

News & Views online

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

Photo by Richard Westfall



From left: Deputy Commissioner Mark Miller; FAM Policy and Communications and 196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Master Sgt. Robert Powell; and, Major Gen. Allan Tackett, West Virginia Adjutant

Miller receives Patriotic Employer Award

by Bob Powell

Major Gen. Allan E. Tackett, Adjutant General of West Virginia, presented Deputy Commissioner Mark Miller with the "Patriotic Employer" award on May 10 for his support of National Guard and Reserve service members that work for the Bureau of Employment Programs. Tackett presented the award on behalf of Robert Powell, FAM Policy and Communications, who nominated Miller while he was on active duty as a member of the Army National Guard in Iraq from January 2004 until February 2005. "I could do my job in Iraq," said Powell, "because I knew Mark would have a job for me when I returned."

Miller, FAM director, said that the bureau has seen reservist's service as a necessary part of doing business. "Since I've worked here," said Miller, "the bureau has supported our employees doing their service, because it allows them to develop skills that they can bring back to the workplace."

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From left to right: Christinia White, Sandra Mullins, Pam Dempsey, Marcella Townsend, Melissa Hager, Patty Jones and Dawn Bare.

UC Board of Review

Story and photo by Bob Powell

The Unemployment Compensation Board of Review provides a two-tier appellate process for claimants or employers who petition for reconsideration of awards or denials of benefits. The BOR office staff splits their time to serve both processes, handling more than 6,300 hearings last year alone.

For the staff of 16 employees: three board members, seven administrative law judges and six administrative staff members, the Board of Review is a busy place.

Marcella Townsend, Chief ALJ and administrator for the BOR, has seen a 50 percent increase in caseloads in her first four years at the board.

"Last year, we processed 5,500 ALJ hearings and about 800 board hearings, which is the most since I began working here," said Townsend.

When an individual is separated from their employer, unemployment claims deputies determine eligibility for benefits through interviews with the claimant and the employer. Appeals can be made by the claimant if benefits have been denied, or by the employer when benefits are awarded to the claimant. Once an appeal is made, the case enters the jurisdiction of the Board of Review and a hearing is scheduled before an administrative law judge. Either the claimant or employer has the right to appeal an ALJ ruling to the full three-member Board of Review.

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Senate floats draft to reauthorize WIA

Staff members to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee released draft legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act and indicated the Committee was on track to hold its markup on May 11. Senate staff members used the first half of the week to continue negotiations on legislative language, stating in a summary accompanying the draft bill that the product represented an extensive bipartisan effort. Upon a quick review of the legislation, we found the draft bill would do the following:

- Maintain the Wagner-Peyser, WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WIA Youth programs, thereby neither adopting the Administration's "WIA-Plus" proposal to consolidate core WIA programs at the federal level and give governors discretion to combine additional programs, nor the Administration's proposal offered last session and included in H.R. 27 to consolidate the Wagner-Peyser, WIA-Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker programs;
- Maintain the ability of local workforce areas to agree upon equitable contributions from mandatory partners for infrastructure funding, unless the local area cannot reach an agreement, in which case the governor of the state would determine appropriate contributions subject to caps;
- Amend "sequence-of-service" language to eliminate requirements that individuals receive core and intensive services before proceeding to training;
- Reduce the required numbers of members of local boards;
- Increase the transferability between adult and dislocated worker funding;
- Streamline performance measures to accommodate Administration's common performance measurement initiative;
- Require colocation of Employment Service (ES) programs in one-stops;
- Make TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) a mandatory partner but allow the governor to "opt-out" by choosing not to make TANF a mandatory partner; and,
- Direct more resources to out-of-school youth.

NASWA continues to work with the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) in support of providing states greater flexibility to administer the Workforce Investment Act. NASWA is continuing to review the draft Senate language. The Senate's draft WIA reauthorization language is available on the Workforce ATM by selecting WIA Reauthorization on the Subject Locator.

NASWA testifies on VETS at House subcommittee hearing

NASWA was asked to testify before the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on May 12. The Subcommittee will examine the performance of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), its resource needs, and review the state grant program that funds the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) programs.

Maren Daley, Chair of the NASWA Veterans Affairs Committee and Executive Director for Job Service North Dakota, will present testimony on behalf of NASWA. The NASWA testimony will focus on changes for the DVOP and LVER programs required by the Jobs for Veterans Act. Also, Daley will cover a variety of funding issues: the need for adequate funding, funds for training veterans, and reiterate NASWA's request to have the funding cycle for the DVOP and LVER programs changed from a federal fiscal year to a program year funding cycle.

