

Happy New Year!

Kent Connections

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees January 2008



Employee of the Month *Alan Tyson*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected ALAN L. TYSON from the Planning Services Department as the January 2008 Employee of the Month.

Alan, a GIS Technician II in the Division of Planning, has worked for Kent County since March 2000. His primary responsibility is the preparation of visual exhibits and Powerpoint presentations related to planning and zoning for Levy Court, Regional Planning Commission, and Board of Adjustment hearings as well as various public workshops conducted by the Planning office.

Alan is praised by supervisors and co-workers for his willingness to take time out of his busy day to help with special projects. He has even volunteered to come to work early to help complete projects before starting his regular work day. Last minute meetings and short notice requests don't seem to fluster Alan, as he graciously adjusts his schedule to prepare poster boards or print tables and specifications on the plotter. Co-workers greatly appreciate his expertise and straight eye when it comes to getting these projects done.

Congratulations Alan on a job well done!

COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > Who is running for Employee Council in 2008?
- > Required defensive driving courses get set to go!
- > What you can do to maintain a healthy heart!

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- 16 - A's to Your Q's
- 4 - Birthdays
- 6 - From The Stacks
- 4 - Mark Your Calendar
- 4 - On The Move
- 6 - Recipe of the Month

Kent Connections is published for the employees and retirees of Kent County Levy Court using Microsoft Publisher® & Microsoft PowerPoint®. Comments, suggestions and story ideas should be addressed to: Kent County Personnel Office, 555 Bay Road, Dover, DE 19901, or given to Allan Kujala, Sophie Dear, Cathleen McLean, or Yvonne Messina. Or, call the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

Co. Administrator eyes 'Green Team' for "Green Gov't"

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Levy Court has led the way in encouraging Kent County residents to conserve energy and natural resources by adding a recycling component to garbage collection districts, preserving farmland, protecting wetlands and woodlands, mandating open space, and joining the National Association of Counties "Save a Light" campaign to install energy efficient lighting in homes. Now, it is the County employees' turn.

County Administrator MIKE PETIT de MANGE is working on a series of "Green Government" initiatives to help motivate employees to recycle and conserve energy in the workplace. His plan has two immediate components – 1) establishment of a "Green Team" to lead this effort; and 2) an office waste product recycling program. The Green Team will include at least one (1) representative from each County department and the group will explore alternative conservation measures and recommend operational changes to enhance energy efficiency and the protection of natural resources in County activities.

Next month, the Green Team will meet for the first time to start brainstorming ideas to move the Green Government concept forward. Employees interested in Green Team membership should advise their department head of their desire to serve. Eventually, the Team will develop a series of conservation proposals for submission to Levy Court for consideration.

This month, County offices will be provided with recycle bins into which recyclable items should be deposited by employees to help reduce the waste stream. The recycle bins will be routinely emptied by facilities management staff into the now familiar blue and gold 45-gallon wheeled containers for curbside collection by the Delaware Solid Waste Authority.

"Kent County Employees are leaders in so
(Continued on Page 6)

A Monthly Contest

A free movie ticket will be given to the first two employees who find the last four digits of his/her Social Security number in the current issue of Kent Connections and contacts the Personnel Office at 744-2310. ELLEN MITCHELL of the Assessment Office and RUBY FARMER of the Tax Office found their numbers and claimed their movie tickets in December. **7757**



Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

In keeping with the winter season, the display cases on the main floor and second floor of the Kent County Administrative Complex features a unique assortment of snowpeople collectibles amassed over the years by Personnel Technician II SOPHIE F. DEAR.

Got an interesting hobby or like to collect limited edition baubles? How about a collection of trinkets from far-away lands? Then show off your talent for amassing things—it may interest others as well. **4923**



HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL

TEAMWORK—a. Build highly successful teams to ensure organizational success, which clearly help fulfill organizational goals; b. Value and support the missions of all work units and strive to strengthen ties to improve the organization; c. Develop databases into which ideas from all are entered and available to anyone; d. Continually organize teams of experts to address special or difficult situations; e. Coach work group in conflict resolution techniques to avoid most conflict.

G.A.U.G.E—Kent Co.'s performance assessment tool

Go Green Kent Co!

Skip bottled water at the grocery & convenience store

Filter your tap water for drinking rather than using bottled water. Not only is bottled water expensive, but it produces large amounts of container waste. Your Green Tip of the Month!



EOM INSIGHT



Name: Alan Tyson

Job: GIS Technician II

Years with the County: 7

Education: Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Maryland Institute of Art

What I like most about my job: Working with dedicated people, who truly enjoy what they do

What I'd most like to change: Redesign of County printed materials

Family: My wife and best friend of 37 years, Carolyn

After work I enjoy: Reading, calligraphy, and other art projects, when I get the chance

Favorite new movie: National Treasure

Favorite old movie: The Great Race

Favorite TV show: Anything on the History Channel

Favorite TV show as a child: Howdy Doody Show

Favorite sport: Caps hockey, Redskins football

Favorite meal: Anything with a dessert

Favorite music: Oldies

Favorite Kent County restaurant: The restaurant I'm in at the time

Favorite Kent County event: Illumination of Downtown Dover

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Robert E. Lee, Abraham Lincoln, and Michelangelo

I'm most proud of: Getting back to church

Pet peeve: Littering of any kind

Motto: What goes around comes around.

If I've learned one thing in life, it's: Each day is a blessing, you may not get another.

Who has had the most impact on my life: My wife, Carolyn, who loves me no matter what, and my parents who continue to be an inspiration to me.

A dream I have is to: Collect Civil War artifacts and visit Civil War sites in my 427 1967 Corvette Stingray, with Carolyn at my side.

If I could have been in any profession of my choosing, I would have been an: Assistant to Frederick Fleet with great binoculars

If I won a million dollars, I would: Help family members, church, and pay for my great nieces' college education

(Continued on Page 12)

Shannon Morris wins Employee of the Year honor

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It is the top honor for a Kent County employee. One person is selected from among 12 monthly contenders to represent the best qualities embodied in all County employees—excellent customer service, outstanding performance, and exemplary character.



For 2007, Wm. SHANNON MORRIS was recognized as the Employee of the Year at the annual Employee

Holiday Dinner & Dance on December 8. Morris is a Building Codes Inspector II in the Division of Inspections & Enforcement, responsible for enforcement of County housing and building codes in addition to routine building inspections. He has become especially skilled at securing favorable verdicts in Court when it becomes necessary to pursue legal action.

