has, on average, about 3,500 defaulted accounts on it," said Knapp. "The delinquency specialists and accounting technicians attempt to contact each client on that list."

He said letters are sent to each client at the same time the worksheet is produced, giving the businesses adequate notification they are in default, before anyone from the bureau contacts them directly.



News&Views photo by Bob Powell

Front to Back: Cathy Corley (seated), Ed Knapp; Elizabeth Peterson, Elizabeth Adkins, Peggy Imler; Robin Allen, Vivian Cartwright, Dave Shannon and Kathy Phillips. Scott Johnson is not pictured.

Knapp, who became the unit's first supervisor in October 1996, said the bureau makes every attempt to work with clients before initiating litigation.

"You will see how the economy causes genuine hardship on some businesses," said Knapp. "Then again, our DCS also see regular violators quarter after quarter."

Both Knapp and Kathy Phillips, the office manager for the unit, credit office automation and DCS and accounting technician field visits to clients with the overall success of the unit.

"On average, the state has a default rate of 2 percent or less," said Knapp. "The federal government requires a minimum rate of 5 percent. Usually a quarterly default rate will begin at about 6 or 7 percent. Most of our DCS reach 2 percent within the first few weeks of a quarter, and a few zero their assignments by the end of the quarter."

Phillips, who worked in UC Contribution Accounting before becoming the Compliance office manager, said the list includes businesses that have closed and had not contacted BEP. The DCS prioritize client contacts based on monetary value and the length of time the account was in default.

"A specialist will investigate a client," said Phillips. "And discover that the business closed. Other businesses usually pay up when confronted."

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Coming next month. . .

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DOL Offers Database of College Students and Graduates Seeking Summer, Full-time Jobs

A free database that identifies 1,913 qualified college students and recent graduates with disabilities who seek summer and fulltime employment is available for the tenth year to public and private sector employers to help them meet their staffing needs.

“The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) offers employers a larger pool of skilled job candidates to choose from while offering students and graduates with disabilities more opportunity to explore or begin careers,” said Roy Grizzard, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. “The program also fulfills President Bush’s New Freedom Initiative pledge to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities throughout the nation.”

The department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is offering the WRP database of job seekers with disabilities in cooperation with the Department of Defense. Through ODEP’s complimentary CD-ROM database, employers can search from a pool of pre-screened applicants who have skills in disciplines ranging from computer sciences and business to communications, engineering, office administration and more. Searches generate candidate profiles, academic and demographic data, and contact information for students from more than 200 colleges and universities in over 45 states and territories. To request a copy of the CD-ROM, send your name, company name, address and phone number to wrp@dol.gov, or call ODEP at (202) 693-7880.

ODEP’s portfolio of assets for employers also includes the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN). JAN is a toll-free information and referral service on job accommodations, self-employment and small business opportunities for people with disabilities and can be reached at 1-800-526-7234 or at www.jan.wvu.edu. EARN, a national toll-free telephone and electronic information referral service, helps employers who have job vacancies to find and recruit qualified workers with disabilities in their localities. EARN can be reached at 1-866-Earn Now (1-866-327-6669) or via its website www.earnworks.com. ODEP’s website is available to employers and employees at www.dol.gov/odep, as is www.DisabilityInfo.Gov, a cross-government portal on disability-related information.

—NASWA WorkforceATM

Unemployment Insurance: Information on Benefit Receipt

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor in partnership with states, plays a critical role in ensuring the financial security of America’s workforce. Established in 1935, UI serves two primary objectives: to temporarily replace a portion of earnings for workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own, and to help stabilize the economy during recessions by providing unemployed workers money for basic needs, which helps boost demand for goods and services. In fiscal year 2004, approximately 8.8 million workers received UI benefits, totaling \$41.3 billion across all UI programs. To gain a better understanding of the UI program, the following questions were asked: How many people ever receive UI benefits during their early working lives, and how many receive UI benefits more than once? and, Does UI benefit receipt change over time, and does receipt vary by industry or occupation?