ETA announces \$125 million for Community Based Job Training grants

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announced in the May 3 Federal Register the availability of \$125 million in grant funds for the Community Based Job Training program. ETA will conduct two competitive Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGA) for the grants in the spring and fall of 2005. Only publicly funded community and technical colleges are eligible to apply.

Applicants must propose a combination of capacity building and training activities targeted at high-growth industries in the local economy. Proposed capacity building strategies are expected to address significant barriers that impede the ability of the community college to meet local industry demand for workforce training. Training activities must lead to an appropriate credential. Applicants must demonstrate that projects will be developed and implemented in the context of a strategic partnership that includes business and industry, the workforce investment system, and the K-12 education system.

Attention ENOD Users

Would you like to cut down on paper overload? If so, consider contacting FAM Payroll Unit and requesting that your electronic transfer notice be discontinued. With pay information available on line, what better opportunity to decrease your paperwork than knocking off a twice monthly paper menace? If you need a copy of the information, just print it from the computer. You can save yourself time and the save the state postage costs. Join in and help cut down on bureaucratic waste.

Take our Sons and Daughters To Work Day



Photo by Bob Powell

Detailed planning and follow-up composed the biggest effort in the agency's Take Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day activities. Event coordinator Judy Howard, FAM Policy and Communications (left), prepared information/activity bags for our guests/participants. Howard collected items from several state agencies to fill the bags. Cathy Green, FAM Accounting, helped with preparation of nametags

for the children, and Richard Westfall, FAM Policy and Communications managed the light refreshments for a short reception held the morning of the event.

Participants at the central office were treated to milk, juice and doughnuts while learning about BEP and state government. Pictured at right, Cody Hughart, with mom Amber Hughart, and Raché Burns, with grandmother Mildred Brown, enjoy some refreshments while learning about BEP.

Participants visited bureau offices in Fairmont, Clarksburg, Summersville, Morgantown, Charleston and Moorefield. The South Branch offices in Moorefield win any participation prize with 60 percent participation! Of course, that means three of the five fulltime staffers brought a guest. According to an official, unnamed government source, "The girls had a wonderful day. They highlighted forms, put together notebooks, researched on the computer in the resource center, and directed customers." After all that

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Joe Manchin III, Governor
 Donald H. Pardue, Acting Commissioner
 Mark Miller, Deputy Commissioner of Administration
 Judith L. Howard, Editor
 Contributors include: Valerie Comer, Linda Cooper, Allan Galloway, Cathy Green, Eva Hardman, Tammy Hesse, Amber Hughart, Debra Layton, Rocky McCoy, Bob Powell, Wanda Smith, and Richard Westfall

Deadline for *News&Views online* is the first day of the month.

In Memoriam

Grace Catherine LaRue, mother of UC Benefits and Technical Support's Shirley Shelhammer, died April 9 in Charleston. Myrna Nasser Ryan, retired WIN Central Office clerk, died April 8 in Longwood, Florida. Curtis Stanley Wilson Sr., father of Charleston Job Services Stan Wilson, died April 21 in Seven Lakes, North Carolina. Vivian Taylor Wise, mother of former Governor Bob Wise, died April 19 in Charleston.

demanding work, Jade Urich, daughter of Amy Urich; Tyla Hogbin, niece of Tina Riggleman; and Courtney Hesse, daughter of Tammy Hesse; were taken to a local steakhouse for lunch. The girls are pictured below (bottom right) relaxing after a busy day.



Photo by Richard Westfall

The workplace visits were educational experiences for all involved. Amber Hughart said, "Cody was more than ready to go home by the end of the day. He didn't realize how long Mommy works each day. He helped fold letters and stuff envelopes for mailings, and typed a few addresses into the computer. We went to Wendy's for lunch, and he really enjoyed walking across the grounds of the Capitol Complex. All in all, it was a good day, and Cody had a lot of fun, and learned that just because a person works at a desk, it doesn't mean that they don't work hard."



Photo courtesy of Tammy Hesse

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



Vonda Black
Huntington Job Service

Enclosed you will find the applications for posted St. Mary's positions that we discussed on the telephone. I want to thank you so very much for taking the time to assist me so that I now understand the process for applying to St. Mary's Hospital. It means more than you know to find someone willing to talk to you and help when you are struggling to find a job again. Thank you so much. I appreciate everything. Have a great day and God bless.

A Job Service Customer

Stephen W. Janney
Charleston Job Service

Thank you for your assistance with the screening of candidates for the new operator positions at DuPont. As you know, we have not hired operators since 1982, so your partnership with DuPont to accomplish this task was extremely important to us.