After the announcement, Morris said “he greatly appreciated the award” for Employee of the Year and he dedicated it to his friend and mentor Building Codes Inspector III JOHN SCHULTIES.

“I appreciate being named Employee of the Year,” said Morris. “There are 300 plus other employees as deserving as I. In the coming year, I will work even harder to prove worthy.”

This year’s contenders from January through December 2007 were: WILLIAM A. HALL (Public Works/Wastewater Facilities); Wm. ROBERT PIERCE (Public Works/Engineering); LESLIE L. VASQUEZ (Assessment); CHRISTINA MORTON (Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement); MARVIN MILLMAN (Public Works/Wastewater Facilities); MICHAEL T. BERRY (Public Works/Wastewater Facilities); RONALD L. “JR” SHORT (Public Safety/Emergency Communications); MELISSA A. STANLEY (Planning Services/Planning); MARI FABRES (Public Works/Wastewater Facilities); Wm. SHANNON MORRIS (Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement); SOFIA V. CULVER (Finance); and KRISTOPHER S. CONNELLY (Planning Services/Planning).

Employee of the Year for 2006 was DAVID GRYGGO, Dispatcher III in the Department of Public Safety/Division of Emergency Communications.

Kent County 9-1-1 earns national Fire Dispatch accreditation

By William R. Dempsey, Asst Director of Public Safety—
Emergency Communications Division

On November 30, 2000 the Kent County Emergency Communications Center was notified that it had been accredited as an Emergency Medical Dispatch Center. This made the center the first in Delaware and the forty-ninth in the world to receive this recognition. Kent County had set the standard for Medical Dispatch in the State of Delaware.



Once again Kent County is leading the way in emergency dispatch and waiting for the other centers to catch up. On November 29, 2007 Kent County was notified that their application to become an accredited Fire Dispatch center was approved. This once again made us the first dispatch center in Delaware to become a fire accredited dispatch center, and the sixth in the world.

As with the Medical Accreditation, this was not a simple process. The National Academy of Emergency Dispatch has Twenty Points of Excellence that a dispatch center must meet in order to be accredited. Some of those points are:

- Documentation of two ISO ratings. The ISO is a company that provides information to insurance companies to assist them in determining what you as a homeowner will pay for insurance. The ISO completed a review of the dispatch center in 2004 and again in 2007. To determine our score the ISO looked at Telephone Service, Number of Dispatchers, Dispatch Circuits and Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms;
- The center must use the Fire Priority Dispatch System and have all of its dispatchers certified as Fire Dispatchers;
- The Center must have a Quality Assurance process in place;
- The Center must review random calls to ensure the dispatchers are following the protocols. The dispatchers must maintain 90% overall score in

(Continued on Page 12)



ON THE MOVE. . .

Compiled by Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Retirement

12/31/07, JUDITH ALLEN, Accountant III, Grade 12, Finance

Resignations

12/04/07 BEVERLY LORD, Clerk Typist, Grade 3, Administration/Personnel Office

12/09/07 KENNETH McKENZIE, Paramedic II, Grade 11, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services

12/21/07 ERIN MILLER, Permit Technician II, Grade 8, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

Milestones

12/02/2002 DANIELLE LAMBORN, GIS Specialist, Planning Services/Geographic Information Systems—5 years

12/02/2002 JASON MILLER, Engineering Project Manager II, Public Works/Engineering—5 years

12/30/2002 MELISSA STANLEY, Planning Technician II, Planning Services/Planning—5 years

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



January 1, 2008 - New Year's Day holiday. County offices closed.

January 2, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

January 11, 2008 - L&W Insurance rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00-2:00 p.m. in Room 213 at the County Administration Complex.

January 11, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at Library at 9:00 a.m., County Administrative Complex Room 257 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

January 16, 2008 - Employee Training Session on "The Rules of Money" (Part 2). Sessions will be held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

January 21, 2008 - Martin Luther King Birthday holiday. County offices closed.

January 28, 2008 - Deadline for submission of nominations for Employee Council.

* * *

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

Mark Twain

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



JANUARY

- 02 Ana Iturriaga, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.
03 Crystal Yerkes, Deeds Office
04 Mark Jacobs, Planning Services/Planning
04 Harold Venable, Public Works/WWF
06 Betty Lou McKenna, Recorder of Deeds
07 Alex Argo, Public Works/WWF
07 Shannon Morris, Planning Services/I&E
09 Kenneth Eckard, Public Works/WWF
10 James Gerardi, Public Works/WWF
14 Allen Metheny, Public Safety/Emergency Mgt.
15 Mike Ward, Planning Services/GIS
17 Allan Angel, Levy Court Commissioner
18 Christal Cannon, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.
18 Debbie Cline, Deeds Office
18 Denise Cayz, Community Services/Libraries
18 Jason Berry, Planning Services/Planning
18 Sabrina Fite, Planning Services/GIS
20 Richard Ennis, Levy Court Commissioner
20 David Henderson, Chief Deputy Sheriff
20 Colin Faulkner, Public Safety Director
20 Edward Semans, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
21 Allison Payton, Public Safety/EMS
22 Brian Hall, Public Works/Engineering
22 Kathy Skinner, Planning Services/Planning
23 Merritt Savage, Planning Services/Planning
25 James Brown, Community Services/Parks
25 John Naylor, Public Safety/EMS
26 Jim Higdon, Sheriff
27 Chuck Hurd, Public Safety/EMS
27 Hans Medlarz, Public Works Director
28 Tom Weyant, Register of Wills
28 Leslie Persans, Planning Services/I&E
29 John Witzke, Public Safety/EMS
30 John Foley, Deputy Sheriff
30 Kathy Phinney, Administration
31 Dexter Kollie, Planning Services/GIS

FEBRUARY

- 04 Stewart B. Hayes, Public Works/WWF
05 Toby Sitler, Public Safety/EMS
06 Bonnie Voshell, Planning Services/Planning
06 Margaret Talley, Comptroller
08 Diane Lockerman, Assessment Office
09 Albert Porreca, Public Works/WWF
09 Bret Scott, Administration
11 Lorri Tanaka, Administration
11 Brian Costa, Planning Services/GIS
11 Mark Kennedy, Administration/Info Technology
12 Susan Durham, Finance Director

(Continued on Page 12)

County employees can help needy families year round at Food Lion

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Kent County employees have a reputation for helping needy families each year, especially through the annual *Pennies from Heaven* program in support of Adopt-A-Family at Christmastime. But, there is an easy way you can help out all year long.