Between 1979 and 2002 about 38 percent of workers born between 1957 and 1964 received UI at least once, with almost half of these individuals receiving UI benefits more than once. Another 39 percent of these workers were eligible to receive UI benefits at least once but never applied for it. Nine percent of the workers were unemployed at least once but never eligible for UI benefits, mostly because of the

conditions under which they separated from their jobs, such as leaving a job to look for other employment. The remaining 15 percent were employed at least once and subsequently never unemployed. As this baby boom group aged, its members experienced fewer UI-eligible unemployment spells but were more likely to receive UI benefits during these spells. Late baby boom workers had the greatest number of UI-eligible unemployment spells around the time of the recessions of the early 1980s, when most were beginning their working careers. Over time, the number of UI-eligible unemployment spells declined. Not surprisingly, given changes in the overall economy and age-related changes for individuals, such as increasing levels of education, training, work experience, and job tenure, that made their employment more stable and made them less likely to become unemployed. Although these workers had more unemployment when they were younger, higher proportions of those who became unemployed when they were older (up to age 45) received UI benefits. More specifically, at ages 18 to 20, 15 percent of those eligible received UI benefits; at ages 36 to 45, the rate of receipt was 30 percent. Regarding UI receipt by industries and occupations, rates were found to vary.

—NASWA WorkforceATM

Child Abuse Prevention Month.

April 1–30. To raise awareness about the problem of child abuse and to provide prevention education.

National Parkinson’s Awareness Month. April 1–30. To raise awareness about Parkinson’s disease.

National Wildlife Week. April 17–23. A celebration to alert the public to the needs of wildlife and efforts to preserve habitats.

Earth Day. April 22. First observed in 1970, Earth Day was an attempt to accelerate the transition to renewable energy worldwide. The efforts continue.

Take Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day. April 28. A national public education campaign sponsored by the Ms. Foundation in which children from ages 8 to 12 go to work with adult hosts.

Photo courtesy of Randy Bare



Governor Signs Vet Bonus Bill

Governor Joe Manchin III (pictured above) signed the West Virginia Veteran's Bonus Bill during ceremonies held at the Capitol recently. The bill will recognize veterans who were bona fide residents of the State of West Virginia at the time of their time of entry into active service for a period of at least six months immediately prior thereto.

Approved applicants will be eligible for a \$600 bonus if they served in the combat zone and received a campaign badge or expeditionary medal. Those having had active service outside the combat zone during the time periods specified for Afghanistan and Iraq will be eligible for a \$400 bonus

Surviving relatives will be eligible for a \$2000 bonus where a veteran's death was connected with the service and resulted from the service during the times specified. For more information and applications, visit www.wvs.state.wv.us/va.

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Joe Manchin III, Governor
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Deadline for *News&Views online* is the first day of the month.

In Memoriam

May Bell "Pat" DeVere, retired UC Contributions clerk, died April 3 in Charleston.

Laura D. Hunt, mother of FAM Procurement's Rita Hunt, died March 25, 2005, in Charleston.

Dorothy Ann Rayhill, mother of Charleston Job Service's Sam Rayhill, died March 14, in Charleston.

Photo courtesy of Food Stamp Employment and Training



From left: Jennifer Weist, Fairmont State Community and Technical College; Barbara DeMary, Region VI Workforce Investment Board; Ginny Layton, Food Stamp Employment and Training; Jeff Smith, Region VI Workforce Investment Board; and, Claudia George, ES Field Supervisor.

Veteran's Incentive Award Given in Fairmont

Fairmont WORKFORCE West Virginia is the work location of the most recent Veteran's Incentive Award recipient. Virginia "Ginny" Layton, representing Food Stamp Employment and Training at the One-Stop, received the award for her work in November's "Getting Veterans Back to Business" event, held November 4.

According to the peer nominator, Ginny demonstrated excellent customer service to veterans through her planning and marketing of the November event. "Ginny was the mastermind of the event theme 'Veterans Building a Strong Foundation for Our Future,'" said Jennifer Weist, Management Team Chair for the One-Stop. "She . . . created a public display using 'bricks' that she had made from cardboard."

Ginny painted each brick, then hand-lettered the name and branch of service of each veteran. She used the bricks in her display indicating the vets as the brick foundation and their families and community support members as the mortar. So impressive was the display that it was left up for the entire month of November.

The marketing effort Layton put forth for the event garnered the top spot in the local evening news broadcast, and received excellent radio coverage as well. "Not only did the recognition given to each veteran allow the Fairmont WORKFORCE West Virginia Center to make connections with the participants and their families, but participants learned of all services available to veterans," Weist said.

This section is dedicated to the dedicated—to those who make a difference in the lives of our customers- —both internal and external.

Big Gold Star Page



Stephen Janney, Veterans Employment Representative
Charleston Job Service

I would like to take a moment to thank you for being so helpful to me while seeking employment. I commend you on your professionalism and your eagerness to help veterans with a respectful attitude. It is a pleasure to work with you and I appreciate all your hard efforts. I truly trust that your employers are aware of their good fortune having such an employee with your attitude and work ethics. Best wishes to you in the future.