I appreciate your professionalism, proactive approach and expertise in screening candidates for the minimum job qualifications we established. I know this work required long hours for you and your commitment to doing an outstanding job for DuPont was evident.

These are exciting times for DuPont and West Virginia, and I enjoyed working with you and hope to partner with Charleston Job Service for more job opportunities in the very near future.

Paul Jameson, Human Resources Specialist

Valerie Comer, Acting Director
Employment Service Division

I am extremely busy and rarely find myself with extra time, but I wanted to make time to write this letter. I have been dealing with Wilma Harris of the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs [Putnam Co. JS] and she has shown me wonderful service. Wilma has made the process of filling my part-time teller position easy and painless. I didn't know anything about the Bureau of Employment Programs. Wilma took the time to educate me on what she was able to do.

I was amazed that she could test the employees and screen on the front end to make sure we get qualified candidates. She

talked me through the first faxed job order request and then followed up with me on how to proceed with the résumés she received. Every question I had Wilma had an answer for. I even asked if there was a charge for the service and I found out that there wasn't. I always wondered what my tax dollars pay for. After this experience with the Bureau of Employment Programs, I can now say there is one thing I am glad to pay for. This was an easy service to use and Wilma took great care of me.

Joel Russell, Branch Manager
United Bank, Scott Depot

DuPont Chemical Solutions Enterprise

Judith Howard
FAM Policy and Communications

The 2004-2005 United Way Campaign has come to a close and, thanks to your help and hundreds of others like you, the entire community will benefit from the almost \$2.5 million in pledges and contributions. Please accept our sincere "thank you" for your continued support.

Many people ask, "Where does this money go?" The pledges received by the United Way of Central West Virginia stay right here in Kanawha and Putnam counties. The dollars help fund close to 50 programs offered through more than 30 local agencies located in both counties. More than 130,000 people benefit each year from United Way funded programs in our local communities. "Who are these people?" is also a common question. A pledge to the United Way funds everything from daycare and after school programs for low-income families, to emergency assistance for victims of natural disasters, to families dealing with the affects of Alzheimer's or needing hospice care. The list goes on and on. A pledge or contribution to the United Way Community Care fund supports the entire community at the same time.

However, there is more that we can do. Budgets are strained and funding is scarce. Changes in economic patterns have caused needs to increase. Involvement by more and more people like you in this community is critical to our social and economic success. We ask that you please continue to be involved with the United Way through your financial and volunteer efforts.

As we quickly approach another campaign season, we look forward to again working with you for the betterment of central West Virginia. Thanks again for all you do in support of this community and thanks for giving in a United Way.

L. Thomas Bulla, 2004-05 Campaign Chairman
John M. Ballangee, President, CPO
United Way of Central West Virginia

Editor's note: A similar letter was addressed to the agency and our employees. United Way also sent an award (pictured on page 8), that will be framed and hung in a conspicuous location at 112 California Avenue.

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It is the Board staff's job to process the appeals, schedule the ALJ and board hearings, and process all the paperwork associated with the appeals processes.

The three Board members, Mike Jones, Carol Bloom and James Dillon, were appointed by the Governor and hold their hearings as necessary.

Townsend supervises one full-time deputy ALJ at the BOR offices and five part-time ALJs, who work from their private legal practices around the state. She said that having her staff scattered across the state has been made easier by the use of teleconferencing.

"Before the ALJ used to have to come to Charleston to call-in hearings," she said. "We now have the technology to originate conference calls from anywhere. The teleconference hearings have saved a lot of time and money for us. A hearing can be held with claimants who are at one location, while the employer may dial-in from their offices, and the ALJ can be at their law firm or a local unemployment office. According to State Supreme Court rulings, however, if a claimant requests a face-to-face hearing we have to provide it for them." Townsend said that 25 percent of their hearings are conducted over the telephone.

The administrative staff has been helped by automation, as well. Pam Dempsey, BOR office manager, believes that computer software has made their workflow easier. Dempsey, a 12-year veteran of the BOR, feels the key to her staff's success has been their use of the Board of Review System (BORS.)

"BORS is a case management software package", said Dempsey. "It helps us process the miles of paperwork generated from the BOR's hearings. The system allows the administrative staff to receive electronic materials from local offices, print board decisions, standardize hearing orders, and withdrawals or affirmations of appeals from one central software package."

Dempsey admits that her office staff still has to transcribe the ALJ hearings, but the job of transcribing the BOR hearings has been outsourced to a contract transcription service.

Townsend could not predict if their workload will be larger over the next year, but she says if it is, her staff can handle it.