If you want to continue to give to Kent/Sussex Adopt-A-Family throughout the year, the Food Lions Shop and Share Program is the answer. Every time you use your MVP card, a percentage of the purchase can go to Kent/Sussex Adopt-A-Family, or any other registered charity.

To participate simply go online to www.FoodLion.com and enroll your MVP card. This enrollment is valid for one year (from January to December). You must re-register every January.

Or you can get Kent/Sussex Adopt-a-Family to enter the information for you. Just send them your MVP card numbers along with your name, address and phone number. They will put your information on file and automatically renew you every year. You don't have to remember. What could be easier?

If you change your mind later, simply let Kent/Sussex Adopt-a-Family know. For more information contact them at 302-424-7260.

This past year's *Pennies from Heaven* program raised enough funds to provide \$646 for our Kent/Sussex Adopt-A-Family and they acknowledged the gift with a very nice thank you card to express their appreciation.

High Praise

Kudos to KRIS CONNELLY and MELISSA STANLEY Planning Division, for a Constituent Comment Card praising both for being "very helpful and patient." The constituent went on to say, "Most of my experiences with Kent County employees have always been positive. Keep up the good work." *Everyone needs to stand up and take a bow!!*

Employee wage (W-2) forms out by Jan. 31

By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

It's that time of year again.

Some employees love tax time—anticipating a big tax refund check. Then there are those of us who cringe at the sound of the word "W-2".



As required by law, your W-2 statement will be distributed by January 31, 2008, but much has to be done before then.

Fortunately, we have received the last paycheck of the calendar year (2007). From those calculations, any necessary changes that need to be reflected on the W-2 are made. Those changes come from the verification sheet that was sent to each department last month.

If we have third-party disability participants, which we do, we are required to prepare a manual W-2 from the provider report which usually arrives the second week in January. Then, imputed income **(Continued on Page 10)**

Dental max reset Jan. 1

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Have you been putting off that much-needed visit to the dentist because you maxed out the annual benefit? Don't wait a minute longer, the annual (calendar year) \$1,000 maximum cost allowed under the County's dental plan reset on January 1.



Delta Dental is the third-party administrator for the County's self-insured dental program. The plan pays 100% in-network of the cost for preventative procedures (including x-rays), 80% for restorative, and 50% for most other procedures of reasonable and customary fees up to a maximum County expense of \$1,000 per calendar year.

A special dental card is not required with Delta Dental, but most dental offices request that new patients bring in a dental claim form.

FROM THE STACKS



By Connie Butler, Library Services Secretary

Sandcastles

By Luanne Rice

Read by Ann Marie Lee

Luanne Rice is one of those rare novelists who can capture the very essence of what is most important in our lives. Her New York Times bestsellers powerfully evoke the defining moments of family, friendship, and love. Now she takes listeners on an unforgettable journey into the fragile miracles of the heart, as a longestranged couple come together once more – and a family that was broken is about to be made whole again.

Eleven years ago, Honor thought she had the perfect home, the perfect love, the perfect life. Then her husband, brilliant photographer and sculptor John Dillon, broke her heart – and tore their little family apart.

Now, hearing of their daughter’s impending marriage, John has ended his self-imposed exile and returned to the family he’s always loved more than anything on earth. What he finds is one daughter still hurting over his abandonment, another who barely remembers him; and a third who may be in more trouble than anyone knows.

And then there is Honor herself – and a passion that may have been interrupted but that has never waned.

Some things, like sandcastles, don’t survive the changing tides. But love, family, and friendship – just as fragile – have a way of standing against anything.

The only question is: Do you believe?

‘Green Team’ eyed

(Continued from Page 1)

many areas, and the Green Government Initiative is our next great challenge,” commented Petit de Mange. “There are opportunities in our workplaces to conserve energy, to recycle, and to make a difference. I believe that through a coordinated team effort we can reduce our waste generation and energy consumption. By doing so, Kent County Employees will demonstrate once again their commitment to service in the public interest and to “Serving Kent County With Pride”.

Recipe of the Month

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

FIESTA CHICKEN SOUP

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 31 minutes

Makes: 4 servings, 2½ cups each

- ¼ cup Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing
¾ lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
1 onion, chopped
1 cup (1/2 of 14½ -ounce can) stewed tomatoes, undrained
1 can (14½-ounce) fat-free reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 ¼ cups water
1 can 8½ ounces) peas and diced carrots, drained
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ cup Kraft Mexican Style Shredded Four Cheese

Heat dressing in large saucepan on medium-high heat. Add chicken and onions; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add tomatoes, broth, water, peas and carrots and chili powder; stir. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer 8 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and onions are tender. Meanwhile, preheat broiler.

Ladle soup into four ovenproof serving bowls; top with cheese. Broil, 6 inches from heat source, 2 to 3 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Jazz it up by topping with crushed tortilla chips, crackers or croutons.

Substitute whatever canned vegetables you have on hand, such as cut green beans or whole kernel corn, for the peas and carrots.

Recipe courtesy Kraft Foods **1007**

Discount Movie Tickets

Discount movie tickets to Dover Mall’s Carmike Theaters are available for sale in the Personnel Office.



The discount tickets cost \$6.00 each and can be used at any scheduled time, but cannot be used during the first 14 days of any Sony® movie. All other movie studios allow ticket use at any time. **6615**

Learn more "Rules of Money" at January staff development

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

The Rules of Money will be continued with the January training sessions. Remember last month's lead-in? *Money*. Some people just seem to know how to get it. And keep it. How do they do it? It's easy. They know the rules.



Rules you can learn and "golden behaviors" for creating wealth, making it grow, making it last. Rules that *work*, and techniques you can begin using *right away*. Rules for thinking wealthy, and practical rules for planning, saving, spending, investing. Rules for uncovering hidden opportunities, handling risk, negotiating, minimizing taxes, and even sharing your newfound wealth (if you so desire).

January's employee development sessions on **The Rules of Money** (Part 2) based on the book by Richard Templar, will be held Wednesday, **January 16, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.** in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

To sign up for training, please contact me in Personnel at 744-2312, by e-mail (if you have a list), or in person. If you initially forget to sign up and wish to attend, or discover that you will be able to attend on the day of the training session -- show up and sign in.

County employees who attended a December session for the first part of **The Rules of Money** were KATHY GOODEN, EVELYN JOPP, GALE MAAS, YVONNE MESSINA, SHEILA ROSS, ANGEL SHORT, and JIM WELSH.

Thank you for your continued interest in employee development!