A Veteran

Claudia George, Field Supervisor
Fairmont Job Service

I would like to take the time to tell you what a wonderful job and service that your employee, Sheri Simmons, has done for Buckhannon-Upshur High School, the students and the Jobs For West Virginia's Graduates Program over the past few years. We have had the pleasure of having Sheri as a volunteer judge for our annual JWVG CDC (Career Development Conference) at which we gather our students from all over the state to compete in several competitive events that help them prepare for the workforce and their upcoming careers.

We can always count on her for only the very best services and efficient work when dealing with the ever-tedious WIA documentation and eligibilities. It is so refreshing to have someone who is so knowledgeable about her job and ever so kind and helpful in the process. I would like to say thank you and job well done!

Lisa Stemple, Program Manager
Jobs for West Virginia's Graduates

Equal Opportunity Unit

Though their information and enforcement duties are substantial, the BEP Equal Opportunity Unit (part of the Management Analysis Section) is comprised of just two employees, Manager Alice McVey and EP Analyst Vickie Elkins. They are responsible for coordinating all equal opportunity activities and are the focal point for civil rights and equal opportunity functions within the bureau. They work to promote the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination, investigate complaints of discrimination, and ensure that training for bureau staff is conducted to promote understanding of pertinent civil rights legislation. In addition, Alice and Vickie are responsible for ensuring that the laws and regu-

lations that prohibit discrimination by recipients of federal financial aid are followed. These laws and regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion or age, in all programs and/or activities of federal funding recipients.

Alice and Vickie review and evaluate agency offices for compliance with established EO policies as those policies relate

to services to applicants, claimants, employees, participants and employers, and provide guidance to staff regarding equal opportunity issues. Speaking of the investigation of discrimination complaints, Alice noted, "Our primary objective is to ensure equal opportunity for all bureau employees, as well as the customers we serve. Our unit administers the EO Counseling and Complaints Processing system by providing timely investigation of discrimination complaints and, when possible, we provide prompt, fair resolution." According to Alice, knowledge of many federal and state enactments, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the equal opportunity provisions (Section 188) of Workforce Investment Act of 1998, are necessary to provide accurate EO services.

The unit prepares and maintains the bureau's Affirmative Action Plan, conducts monitoring functions to ensure equal opportunity policies are implemented and managed efficiently, and develops and maintains EO policy and directives.

Though Alice and Vickie stand alone with many of the responsibilities, they do have three EO Counselors in the agency with whom they work. In addition to their regular assigned duties, employees Jim Wolfingbarger, Pam Phillips and Jonathan Reynolds are sometimes called upon to assist the EO Unit in the investigation of complaints and other EO related matters.

If you have questions regarding discrimination based on race, color, age, national origin, religion, sex or disability, contact the EO Office at 558-1600, or contact one of the EO Counselors listed above.

News&Views photo by Bob Powell



From front: Vickie Elkins, Alice McVey, Jim Wolfingbarger and Jonathan Reynolds. Not pictured, Pam Phillips

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The reason many businesses will pay is "Rule 96." West Virginia Code § 21A-2-6(18) authorized creation of a database of employers who had defaulted on either unemployment or workers' compensation contributions. The database provides daily updates to state licensing agencies, which have the authority to limit business operations within their jurisdictions.

Knapp said that any defaulting business could lose contracted payments, licenses, or government grants. According to the statute, businesses could jeopardize their state business certificate as well.

Phillips said that being armed with a tool like Rule 96 certainly helps, but her DCSs could accomplish a lot through helping clients one-on-one. She described one field visit that a DCS made to Jackson County in one day.

"One DCS cleared ten to 15 accounts that day, collecting around \$5,000," said Phillips. "She left the office that morning and was back before 3 p.m."

If defaulted employers persist, the DCSs can swear out a criminal complaint before a Kanawha County magistrate. The magistrate issues a summons for the employer to appear in court to resolve the delinquent tax premiums.

According to Phillips, the employer will have another opportunity to pay the delinquency before the court orders them to pay. The court will impose fines, court costs and a payment plan to resolve the issue, following its ruling.

"Usually, after an employer has been to Charleston to face the judge they will pay," said Phillips. "Once they've been pulled in, they aren't interested in returning."

She said her staff enjoys their work because they are helping someone. She said they have to in order to process nearly 1,200 delinquencies each year.

Wade Wolfingbarger, assistant director, UC Contribution Accounting, developed the Compliance Unit. According to Knapp, Wolfingbarger saw a need to actively pursue delinquent clients and began to develop the unit from his own staff.

Phillips took part in a compliance test program before Knapp joined BEP. The Audit and Compliance section was segregated from UC Contribution Accounting in November 2004.

Knapp hopes that office automation will continue to free his staff to spend more time in the field and lessen the paperwork required in the unit. His ultimate goal for their work would be to have an average default rate of zero.

West Virginia—America's Best Kept Secret

Because of our mountains, we have rivers. The oldest river in the Western Hemisphere, the New River (quite appropriately named, don't you think) ends in West Virginia. We have the Gauley River, which confluence's with the New River in a magnificent cascade to form the Kanawha River, which in turn flows through the center of the state, and directly through the capital city of Charleston, the largest city in West Virginia. These rivers in addition to the Cheat, Blackwater, Tygart, Monongahela, Ohio and countless others offer tremendous recreational opportunities.

The tallest building in Charleston is barely 25-stories tall, which if you think about it, is a plus; how could you possibly build a skyscraper more beautiful than a mountain? The capital city stretches throughout the long river valley encompassing both hill and dale. The Charleston airport, the largest in the state, sits on top of a mountain. The crime rate in Charleston, including the entire population of the Kanawha Valley (around 200,000), reflects that of the entire state, the lowest in America. No more than a handful of murders are committed each year. Charleston has no subway systems, but truth be known, you can get from one end of town to the other, even in rush hour traffic, in less than ten minutes. There are three major interstate systems going through Charleston, the smallest city in America to make such a claim.

The entire state has six different interstate systems, meaning, from Charleston, you can reach Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Louisville or Charlotte in four or fewer hours. Ah, but once you leave the interstates, the drive becomes a thing of wonder. Two lane roads, winding up and down the mountains, offer amazing views and historic places, small towns, poor in wealth but rich in history.

West Virginia is the birthplace of Mother's Day, in Grafton; and Father's Day, in Fairmont. We have the oldest covered bridge still in use. We have walnut festivals and strawberry festivals and apple festivals and pumpkin festivals and buckwheat festivals, and arts and crafts fairs and stern wheel regattas and ramp dinners. We have Bridge Day, on the New River Gorge bridge more than 800 feet above the New River; the only standing structure in the United States that, one day a year, allows parachuting and bungee jumping.

We have college basketball, and two great college football teams, both of which have been nationally ranked in all major and mid-major polls in the past few years, minor league baseball, and, just like all of America, Friday night high school football. We have white water rafting, and skiing, and hiking, and caves, and waterfalls, and camping in every direction. We have Sundays where a leisurely drive in the car can take eight hours, and only cover 100 miles. We have bed and breakfasts, resorts, golf courses, museums, and the Greenbrier Hotel. West Virginia has more natural beauty and wonder than any person could ever imagine.

We have all of this, and yet, our greatest asset is our

Whether you think you can or think you can't—you are right.

—Henry Ford

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West Virginia — 2005 Spring Convention
 Radisson Hotel, Morgantown May 12-13

Make your reservations direct with Radisson Hotel— 304-296-1700. Rooms are \$77.00 per night (subject to 9% taxes). Reservations must be made by April 13, 2005, as rooms may not be available after that time.

Great news for members — this year our chapter will cover \$15.00 of your registration fee if you register for the entire convention. This would mean all events on Thursday afternoon, Thursday evening, and Friday morning.

Registration fee \$45.00 minus \$15.00 — **\$30.00**. Your registration includes Thursday meeting, Thursday afternoon break, Thursday night awards presentation with fajita reception bar and music, Friday retirees' breakfast, and Friday morning business education meetings.

REGISTRATION FEE: MEMBERS - \$30.00
NON-MEMBERS - \$45.00

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS AND REGISTRATION – APRIL 29, 2005

NAME: _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

OFFICE: _____

COMPLETE REGISTRATION – ALL EVENTS \$30.00

NON MEMBERS – ALL EVENTS \$45.00

THURSDAY MEETING ONLY - \$10.00

THURSDAY EVENING AWARDS RECEPTION WITH FAJITA BAR & DJ - \$20.00

FRIDAY MEETING (Including Retirees Breakfast) - \$15.00

FRIDAY RETIREES BREAKFAST ONLY - \$10.00

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **WVIAWP**

MAIL TO: ANGIE TINGLER, 304-637-0255
 Elkins WORKFORCE West Virginia Center
 1 Pleasant Avenue, Suite 2
 Elkins, WV 26241

With nearly 33 years of service backing her up, Shelia Kilgore (right) can easily be described as an expert in her field. An employment interviewer for Huntington UC, Shelia handles a myriad of responsibilities in her everyday pursuit of providing her customers with excellent service.

No matter whether Shelia is processing unemployment claims, conducting group interviews, performing Eligibility Review functions, or just pitching in to help when staff shortages occur, she can always be counted on to do her best using her knowledge and positive attitude to lead the way.

According to nomination documentation, Shelia is a trusted, valued employee, who is dependable and works independently. She also uses her customer service skills to maintain a good working relationship with her Job Service counterparts. Whether it is her professionalism, character, or her respect for the sensitive and private nature of the problems her customers face, Shelia handles every task with dedication and devotion to her job and her clients.

When the Governor's Workforce Investment Division and Job Service adopted the Mid-Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) for their case-management computer system, little did Diane Perdue (below) know that her work life was about to be consumed. Rolling out an entirely new system that was not specifically designed to work in West Virginia gave Diane a mission. She had to not only learn the new system so she and a

coworker could teach it to field staff, but she also had to give input on how best to make changes to customize the system best for West Virginia's needs. Her more than 25 years of service shows in the quality of her work.

Not only has Diane dedicated so much of her work time to MACC, but many off hours have been spent learning and improving the system, as well. Luckily, Diane is a skilled trainer. Many of her students have identified one of Diane's most important assets as making field staff feel as if there are no stupid questions—a trait many trainers would like to emulate.

Always willing to listen and help, Diane fields phone calls and e-mails and dispatches them quickly, knowledgeably and efficiently. Her professionalism is beyond reproach, yet she promotes a feeling of comfort when field staff asks for assistance. One statement above the rest describes the commitment Diane has put forth with this effort. "Diane has . . . become so knowledgeable of not only the computer system, but Job Service procedures as well." Her dedication places Diane at the top, as her numerous friends and coworkers ask that her efforts be recognized.



Barbara Henderson (right) has more than 20 years state service. In her tenure, she has performed many job functions and seen many changes. Barbara shoulders many responsibilities at the Martinsburg Job Service office. She is the MACC lead for her office; works closely with employers in an eight-county area; provides backup for the office manager; reviews work of other employees; stays current with program changes and enhancements; and, performs other duties too numerous to list. Barbara is always willing to stop what she is doing to answer questions or assist other employees in serving customers. She provides mentorship to office staff with her knowledge and provides a role model through her professionalism and dedication. Her coworkers find inspiration in the way Barbara conveys the need to have pride in one's work product. Her positive attitude, no matter the circumstance, helps boost office morale. She is seen as talented, but also as quiet and diligent by her coworkers, who feel she provides the example to which they should aspire.



News&Views photos by Richard Westfall

Take Our Sons and Daughters To Work Day

(please print)

Parent _____

Child _____

Age _____

Cost Center # _____

Cost Center Name _____

Return completed form to Judy Howard, cc 5301, fax 558-3512 or e-mail jhhoward@wvbep.org.

On April 28 the Bureau of Employment Programs will be participating in Take Our Sons and Daughters To Work Day. A short program will be presented in the Central Office explaining what we do as an agency and why it is important to West Virginia citizens. Management encourages local offices to offer a similar discussion early in the day so participating children can apply their new knowledge to what they experience throughout the day.

The bureau will follow the national age guidelines, offering the program to children 8 to 12-years-old only. Pre-registration is encouraged. Visitor ID cards for the children will be supplied by the FAM Office of Policy and Communications.

West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs
 112 California Avenue
 Charleton, West Virginia 25305-0112

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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people. West Virginians are good people. We care about each other. We talk to our neighbors over the backyard fence. We grow tomatoes for the entire neighborhood. We turn around in each other's driveways, and yell "howdy" when we do. We sit on the porch on warm summer evenings, listening to crickets, and watching kids catch fireflies. We loan a hammer, or a cup of sugar. We don't take two-hour lunches, but we do spend a few minutes each day with a cup of coffee, and our feet up on our desk, shooting the breeze.

We rarely get in a hurry. We have relatives just down the street. We don't just loan someone a socket wrench, we help them fix their car. We share recipes, and gardening tips, and our last cup of coffee. We baby sit each other's kids, we house sit each other's dogs while we're on vacation, and we loan each other our cars if we have to get to the drugstore. We ask each other if we need anything as we're going to the market. We celebrate each other's accomplishments, and we cry over each other's disappointments. We are a friendly folk.

We are West Virginians. Mountaineers are always free! Free to take the time to enjoy life, and hold each moment in our hearts, forever.

—author unknown

Editor's note: The preceding article was taken from an e-mail message that was sent to FAM Policy and Communications.