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According to Miller, the bureau has had four or five service members in the reserves at anyone time, some in key management positions. Miller says it challenges his employees who then have to step up into those positions until the service members return. "Lately, the bureau has had to do the same job with fewer people," said Miller. "So our experience with Guard members has prepared us to adapt better to do the same job with less."

Judy Howard, FAM Policy and Communications, agrees that Miller's award is overdue. "Mark has also been an outstanding supporter of military spouses," said Howard. "I don't know what I would have done without his friendship and understanding while my husband, Paul, was overseas."

Miller admits that the award came as a surprise. "I really don't think I'm that important," said Miller. "I do try to care about people, and also encourage them. I hope I've been able to help everyone who has worked for me."

He said that employers should be publicly recognized for their support. "I think it's critical to recognize employers because of their sacrifice, and encourage customers to support those businesses as well."

The award, presented on behalf of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, recognized Miller for contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by his support of his employee citizen-soldiers.



Photo from left: Tara Robbins, Debra Layton, Dr. Linda Dunn and Jeff Hester

South Branch's Layton receives academic honor

Debra Layton, interviewer at South Branch WorkForce West Virginia's Unemployment Compensation office, was one of two recipients nominated to the All USA Academic Team for academic excellence. Dr. Linda Dunn, President, and Jeff Hester, Board of Governors, of the Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College, and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society presented Debra with a certificate. Debra was further honored at a Governor's Reception at the State Capitol on April 28, where she received a framed certificate and medallion in recognition as an All State Academic Team member. A luncheon followed. Debra was one of 19 students state-wide presented with this prestigious award.

It is a scientific fact that your body will not absorb cholesterol if you take it from another person's plate.

—Dave Barry

BEP Health Screen Most Successful Yet

by Fred Mixer

For 69 people, April 14 began very early. The BEP employees, employee spouses and Division of Correction employees fasted for 8 to 12 hours, then went to the conference rooms on 6th floor to have blood drawn to be tested ("screened") for total cholesterol, triglycerides and glucose. Men over the age of 45 were also screened for prostate specific antigen (PSA). Both men and

Photo by Richard Westfall



From left: BEP Wellness Coordinator Fred Mixer, and PEIA Pathways to Wellness participating health consultant.

women age 35 and older also received a bone density test to assess osteoporosis risk factors. Tests were free of charge.

For a minimal fee, additional tests were available. Among these were: Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CPMB), \$15; Complete Blood Count (CBC), \$10; Hemoglobin A1C, \$14; and thyroid testing, \$25. The Bureau of Employment Programs' Worksite Wellness Committee and PEIA Pathways to Wellness, a group of health consultants contracted through PEIA to promote health and well being among all state employees, sponsor the screenings. In the past, people have discovered they were diabetic, hypertensive or in danger of suffering a stroke or heart attack just by participating in screening programs.

Fred Mixer, Wellness Coordinator for the bureau, said this was the best turnout he has seen for agency employees since we began having screenings two years ago. An employee turnout equaling 20 percent of the worksite population is considered good. This turnout equaled 32 percent. Needless to say, Mixer was ecstatic!

Having this number turn out for a health screening has him thinking of a complete health fair next year. A health fair would mean there would be other health care professionals on site, such as a chiropractor checking spinal alignment, acupuncturists and massage specialists, just to name a few.

Once the screening event was completed, a door prize drawing was held from among the participants. Elizabeth Peterson, UC Audit and Compliance, won the drawing and received a gym bag.

Dealing with pain

Many people become fearful and anxious when they are dealing with pain—unfortunately these responses sometimes intensify or exacerbate the experience.

Two simple ways of dealing with the potential problem of self-magnification of your pain is to practice simple physical and mental distractions. Repeating positive affirmations or listening to relaxing music can help, for instance. Practicing some light yoga can increase your oxygen intake, which can reduce distress. Any type of distraction would probably help—watching a movie, reading a book, talking to a friend—anything that takes your focus away from the pain and your fear of it would probably be of benefit.

Pacing yourself can help, too, according to Florida chiropractor and acupuncturist Scott Denny. So heading back to the gym for a full workout right away might not be the best idea if you have been in pain. If you trigger the pain cycle again, your stress could go up, and the whole thing starts all over again.

Try to focus on the positive and stay away from the thoughts about pain that scare you. Tell yourself this is only a temporary thing—and soon you'll be better and able to do what you could do before.