High Praise

Congratulations to SCOTT TANNER, Inspections & Enforcement Division, for a Constituent Comment Card praising him for his "professional knowledge and easy communication skills." *Kudos!*

Time to set goals for 2008 & review 2007 successes

By David Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

So once again it is time to reflect on the year past and set the goals for the new year ahead. Let's see.....

Last year:

We got body armor!!!! Yes, if you haven't noticed, the paramedics now wear protective vests. These are the same type vest worn by the police. Obviously, this will be of



great benefit should any of our medics find themselves in harm's way. One point not so obvious is that statistically, more medics get hurt at scenes they perceived to be safe than those that are overtly hazardous.

We got trucks! Two additional Suburbans were placed in service and will be ready for the expansion of the EMS Division.

We got MDTs! Mobile data terminals (computers) are now in the medic units, ambulances, and some fire trucks throughout the County. The system is being completed so that much vital information can be exchanged via the laptops and thus reduce the radio traffic on the 800 system.

This year:

We'll get a trailer. The All Terrain Medical Response trailer that houses the Medic Gator and the Bike Medic equipment will be upgraded to a larger unit. Right now the equipment fits, but only by a couple of inches. The new unit will allow for additional gear and more comfortable maneuvering. The new trailer will also afford a better work are during inclement weather or the summer heat.

We'll get Tactical Medics. One more specialty group of uniquely trained medics, the tactical program will support the STAR Team of police based in Smyrna. This team provides tactical police operations to the municipalities of Kent County that do not have their own team. Tactical Medics are trained to provide medical services in close proximity to these op-

(Continued on Page 12)

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

With the whirlwind of the holiday season behind us (and I hope that everyone had a good one), the Employee Council would like to take a few moments to say thank you to everyone for their continued support over the past year. Whether it was buying a raffle ticket or candy gram, or volunteering to help out with some of the various events, *we truly appreciate each and every one of you and are proud to serve on your behalf.*

With the New Year upon us, one of the Council's first acts of business will be to seek nominations to fill three seats which will expire in February. Nominations will be accepted beginning January 7 - 28, and may be **emailed to me** (*only nominations in writing will be accepted*). Ballots will be distributed in early February, with the winners beginning their terms with the March meeting. New officers will also be elected at that time.

Before submitting someone however, please make sure that your prospective nominee agrees to the nomination. We will double-check with all prospective nominees that they are willing to serve if elected before the ballots are distributed. Also, please keep in mind that only classified employees are eligible and there is a maximum of two employees from any one department/office who may serve on the Council at one time. Serving on the Employee Council is a great way to connect with your fellow employees and keep up with current County-specific issues.

The ever popular 50/50 raffles will continue into the new year, with the next chances to win being January 11 and January 25. An email reminder will go out a few days before. Good luck!

The Employee Council has chosen ALAN TYSON, Planning Division, as the Employee of the Month for January 2008. In addition to a day off with pay, Alan will also receive a \$100 stipend and be eligible for the 2008 Employee of the Year award. Congratulations!

The Council would also like to extend its congratulations to SHANNON MORRIS from the Inspections & Enforcement Division for being chosen as the 2007 Employee of the Year. Way to go, Shannon!

(Continued on Page 10)

Tech Talk



Can I Buy A New PC and NOT Get Windows®?

By Mark Strong, Network Administrator

The vast majority of PCs today come with Windows® pre-installed, and actually can't be sold without it. Leading PC hardware makers (Dell, HP, Gateway, et.) can't freely advertise PCs sold without Windows, or with an alternative OS such as Linux, without having to pay Microsoft significantly more for every other license they ship. The obvious fact is all name brand PCs are a combination of two retail products: PC hardware and a Windows license.

That's why all major name brand PCs repeat their own version of the cult-like mantra "Dell recommends Windows Vista Professional," as if there were a choice in the matter. It's difficult, but not impossible, to be refunded the cost of Windows when buying a new name brand PC. While Dell has no set policy, the company has on occasion refunded customers who requested it.

For PC users who don't use Windows, this is understandably annoying, particularly users of Linux, the primary alternative to Windows for PCs. They are not happy about being forced to buy a copy of Windows they will never use or even register.

For Apple, hardware and software are inseparable, tightly integrated components. This applies to both the Mac and the iPod. Tight integration allows Apple to remain competitive even as cheap hardware cloners pump out fake iPods or try to make PCs that look like its Mac designs.

Many techs/geeks buy the individual parts to do a "make it yourself" PC and then install Linux. This cuts Microsoft, and its licensing fee, out of the loop when getting a new PC. It can be a fun and relatively inexpensive project, but good luck getting support if there are any problems.

So the answer to the question "Can I buy a new PC and NOT get Windows?" is.....

Yes, but not easily. The cards are stacked against you. **7030** **0083**

* * *

Keeping score of old scores and scars, getting even and one-upping, always makes you less than you are.

Malcolm Forbes

Employees to be rewarded for perfect attendance

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Levy Court will recognize 59 employees at its meeting on January 29 for achieving perfect attendance during Calendar year 2007, - a slight 18 percent decrease from last year's 70. Each employee receives an extra vacation day, a certificate, and a boxed set of four beverage glasses featuring a blue Kent County logo.



The following employees will be recognized for achieving one calendar year of perfect attendance: RICHARD BAKER, Wastewater Facilities Division; RONALD BERRY, Engineering Division; REINHOLD BETSCHEL, Wastewater Facilities Division; ALBERT BIDDLE, Planning Division; SCOTT BUNDEK, Emergency Communications Division; NYLE CALLAWAY, Wastewater Facilities Division; DYLAN CARRAR, Emergency Communications Division; MICHAEL CLARKE, Emergency Medical Services Division; TIMOTHY COOPER, Wastewater Facilities Division; BRIAN COSTA, Geographic Information Systems Division; LOU COX, Assessment Office; WILLIAM DEMPSEY, Emergency Communications Division; SUMMER DeSAULNIERS, Emergency Medical Services Division; SUSAN DURHAM, Finance Director; COLIN FAULKNER, Public Safety Director; JOHN FOLEY, Deputy Sheriff; JENNIFER GRAHAM, Emergency Medical Services Division; DALE HAMMOND, Inspections & Enforcement Division; MICHAEL HARRINGTON, Engineering Division; CRAIG HARVEY, Wastewater Facilities Division; MARTY HAYES, Clerk of the Peace Office; WENDY HAYWOOD, Community Services Department; GERALD JOHNSTON, Engineering Division; GEORGE KUERNER, Wastewater Facilities Division; ALLAN KUJALA, Personnel Director; GALE MAAS, Administration; M. RICHARD MacDONALD, Facilities Management Division; HANS MEDLARZ, Public Works Director; J. ALLEN METHENY, Emergency Management Division; CHRISTINA MORTON, Inspections & Enforcement Division; JOHN NAYLOR, Emergency Medical Services Division; SHAWN O'TOOLE, Wastewater Facilities Division; MICHAEL PETIT de MANGE, County Administrator; DOUG PHILLIPS, Emergency Medical Services Division; DOUG POORE, Emergency Medical Services Division; ROBERT PROBST, Recreation Division;

KATIE RIDGEWAY, Emergency Communications Division; ROBERT SAVAGE, Wastewater Facilities Division; SHEILA ROSS, Assessment Office; BARBARA SCHROEDER, Finance; RUTH SEMANS, Deputy Register of Wills; ANGEL SHORT, Community Services; KEVIN SIPPLE, Emergency Communications Division; RODNEY SMITH, Planning Division; LORRI TANAKA, Administration; ALLAN THOMAS, Wastewater Facilities Division; JOHN VANDORPE, Deputy Sheriff; HARRY VANSANT, Community Services Director; NICOLE VAUTARD, Emergency Management Division; SCOTT VAUTARD, Inspections & Enforcement Division; HAROLD VENABLE, Wastewater Facilities Division; WILLIAM VINCENT, Wastewater Facilities Division; RICHARD WASHINGTON, Wastewater Facilities Division; MIKE WARD, Geographic Information Systems Division; LARRY WARNER, Deputy Sheriff; HILARY WELLIVER, Libraries Division; MICHAEL WEYANT, Inspections & Enforcement Division; JOHN WILLSON, Emergency Medical Services Division; and JOHN WITZKE, Emergency Medical Services Division.

The Emergency Management Division achieved 100 percent attendance again during 2007.

Any employee not listed but believing they should have perfect attendance during Calendar Year 2007 are asked to promptly contact the Personnel office.

2008 Kent County Holidays

New Year's Day 2008	Jan. 1	Tuesday
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Jan. 21	Monday
Presidents Day	Feb. 18	Monday
Good Friday	March 21	Friday
Memorial Day	May 26	Monday
Independence Day	July 4	Friday
Labor Day	Sept. 1	Monday
Columbus Day	Oct. 13	Monday
Election Day	Nov. 4	Tuesday
Veterans Day	Nov. 11	Tuesday
Thanksgiving Day	Nov. 27	Thursday
Day after Thanksgiving	Nov. 28	Friday
Christmas Day	Dec. 25	Thursday
New Year's Day 2009	Jan. 1	Thursday

CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

Payroll in the New Year 2008!!

As with each previous new year there are a few changes to payroll processing in 2008. First off, your W-2 forms will look a little different.

The IRS has moved your personal social security information to a new box. In theory it is so this information won't be accessible thru the window on the envelopes. This format matches our latest payroll software upgrade.

The tax rates tables have also changed slightly for 2008. The ranges increased for each percentage level. This means, there will possibly be a change to the amount of your next check depending on where your annual pay rate falls. Keep an eye out for this net pay change on your January 11, 2008 paycheck.

For 2008, the new maximum dollars to be taxed for Social Security (FICA) is \$102,000. There is no limit on Medicare.

The maximum deferral amount for your 457 deferred compensation (ICMA-RC) is \$15,500. The new year kicks off the \$500 annual increases for limits for deferred comp. This might be a good time to reassess how much you currently contribute each pay period to your 457 retirement account.

If you need any further information please call me at 744-2387.

Happy New Year! **7157**

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

(Continued from Page 8)

If you know of a co-worker who has excelled and/or gone above and beyond in the performance of their job duties, then nominate them for Employee of the Month. Nomination forms are available in the central mail room and also on the v: drive under forms. Submitted forms are eligible for a three-month period and may be re-submitted if they are not chosen during that time.

Your Employee Council: President KATHY PHINNEY, Vice-President MARY EISENBREY, Treasurer CYNDI LAIRD, Secretary MICHELE LAPINSKI, members PAT ORONA, LORI SHORT and JAYNE ZERANSKI.

POLICY REVIEW



By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

§2-19 Retirement Gift

Kent County Levy Court Policy 2-19 provides for a suitable gift to be presented to qualifying long-term employees.

In order to receive a retirement gift, the employee must have accrued at least 25 years of service to Kent County and be eligible to receive a pension immediately following the last day of employment.

All permanent full-time employees are eligible for retirement gift as well as elected officials and appointed County attorneys.

The retiree with 25 or more years of service can choose from several available distinctive fine wood mantel or wall clocks with quartz movement and featuring a brass name plate with years of service inscribed thereon.

Once selected the clock is gift wrapped and a certificate prepared for presentation by the Commissioners at regular Levy Court meeting.

For more information consult the Kent County Levy Court Policy Manual. **4890**

Employee pay (W-2) forms

(Continued from Page 5)

must be added to those employees who earn over \$50,000 for the value of the extra life insurance provided by the County—it is a taxable benefit over \$50K.

Lastly, all of the fortunate folks who commute in a County-owned vehicle will have an imputed income amount added to their W-2 based on the number of days they drove their vehicle to and from work. When all of this is completed then a magnetic tape is prepared for the IRS and the Delaware Division of Revenue so that your income and the amount of taxes you paid is on file. Now comes the time to print, and invariably something happens when we try to print the first time.

In the end we will successfully print and distribute your W-2 by January 31, 2008.

Happy New Year!

Kent County Library launches first winter reading program

By Hilary Welliver, Associate Librarian

Many people make New Year's Resolutions to improve their health, read more books, and become more active, both mentally and physically. Despite initial enthusiasm, many people lose momentum only weeks later, eventually abandoning their worthy goals. With the challenge provided by Kent County Public Library's Winter Reading Program, it is possible that these goals may be met - and rewarded.



Each participant receives a Winter Reading Log to track reading and movement progress, assigning point values to each 30 minutes of movement completed. Individuals set their own goals for achievement and the Lt. Governor's Challenge rewards them with a medal, dependent on activity points earned. The reading goal for the Winter Reading Program is 15 minutes a day, 5 days a week for a total of 10 hours. When participants reach their reading goal, they will be awarded a book bag, provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The free program runs January 14 through April 14th, and is open to youth and adults. Registration is taking place now.

Additionally, two health-related programs will be offered monthly throughout the Winter Reading Program. For example, Kent County Public Library is offering adult workshops for Tai Chi, massage, and organic foods as well as youth programs about gymnastics, bicycle safety, and martial arts. On Wednesday, January 16 at 6:30 p.m., Marianne Carter, Director of the University of the University of Delaware Wellness Center and a wellness-columnist for the *News Journal*, addresses the question: "How do I get healthy?" This program will also be the kick-off for Kent County Public Library's Winter Reading Program: Be Healthy Delaware@Your Library! Refreshments will be served.

The Winter Reading Program is an excellent opportunity to highlight the Delaware Academy of Medicine's circuit health librarian's monthly visit to Kent County Public Library. Get answers to your health-related questions. Patty Hartmannsgruber, a
(Continued on Page 12)

2 employees to take frigid "Polar Bear Plunge" next month

By Sophie Dear, Personnel Technician II

Thousands of 'Polar Bears' will pack Rehoboth Beach - with thousands more lining the boardwalk to catch a glimpse of the spectacle -- on February 3, 2008 when, at 1:00 p.m., the Polar Bears will take their annual icy dip into the Atlantic Ocean to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics Delaware. This year's "Bears" will include County employees JAMES NUNES (Wastewater Facilities Division) and JESSICA STEELE (Recorder of Deeds Office). The plunge, to benefit Special Olympics of Delaware, will be presented by WaWa and Comcast.



According to the Special Olympics website, nine bears will be plunging for the 15th time if they do it this year. The members of this special group will each receive an LL Bean black polar fleece vest to commemorate their anniversary plunge. JAMES NUNES' name is on that list. He intends to plunge again this year.

According to Steele, it's also an opportunity to have fun with a group of friends - a day of fun, eating, and hanging out. She said there are lots of activities for participants that day.

This year's Apres Plunge Party will be hosted by the Baycenter. The party features Nicola's pizza and chili, great big cookies, a cash bar and the toe-tapping sounds of Greg Mack and his Polar Bear Band. Plungers get in for free and non-plungers can attend the party for just \$5.

The event has grown from a mere 78 participants brave (or crazy) enough to take the first plunge in 1992 (where they raised \$7,000) to more than 2,000 Polar Bears each of the past four years.

The 2007 Plunge drew a record 2,690 participants, a crowd of more than 10,000 spectators, and raised an event-record \$520,000!

All staff members of Special Olympics Delaware are required to take the Plunge! (And some County employees complain about things their supervisors ask them to do!)

(Continued on Page 15)

9-1-1 earns Fire Cert.

(Continued from Page 3)

their call taking. Some of the calls taking procedures that are scored include: Case Entry, Chief Complaint Selection, Key Question Protocol Compliance, Post Dispatch and Pre-Arrival Instructions and Determinant Code Selection Accuracy.

- We had to show that the Fire Field Personnel were oriented in the proper use of the Fire Protocols. There has to be Fire Officer Oversight and Involvement in EFD activities.

This did not occur overnight. We started training our dispatchers four to five years ago in the Fire Dispatch Protocols. The Quality Assurance program was put in place to improve our call taking procedures. The most important part of our becoming an accredited center was the employees. It is because of their hard work and dedication that Kent County was able to become the first center in Delaware to be given this honor.

Time to set 2008 goals

(Continued from Page 7)

erations, thus providing life-saving interventions in a timely manner.

There will be other new milestones and goals achieved this year, but they will be done with less Federal funding than we have enjoyed in the past. FY 2007 funding was just 44% of the previous year. FY 2008 will be about half of '07. One of the challenges for the coming year will be to manage the programs and equipment we have while the grant funds shrink and become more restrictive. It is indeed a balancing act to be more prepared for "the Big One" while at the same time not playing "Chicken Little".

EOM INSIGHT

(Continued from Page 2)

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Designed a Lincoln Trail Award for the Boy Scouts and that I am a Titanic enthusiast

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Rode with my brother in a little red wagon at breakneck speed down 67th Avenue when I was a kid, and lived to tell about it.

Three words that describe me: Quiet, friendly, creative **2557**

Winter reading program

(Continued from Page 11)

circuit health librarian, visits Kent County Public Library on the second Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. through noon. Upcoming dates include: January 16, February 20, March 19, and April 16.

One of the biggest problems in America today is lack of activity. We know it's good for us but avoid it either because we're used to being sedentary or afraid that exercise has to be vigorous to be worth our time. The truth is, movement is movement and the more you do, the healthier you'll be. Even moderate activities like chores, gardening and walking can make a difference. And, of course, keeping your mind active through reading exercises your brain. Keep those synapses sparking! So Be Healthy Delaware @ Your Library! Readers of all ages are invited to participate in the free Winter Reading Program. It's "Win-Win" for everyone!

Eat Smart. Play Hard. Read a Lot. @ Kent County Public Library.

Sponsors for "Be Healthy Delaware @ Your Library!" include the Office of Lt. Governor John C. Carney, Jr., Delaware Center for Health Promotion at the University of Delaware, Delaware Academy of Medicine, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Bayhealth, and your local library.

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS

(Continued from Page 4)

- 12 Jesse Wallace, Public Works/WWF
- 14 Yvonne Messina, Administration/Personnel Office
- 15 Jerri Thompson, Public Safety/EMS
- 17 Florence Greene, Community Services/Libraries
- 20 Richard Krueger, Community Services/Libraries
- 20 Deborah Palmer, Assessment office
- 20 William Clevenger, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 21 Alan Tyson, Planning Services/Planning
- 24 Brian Lewis, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.
- 25 Robert Rebeck, Administration/Info. Technology
- 26 John Willson, Public Safety/EMS
- 26 Kristina Rinkenberg, Comm. Services/Libraries
- 28 Brandon Olenik, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

High Praise

High Five to JOE O'CONNELL, Inspections & Enforcement Division, for a hand written note from a satisfied customer praising him for "a wonderful job on our inspection. He was courteous, fair, thorough and committed to helping us" pass inspection in time for Christmas. *Simply great customer service!!!*

Annual service awards recognize employee commitment

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

The holidays bring more than just gifts from Santa Claus and New Year toasts. The Levy Court Commissioners use the holiday season to recognize employees with multiples of 5 years of service as provided in Kent County Levy Court Policy 2-18.



For 2007, Levy Court recognized 43 employees at the Employee Christmas Luncheon on December 13. Those employees receiving service awards included: RICHARD BAKER, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities - 30 years; DENNIS CLARK, Community Services/Parks - 30 years; MARTY HAYES, Clerk of the Peace office - 25 years; ALBERT BIDDLE, Planning Services/Planning - 20 years; CATHERINE BROWN, Tax Office - 20 years; SOFIA CULVER, Finance - 20 years; SHEILA ROSS, Assessment Office - 20 years; DAVID ABRAMSON, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services - 15 years; M. SCOTT BUNDEK, Public Safety/Emergency Communications - 15 years; MICHAEL CLARKE, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services - 15 years; MARY EISENBREY, Assessment Office - 15 years; CRAIG HARVEY, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities - 15 years; KATHYRN GOODEN, Assessment Office - 15 years; DARREN JONES, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services - 15 years; MARGARET TALLEY, Comptroller - 15 years; BRIAN COSTA, Planning Services/Geographic Information Systems - 10 years; MARI FABRES, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities - 10 years; MICHAEL HARRINGTON - Public Works/Engineering - 10 years; JILL JOHNS, Planning Services - 10 years; ALLEN KEARN, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities - 10 years; ERIN MILLER, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement - 10 years; ELLEN MITCHELL, Assessment Office - 10 years; LESLIE PERSANS, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement - 10 years; MICHAEL BERRY, Public Works/Engineering - 5 years; KRISTOPHER CON-

NELLY, Planning Services/Planning - 5 years; GINA GLANDEN, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement - 5 years; FRANCES GUNNING, Community Services/Libraries - 5 years; EVELYN JOPP, Administration - 5 years; JOHN McDOWELL, Finance - 5 years; DANIELLE LAMBORN, Planning Services/Geographic Information Systems - 5 years; BETTY-LOU MCKENNA, Recorder of Deeds - 5 years; HANS MEDLARZ, Director of Public Works - 5 years; JASON MILLER, Public Works/Engineering - 5 years; JAMES NEWTON, Public Works/Engineering - 5 years; STELLA PADILLA, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities - 5 years; MICHAEL PETIT de MANGE, County Administrator - 5 years; LINDA PFEIFFER, Finance - 5 years; KATHRYN RIDGWAY, Public Safety/Emergency Communications - 5 years; LORI SHORT, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement - 5 years; MELISSA STANLEY, Planning Services/Planning - 5 years; JERRI THOMPSON, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services - 5 years; ROBERT WATTS, Public Safety/Emergency Communications - 5 years; and GEORGETTE WILLIAMS, Deputy Recorder of Deeds - 5 years.

BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

The Personnel Office has Personal Membership Applications from Sam's Club for employees and retirees. If you are not yet a member, and would like to join, please contact the Personnel Office for a membership application, or stop by to get one.

If you are enrolled in the AFLAC Flexible Spending program, you are halfway through the plan year! Don't "forget" and throw away the (clearly itemized) receipts for any eligible over-the-counter health-related items – submit them, with the completed paperwork, to the Personnel Office for reimbursement. It's YOUR money – don't leave it in the fund and lose it at the end of the plan year (June 30)!

The dental plan year began new on January 1 – if you were holding off on having dental work completed because you exhausted your benefit in 2007, now's the time to get back in the chair.

If you have any questions regarding any of the items mentioned in this article, or any other benefit question, please feel free to call the Personnel Office.

High Praise

Thanks a bunch to SHIRLEY GOODWIN, Planning Division, for a Constituent Comment Card praising her for being a "great employee" and helping find needed information. High Five!

Talk about medical history at family gathering

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II
from the website www.cancer.org

Think back for a minute on all the family get-togethers you have attended, and the numerous warm conversations that have taken place. On these special occasions, it is just you and your loved ones tackling life's most gripping topics – like how someone who isn't a complete idiot would have called that play last night. How you can tell the new grandbaby is definitely a genius. How the weather today just isn't like the weather when you were little. How you can have a million channels on cable and still not have anything worth watching.



And repeat.

That's a pretty limited menu of topics to work with, so if you find yourself at a loss for things to talk at your family gatherings, the US Surgeon General's Office suggests you spice things up by discussing your family's medical histories. Really!

The most common, most deadly diseases facing Americans tend to run in families – heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer. In fact, a family history of cancer is considered to be an important risk factor for several forms of the disease, including breast, colon, prostate, and ovarian cancers, according to Heather Spencer Feigelson, PhD, MEP, an American Cancer Society epidemiologist specializing in genetics. By knowing that you have such a history, you can take steps to better protect yourself from the risk you face.

"Keeping an accurate record of family medical history, just like keeping an accurate record of current prescription medications, can be an important . . . prevention strategy," Feigelson says.

The catch is that most of us don't keep such records. A 2004 government study found that only 30 percent of people actively track their health history, even though 96 percent of all people say it is important for their health to do so. The findings, published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (Vol. 53, No. 44: 1044-1047), were based on a survey of more than 4,000 US adults.

To bring interest to the matter, the Surgeon General in 2004 established National Family History

Day, to be observed each year on Thanksgiving Day. The choice of Thanksgiving was intended to encourage talk of family health history at holiday gatherings. To assist in recording the information, the US Department of Health and Human Services has developed a free, online tool for families to use.

The tool, called "**My Family Health Portrait**," allows English- and Spanish-language users to enter personal medical information and medical histories about parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and children. Various fields capture such information as disease type (such as breast, ovarian, colon, or some other specific type of cancer) and the age at which a relative became ill. The tool also creates a visual "family tree" that merges health information from different relatives and gives you a visual way to see if any health conditions appear to move from generation to generation. If you do see such a pattern, it's time to talk to your family doctor.

"Any family history that concerns you should be discussed with your doctor," Feigelson says, "because it may influence the type and frequency of screening exams or the appropriate use of other prevention strategies."

Such strategies may include a more assertive program of cancer screening options such as mammograms, MRI scans, or breast ultrasounds for women with a family history of breast cancer. Men with a strong family history of prostate cancer might opt to start PSA testing at a younger age than normally recommended. While we would all do well to stop smoking, eat healthier, exercise more, and achieve a healthy body weight, people with a family history of cancer have even more reason to take good care of their bodies. More evidence emerges every year connecting diet and fitness to cancer – prevention *and* risk.

Just because it is called a Family Health History, don't make the mistake of thinking it's all about the dearly departed, or that it only involves looking backward. The other key word to consider is Family. While recording this history, remember it is not all about me, me, me. To stress the point, the Surgeon General's Office recently expanded its Family History Initiative to include children and incorporate their health information into the Family Health Portrait tool. As their family grows, parents are encouraged to make note of birth defects, developmental disorders, prenatal infections, or other health conditions that might one day expose their children to a greater risk of cancer in the future. **5946**

Kent County Library doubles number of magazines/newspapers

By Hilary Welliver, Associate Librarian

If your eyes light up when the latest issue of your favorite magazine or newspaper arrives in the mail -- you will be excited to know that Kent County Public Library has expanded its subscriptions to include nine local, regional, and national newspapers, and fifty magazines for children, teens, and adults.



Newspapers: *Christian Science Monitor, Delaware State News, Dover Post, Hoy en Delaware, New York Times Large Print, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Wilmington News Journal.*

Magazines (Adult): *AARP, Better Homes and Gardens, Bits and Pieces, Consumer Reports, Cosmo, Country Living, Delaware Lawyer, Delaware Today, Eating Well, Economist, Family Circle, Family Fun, Field and Stream, Kiplinger's, Library Journal, Mailbox, Martha Stewart Living, Memory Makers, Modern Bride, Motor Trend, Nascar Illustrated, National Geographic, O: The Oprah Magazine, Outdoor Delaware, Parents, People, People en Espanol, Popular Mechanics, Popular Science, Practical Homeschooling, Publishers Weekly, Readers Digest Large Print, Rolling Stone, Smithsonian, Sports Illustrated, This Old House, Threads, Time, Trailer Life, Weight Watchers Magazine, The Week, Writer.*

Magazines (Teen): *Cosmo Girl, Hot Rod, Imagine, In Style/Your Look, Mad, Shonen Jump, Teen People, Thrasher.*

Magazines (Children): *American Girl, Cobblestone, Cricket, Nick, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Zoo-books.*

Look for new materials to start arriving this month!

2 Employees to take "Plunge"

(Continued from Page 11)

There are 17 states that conduct a Polar Bear Plunge to benefit their state's Special Olympics program. Delaware's Plunge remains one of the most successful, thanks to the dedication of individuals like James and Jessica, and their friends.

Levy Court eyes new local government workers comp. pool

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Substantial cost savings appears to be the main reason the Delaware League of Local Governments has moved ahead with efforts to form a workers compensation insurance pool with member municipalities and county governments.

Essentially, the Delaware League has established a member owned insurance company of pooled assets to pay costs associated with work related injuries by employees of the member jurisdictions. The Delaware Department of Insurance recently chartered the "DELEA Founders Insurance Trust" and the group released estimated premiums (or "assessments" in the pool format) to the various governments expressing interest in participating.

For its \$15.5 million payroll, Kent County is currently expecting to pay \$482,265 in workers compensation premiums for the 2007-08 fiscal year to the current insurer—Technology Insurance Co. While, DELEA presented a lower assessment of \$458,035. The rate, however, is subject to change based on final salary figures and sufficient pool participation.

In the DELEA insurance pool, the board of directors is composed of representatives from the member governments and they in turn are responsible for hiring a program administrator, claims administrator, an actuary to determine premium rates, accounting firm, legal counsel, a risk manager, etc. Any proceeds in excess of claims paid would be used to offset future premiums.

Before making any decision on the proposed workers compensation pool, the Levy Court Commissioners agreed last month to wait until a report can be presented by the County's insurance consultant—Insurance Buyer's Council. Some factors the Levy Court will need to consider include a mandatory three-year membership requirement, potential adverse selection, and the recent 15% across the board reduction in workers compensation premiums ordered by the Insurance Commissioner.

The consultant's evaluation report is expected this month.



SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Q. *Even if it's not regular policy or standard procedure, sometimes giving a deserving employee recognition and/or extra compensation for showing initiative or doing a good job is the right thing to do. Isn't it?*

A. You are correct, supervisors should always recognize deserving employees for a job well done and/or initiative. However, governments do not earn profit, so they don't have funds available to give out special bonuses to employees. All of our funds are generated from taxes or fees paid by our citizens. In addition, our employee compensation is budgeted and the expenditure of those compensation dollars is regulated by County ordinance. Being a public servant has its limitations, such as the compensation issue you mention, but on the upside we rarely have layoffs, we never go out of business, we have great benefits, and as voters we get to help choose our bosses.

Q. *I am what you call a temporary or contractual employee and I think it is totally unfair that we do not get paid for holidays. How am I supposed to budget my income and expenses, if I am losing a day or two of pay?*

A. When you were selected to work as a temporary employee, you signed an employment agreement which very specifically explained that no benefits would be provided. Paid holidays are a benefit.

Q. *In December the Levy Court saw fit to give employees two extra days off—Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, but instead of making these dates "regular holidays", they were declared "special holidays". This is unfair, since the 24/7 employees would have been paid triple time for a regular holiday instead of just time and one half. What gives?*

A. The Levy Court, in particular President Banta, were extremely kind and generous for declaring special holidays on those two dates. Most of us were off and those that had to work were paid time & one half for those hours or could choose a compensating day off. While true that a "regular holiday" declaration would have paid essentially triple time for some of the 24/7 group, it would have excluded any position operating under a collective bargaining agreement—for which it would have been just a normal work day, since regular holidays are very specifically listed in those contracts.

Q. *I would like to know why all the health checks (flu shots, etc.) are geared only to the first shift. Wouldn't it be more fair to have things from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to benefit everyone?*

A. Excellent question. As you can image, it is quite a challenge for us to schedule health related events for the Administrative Complex, the Emergency Services building, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the County Library all on the same day. We have in the past tried to schedule the treatment plant at the 3:30 shift change to maximize participation, since those folks have to work with wastewater. And we try to do all the work sites in one day, because the provider (this year Christiana Care) charges a flat per day fee plus a per shot fee. But your suggestions is a good one. We can explore a per hour fee option and offer the flu shots on different days, if it is not cost prohibitive. In case you wondered, the County paid \$2,520 in October to provide flu shots to employees free of charge.

Q. *I consider myself a County employee, so I ask why certain employees are required to wear certain clothing and others do not? We all deal with the public in one form or another.*

A. All employees should abide by the work attire guidelines. These require staff members to either wear County issued uniforms or dress in a professional manner. The guidelines list specific prohibited clothing and make the department head responsible for enforcing the dress code. If you are offended by a co-worker's attire, inform their supervisor. If you are afraid to speak to a supervisor (and you should never be afraid to talk to someone) then inform the Personnel Office and we will let the person in charge know about your concern.

Q. *I notice several employees eating breakfast and other meals at their desks each and every morning. Shouldn't they be eating breakfast at home before work, and leaving the work area for lunch and snacks?*

A. It really depends on the desk location and the department head. Some people have to eat often for health reasons, but I think breakfast should probably be eaten at home most of the time. I do agree that eating in front of customers is generally taboo.