—adapted from Natural Health

Controlling inflammation

Prostaglandins, a group of hormones, regulate inflammation. That means that some of these hormones increase inflammation and some of them reduce it. Your diet can affect this system. Here are a few tips to try. You should notice results in about four-to-six weeks:

- Add turmeric and ginger to your diet—they are natural antiinflammatory agents.
- Get rid of polyunsaturated oils and partially hydrogenated oils from your dietary intake. They encourage synthesis of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins. It's also a good idea to get rid of trans fatty acid sources, like margarine or shortening.
- Switch to using olive oil in your diet and increase your omega 3 fatty acids intake. Good sources of these are wild Alaskan salmon, sardines, walnuts and soy foods. This will increase your production of inhibitory prostaglandins.

—adapted from DrWeil.com

Stupid Quote

We don't like their sound. Groups of guitars are on their way out.

—Decca Records rejecting the Beatles, 1962

April Employees of the Month

The 35-plus years Marie Vandergrift has spent working for the Bureau have served her well in her current job as acting office manager for Fairmont Job Service. She keeps her customers in mind as she completes the many tasks needed to provide quality service. Always willing to do whatever it takes to get a job done, Marie never worries about what is in her "job description," she just does it. As a goal-oriented person, Marie's concentrated efforts result in positive outcomes. According to nominating documentation, "Marie has been the 'rock' behind Fairmont Job Service for 35 years." Her coworkers know that answers to their questions lie within Marie's knowledge.

Marie sets an example for all state workers in her positive attitude, caring demeanor and exemplary work ethic. She works closely with employers, is well versed with the MACC and cares about her customers and her coworkers. "In our opinion, Marie is truly an asset to the agency," her nominators wrote. What better compliment to be had than to be an example by which one's coworkers strive to reflect in their own work.



From left: Valerie Comer, Employment Service Division Acting Director and Marie Vandergrift.

Have you moved to a new office location recently? Is your supply closet pretty full of the forms and pamphlets you use frequently? Did your mail get to the office in a timely manner this week? If the answer is yes, it is probably because of some action or duty by Joe Scalf. A ten-year employee of the Bureau, Joe has performed a myriad of jobs. He was a storekeeper in the old stockroom for many years; he moved over to Mail Services when the stockroom closed, and learned new skills there while continuing to maintain a stock of frequently used forms; and, in the past several months, he has been assisting with the many moves that have occurred in Charleston and in the field. With a smile always on his face and a chuckle in his voice, Joe Scalf just takes what comes with each day and makes the tasks his own. "Joe goes about his job with a quiet strength that is to be admired," a customer added.

During the past couple of years, change has been Joe's constant companion with the demise of the stockroom and changes in the administrative support arena. Through all of this, he has just shown up to work and flowed with the changes. From hefting around on 200-300 pound file cabinets to delivering a Fedex envelope, this first-time grandfather has worked without complaint. As noted in his



From left: FAM Mail Services Supervisor Joe Creech and Joe Scalf.

nomination documentation, "Joe willingly helps others. His cheerfulness makes you want to smile back." While he does always offer a smile, don't be fooled. Joe is very serious about his job—no matter the tasks.

Wheeling is booming right now with the recent opening of Cabela's, Sheetz, Dollar General and a few other new employers. Making those employers happy with their choice of working with Job Service to fill their job openings can be, in a large part, credited to Lisa Templin. As a member of the Business Service Team, Lisa has been solely responsible for bringing the employers into the Job Service fold. Human Resource execs from several of the new businesses have taken their time to acknowledge and compliment Lisa's work. "We consider the relationship as a valued partnership," one employer stated.

Lisa also did her business clients a big favor recently when she notified the local newspaper that a firm was selling labor law posters that are furnished free through Bureau offices. The paper did an article about how many businesses have called to ask for the free posters and to thank Lisa for saving them money. She also received commendation from one of the newspaper's editor's in an editorial written later that week. When it comes to taking care of her customers, Lisa is always willing to put forth the work needed to provide a quality service.



Lisa Templin

Faile Wins Vet Incentive Award

John Faile, disabled veteran outreach program specialist at Charleston Job Service, has been awarded one of this year's Veterans Services Incentive Awards. These

Photo by Richard Westfall



From left, John Faile and Ken Deel

awards come from provisions in the LVER/ DVOPS grant that allows for up to 10% of the grants be set aside for cash incentives. John's award totaled \$1163.75.

John began work at the JS office in November 2002. Since then he has continuously exceeded expectations in providing quality

services to veterans.

In addition to the daily activities at the local office, John is active in fifteen community based organizations, provides information to area National Guard and Reserve units prior to their deployment and upon their return. Many times, the information delivered has been at his expense and on his own time. John just does what he believes is necessary for his veterans and has certainly earned the recognition and the Veteran Services Incentive Award.

See page 4, editor's note.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED