

Kent Connections

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees

March 2007



Employee of the Month *Leslie L. Vasquez*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected LESLIE L. VASQUEZ from the Assessment Office as the March 2007 Employee of the Month.

Leslie, a Kent County employee since January 2000, is an Appraiser I in the Assessment Office responsible for inspecting improved and unimproved properties to collect data used in real estate appraisal. She also investigates the permitting and construction history of assigned parcels, and assists the public in a variety of property research matters.

When hired, Leslie quickly learned the duties of her property assessment role and has always gone the extra mile to help the public and her co-workers. Leslie has successfully completed the 120 hour educational segment as well as the 2,500 hour experience segment of her Real Estate Appraiser Certification requirements. Coworkers consider Leslie a team player who works hard to make a valuable contribution to the Assessment Office. She is praised by supervisors for her proactive approach to solving problems and suggesting procedure improvements.

Congratulations Leslie on a job well done!

COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > *How is the FY2008 budget shaping up?*
- > *What are the health insurance bid results?*
- > *Who will be the next County Administrator?*

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 Carissa McLoughlin. Or, call the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

McLeod accepts administrator post in Georgia

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

At the end of January, County Administrator ROBERT S. McLEOD informed Levy Court Commissioners that he had applied for and was a finalist for a similar position in Whitfield County, Georgia. Late last month, he announced he was offered and had accepted the position beginning after the Easter holiday.



According to media reports, Whitfield County, located north of Atlanta and south of Chattanooga, Tennessee, is somewhat smaller with a population of 89,500 residents and the County Seat of Dalton is known as the "Carpet Capital of the World" with several floor covering manufacturers in the area.

McLeod started his employment with Kent County in July 1990 after a career as a naval officer and a stint at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

During his 17 years, McLeod provided leadership for the design and construction of the County Administrative Complex, acquisition and development of multiple parks, establishment of a County library, reorganization of the County departmental structure, a comprehensive budget process, numerous economic development initiatives, and a major upgrade of the wastewater treatment facility which is now considered a model treatment plant by EPA Region III.

"It has been a privilege to work here in Kent County with some of the finest and most professional people in the world," McLeod observed. "Carol and I will certainly miss the many friends we have made here, but we do look forward to living in the warmer climate Georgia offers."

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: JAMES MOORE



Job: WWF Plant Operator I
Date hired: February 20, 2007
Education: High School graduate
What I like most about my new job: The location – it's only seven minutes from my house
Greatest accomplishment: My son
Greatest challenge or obstacle: Too stubborn.

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Spending time with my son
Most recent movie enjoyed: Snakes on a Plane
Favorite TV shows: Lost
Favorite sport: Baseball
Favorite meal: Pork chops
Favorite music: 80's Rock
Favorite saying or slogan: Hope is a good thing, and a good thing never dies.
A dream I have is to: Fly a helicopter
If I won a million dollars, I would: Buy a house
You'd be surprised to learn that I: Am a trivia whiz
Three words that describe me: Stubborn, loyal, smart **4939**

Congratulations

Congratulations to DANIELLE LAMBORN, GIS Technician III, in the Department of Public Works and her husband, Gary, on the birth of their daughter, Gabriella Raye on January 11, 2007 at 2:24 p.m. weighing 6 lb. 10.5 oz. and 19 in. long.

Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

The display case on the main floor of the Kent County Administrative Complex features a unique arrangement of Willow Tree Angels collected over many years by Deed Clerk CRYSTAL YERKES.

In the second floor display case, Engineering Project Manager JASON MILLER has captured the excitement of March Madness with NCAA college basketball memorabilia.

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.

EOM INSIGHT



Name: LESLIE VASQUEZ

Job: Appraiser I

Time with the County: 7 years

Education: High school graduate and Appraisal classes

What I like most about my job: Being able to work outside

What I'd most like to change: Nothing really, I work with great people

Family: My husband, Johnny; son, Austin; two daughters, Brittney and Kristi; two grandsons, Dillon and "AJ" (Austin, Jr.); and a brand-new granddaughter, Avah. Three dogs, Traci, Vinnie, and Benji.

After work I enjoy: Working in the yard and playing with my dogs

Favorite new movie: The Devil Wears Prada

Favorite old movies: Dirty Dancing

Favorite TV show: The Closer

Favorite TV show as a child: Andy Griffith

Favorite meal: All kinds of food, I don't think I have a favorite

Favorite Kent County restaurant: Mexican

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My in-laws; Kyra Sedgwick

I'm most proud of: Me – I've worked hard to get where I am

Pet peeve: People driving too slow in the fast lane

Motto: Love life and enjoy.

If I've learned one thing in life, it's: Make sure you tell the ones closest to you that you love them, because you never know what will happen.

Who has had the most impact on my life: My mother

A dream I have is to: Take a cruise to Alaska

If I won a million dollars, I would: Be broke, because I would give to family and friends

The most adventurous thing I've ever done: Learn to ride a motorcycle

Three words that describe me: Trustworthy, honest, caring **1062**

Congratulations

Congratulations to MARY ELLEN GRAY, Assistant Director of Planning Services—Planning Division and her husband Paul on the birth of their son, Zackery John on February 10, 2007 at 7:30 a.m. weighing 8.5 lbs and 20.5 inches long.

Levy Court eyes Brecknock Park for future gym/office

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

One more goal of the 10+-year-old Kent County parks master plan moved a step closer to reality last month, when Levy Court formally selected Brecknock Park near Camden as the site for the County's first indoor recreational facility.

The gymnasium is expected to be located on the south end of the park adjacent to the existing maintenance building, outside of the viewing area of the historic manor house which dominates the property. In addition, the facility is expected to house the Department of Community Services, including the Parks and the Recreation divisions.

Recently the Parks and Recreation offices were moved to the second floor of the Kent County Administrative Complex to make room for the Recorder of Deeds office on the first floor.

While the decision to site a gymnasium has been a long time coming, the final selection still raised some concern from citizens regarding how the structure will "fit" into the historic nature of the property.

"The motion adopted by Levy Court, simply selects Brecknock Park as the site for our first gymnasium," explained HARRY VANSANT, Director of Community Services. "It also directed the staff to begin the design and development process for the site and structure."

"We will work closely with the architects and engineers to develop a facility that will meet our recreational programming needs, but we will also want the building's appearance to blend in with the existing structures. We believe that we have accomplished that with the other facilities that have been constructed at Brecknock and will do the same with the Recreation Center. We were very determined, when our Master plan was developed, to make sure that the historic, cultural and archeological significance of the site would be protected. We were just as determined to develop a site plan that would be sensitive to the parks capacity for development," Vansant further explained.

Ultimately, the Levy Court will decide how the building looks and the type of construction materials used.

2006 pension report shows fund performed so-so

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

The fickle but steadily increasing stock market has continued to positively impact the County's pension fund, with all three fund managers reporting positive growth in 2006, but falling slightly behind the comparative indices.

By the end of the calendar year, the fund grew from \$20.4 million to \$22.3 million with an annual return of 9.47%, just behind the Policy Index of 11.12%. For the year, the equity portfolio (stocks) lagged behind the S&P 500 bench mark 12.41% to 15.80% (In 2005, the fund managers bested the index by almost 6%). The bond portfolio once again slightly underperformed the Lehman Brothers Aggregate Bond Index earning 3.87% compared to 4.33%.

The County's pension fund is allocated between large capitalized growth equities (stocks), large capitalized value equities (stocks), and bonds (fixed income) with an average 30/30/40 ratio. The pension assets are used to pay monthly pension benefits to County retirees totaling about \$835,000 per year.

Each year the County contributes to the pension fund to ensure that adequate assets are available to pay benefits when employees retire. The amount **(Continued on Page 8)**



Kent County Associate Librarian Hilary Welliver, County Librarian Richard Krueger, and Lyubov Umstead of the Kent Council for Reading display new bilingual books recently donated by the group to the County Library.



ON THE MOVE...

Compiled by Carissa McLoughlin, Personnel Technician II

New Hires

02/12/07 DALE E. JONES, Building Codes Inspector I, Grade 8, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

02/20/07 JAMES D. MOORE, WWF Plant Operator I, Grade 6, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

02/25/07 GLENN BENNETT, Engineering Project Manager I, Public Works/Engineering

02/26/07 RICHARD LANKFORD Jr., WWF Plant Operator I, Grade 6, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

Promotion

02/05/07 JASON D. BERRY, Planner I, Grade 11 to Planner II, Grade 12, Planning Services/Planning

Transfer

02/04/07 CYNDI LAIRD, Account Analyst, Finance to Account Analyst, Public Works/Engineering

Reassignment

02/25/07 REINHOLD BETSCHEL, Engineering Project Manager II, Public Works/Engineering to Asst. Director of Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

Resignation

02/01/07 TERESA OAKLEY, Paramedic Trainee, Grade 7, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services

Milestones

02/02/2002 JERRI THOMPSON, Paramedic II, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services—5 years

02/25/2002 KATHRYN RIDGWAY, Dispatcher II, Public Safety/Emergency Communications—5 years

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



March 6, 13, 20, & 27, 2007 - National Fruit Month. Free Fruit Tuesdays: Employees may pick up a piece of fruit in the Personnel Office.

March 7, 2007 - Employee Training Session on "Preparing for Your Performance Appraisal". Sessions will be held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

March 7, 2007 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

March 9, 2007 - CPR/AED Training at the Emergency Services Bldg. from 1-4 p.m.

March 14, 2007 - Blood Pressure Checks at Annex at 9:00 a.m., County Administrative Complex Room 257 from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

March 21, 2007 - L&W Insurance rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00-

(Continued on Page 6)

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



MARCH

01 Wendy Haywood, Recorder of Deeds Office

06 David Melvin, Public Works/WWF

07 Nyle Callaway, Public Works/WWF

09 Fran Gunning, Comm. Services/Libraries

11 Doug Haddad, Public Safety/EMS

12 Carissa McLoughlin, Administration

14 Judy Allen, Finance

14 Robert Mock, Public Safety/EMS

15 Shervina Miller, Public Safety/EMS

15 Brent Mollohan, Comm. Services/Recreation

19 Kelly Crumpley, Planning Services/Planning

20 Bruce Chillas, Public Safety/EMS

21 Mike Petit de Mange, Planning Services Director

23 Dennis Clark, Comm. Services/Parks

23 Ellen Mitchell, Assessment Office

24 Wilson Branham, Public Works/WWF

25 DawnMarie Shane, Public Safety/EMS

25 Georgette Williams, Deputy Recorder of Deeds

26 Hilary Welliver, Comm. Services/Libraries

29 Jason Courtney, Comm. Services/Parks

30 Bill Hall, Public Works/WWF

30 Allen Kearn, Public Works/WWF

APRIL

01 Gale Maas, Administration

01 Mari Fabres, Public Works/WWF

01 Erin Miller, Planning Services/I&E

03 Martha Lewis, Deeds Office

03 Terri Misiewicz, Finance

03 Jason Miller, Public Works/Engineering

06 Katie Ridgway, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

07 Marty Hayes, Clerk of the Peace Office

09 Karen Cooper, Tax Office

10 Mark Horton, Public Safety/EMS

11 George Kuerner, Public Works/WWF

11 Craig Harvey, Public Works/WWF

13 Sofia Culver, Finance

14 Lee Mullarkey, Planning Services/I&E

16 Mike Bishop, Public Safety/EMS

17 Rodney Smith, Planning Services/Planning

20 Steven Seichepine, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

24 Ronald Berry, Public Works/Engineering

25 Robbie Watts, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

28 Dan McLaughlin, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

29 Keith Mumford, Community Services/Recreation

30 Darren Jones, Public Safety/EMS

30 Walter Studte, Board of Assessment

County staff learns to drive defensively

By Carissa McLoughlin, Personnel Technician II

The roadways might just be a little safer now thanks to the defensive driving course many Kent County employees completed on February 23 & 27. The safe driving course is mandatory for employees operating a county vehicle on a regular basis as provided in Kent County Levy Court Policy 4-6, but other interested employees were able to attend.



The following employees completed the Basic Course: ALEX ARGO, JOHN de BLOOIS, JAMES GERARDI, SHIRLEY GOODWIN, DALE JONES, EFREM JONES, BRIAN LEWIS, JOHN McFADDEN, DAVID MELVIN, MARVIN PARKER, ROBERT PIERCE, PATRICK QUILLEN, JOHN TINGER, HILARY WELLIVER, and ANNETTE WHITBY

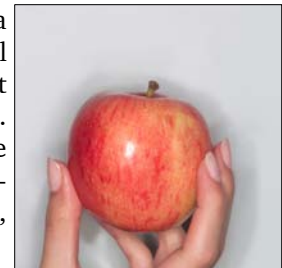
The following employees completed the Advanced Course: SHERRY BARKER, SHARON BEAN, RONALD BERRY, REINHOLD BETSCHEL, WILSON BRANHAM, DENISE CAYZ, DENNIS CLARK, LOU COX, DICK DEMPSEY, SUSAN DURHAM, MARY EISENBREY, JOHN FOLEY, PENNY GIBBS, KATHY GOODEN, BRIAN HALL, DALE HAMMOND, SANDRA HANGGI, CRAIG HARVEY, JENNIFER IMMEDIATO, CYNTHIA JOHNSON, JERRY JOHNSTON, ALLEN KEARN, RICHARD KRUEGER, DIANE LOCKERMAN, DICK MacDONALD, SCOTT McMILLON, JOYCE MELVIN, MARVIN MILLMAN, BRENT MOLLOHAN, KEITH MUMFORD, JIM NEWTON, JOE O'CONNELL, SHAWN O'TOOLE, STELLA PADILLA, WADE PAUGH, LESLIE PERSANS, AL PORRECA, KEITH POWELL, ROBERT PROBST, MIKE RIGBY, KEITH SCHWAMBERGER, KEVIN SIPPLE, ROBERT SKRIPKO, CARL SOLBERG, ALLAN THOMAS, JOHN VANDORPE, HARRY VANSANT, LESLIE VASQUEZ, NICOLE VAUTARD, SCOTT VAUTARD, JACK WEBB, JAMES WELSH, MICHAEL WEYANT, and WALLACE WOOTTEN.

The certification is good for three years and classes are scheduled by the County each February.

Free Fruit Tuesdays promote good Nutrition & Health

By Carissa McLoughlin,, Personnel Technician II

March is National Nutrition Month and to help County employees maintain a healthy lifestyle, the Personnel Office will sponsor Free Fruit Tuesdays beginning March 6. Each Tuesday, employees are invited to stop by the Personnel Office for a free orange, pear, banana, or apple.



The National Institute for Health recommends 2-4 servings of fruit each day to help maintain a balanced diet and good health.

Fruit is not only refreshing and tasty, but contains many vitamins that aid in strengthening your immune system, healing and much more. Here are some important facts about fruit.

All **oranges** are low in calories, have no cholesterol or sodium, excellent source of vitamin C, fiber, calcium, and folate. Eating an **orange** with a meal, and especially with vegetables, boosts the body's absorption of iron from plant food by nearly 400%.

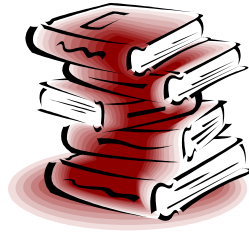
Pears are a good source of the B-complex vitamins and also contain vitamin C. They contain small amounts of phosphorus and iodine.

Bananas are an excellent source of vitamin B6. A lack of vitamin B6 in diets can cause weakness, irritability and insomnia. 1 1/2 **bananas** gives the daily requirement of B6 essential for mental well being. **Bananas** are high in potassium, vital for proper brain function. They are one of the best sources of fruit fiber which is known to prevent bowel cancer. An average **banana** contains 120 calories.

Apples are fat free, sodium free, cholesterol free and an excellent source of fiber. **Apples** are a rich source of phytonutrient (plant based) antioxidants. **Apples** and **apple juice** are two of the best sources of the mineral boron, which may promote bone health.

Employees located outside the Administrative Complex should contact the Personnel Office at 744-2310 on Mondays to reserve a free piece of fruit for pick up on Tuesday.

FROM THE STACKS



By Richard "Dick" Krueger, County Librarian

The Taking

By Dean Koontz

Anything by Dean Koontz is going to be a little "off the wall" and I must admit that I have been hot and cold on past books. This book is definitely different and I did go looking for a past Koontz book, this has a 2004 publication date.

Molly and Neil Sloan live in a remote California mountain town and are awakened one night to find a noisy rain beating on their rooftop. As Molly awakens and roams through to house, she notices that there are four coyotes outside her front door. They are remarkably friendly and after a brief encounter they suddenly departed as if being pursued by some unseen creature. The rain is strange, aromatic luminescence and is far from normal.

This is just the beginning of what everyone is experiencing. Overnight, they hear strange noises and see strange lights. At first, from their television, the Sloans learn of enormous waterspouts and blizzards around the globe; then, the television stops transmitting, as do all other forms of communication with the outside world. Strange things happen, digital clocks are acting like computer readouts with random numbers. In the morning they find themselves along with their neighbors in a purple fog. There is no explanation for this phenomenon. Suddenly they know that the world is being prepared for beings other than themselves.

Your going to have to read the book or listen to the book on CD to find out what happens. If you are a Koontz fan, you will enjoy this book. The critics gave the book mixed reviews; however, I enjoyed listening to the book and it circulates regularly. We have "The Taking" on the shelf in both book and CD formats.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

(Continued from Page 4)

2:00 p.m. in Room 213 at the County Administrative Complex.

March 21, 2007 - Employee Training Session on "How to Work With People". Sessions will be held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

Recipe of the Month

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

DIANE'S COLCANNON

- 2 1/2 pounds potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 slices bacon
1/2 small head cabbage, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1/2 cup milk
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup butter, melted

Place potatoes in a saucepan with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until tender.

Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium heat until evenly brown. Drain, reserving drippings. Crumble and set aside. In the reserved drippings, sauté the cabbage and onion until soft and translucent. Putting a lid on the pan helps the vegetables cook faster.

Drain the cooked potatoes, mash with milk and season with salt and pepper. Fold in the bacon, cabbage, and onions, then transfer the mixture to a large serving bowl. Make a well in the center, and pour in the melted butter. Serve immediately.

Recipe courtesy 2007 Allrecipes.com **8495**

In Memoriam

HARVENE M. (Wood) McKAIN, a Kent County Levy Court retiree, passed away on February 6, 2007. Harvene worked as Laboratory Technician II, and later as Laboratory Supervisor, at the Wastewater Facilities for 15 years, retiring in 1988.

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. J.R. SHORT of the Division of Emergency Communications was the only one to find his number and claim a movie ticket in February. It's easy to win a movie ticket -- just read Kent Connections every month!



Trainings feature GAUGE & co- worker interaction

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

To make up for not having a training session in February, there will be two different training sessions in March – “Preparing for Your Performance Appraisal” and “How to Work With People.”



It’s that time again – **performance appraisals!!!** In the March voluntary training session, participants will review the GAUGE (“Guide to Achievement, Understanding, Growth, and Excellence”) appraisal system and receive some tips for a successful performance appraisal. The annual performance appraisal process is required by *Chapter 68: Personnel* in the Kent County Code and should be viewed by employees as a meaningful opportunity to discuss goals and areas of improvement for the coming year. The training sessions will be held on Wednesday, **March 7, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.** in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

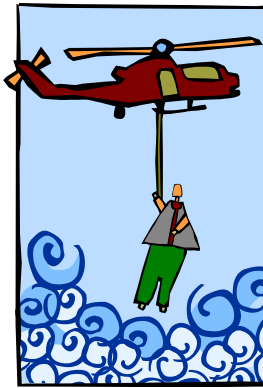
In today’s team-focused workplace, good people skills aren’t just nice to have, they’re essential. In this DVD, **“How to Work With People,”** the speaker shares his insights into what makes exceptional teams. Take the eye-opening SELF Profile to assess your personal style and the styles of other members of your team. Understand why others react the way they do in different situations. See how others judge you. Find out what you can do to get better results with people of each style. It’s a valuable experience for every work team that will increase productivity and improve results. The training sessions will be held on Wednesday, **March 21, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 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.

Help Public Safety meet your needs by preparing ahead

By Dave Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

I have just returned from an International Disaster Preparedness Conference. One of the sessions discussed common issues during flood rescue. Most of these issues can be related to any disaster rescue situation. The glaringly obvious overtone to this session was the need for the public and/or individuals to prepare for some of their own needs.



Mandatory evacuation orders are sometimes declared in advance of particularly dangerous weather events. The reality is that these orders cannot be enforced by emergency workers. In America you have the right to be stupid and stay in harm’s way.

It has been documented that well over half of those individuals who refuse to comply with an evacuation order will cite pet concerns as their motive. Emergency planners are adding special sheltering concerns to their action plans and shelter-providing agencies are developing capabilities to accommodate people and their pets. Pet owners, however, have demonstrated an expectation that the rescue teams will have full pet handling capability. This is not the case!! Pet owners should be educated in prepping their felines and Fidos for evacuation. Whatever small pet is to be rescued, the owner should have them in a travel cage before the rescue arrives. Most people take their pets to the vet in one...why not use it in an emergency? Later, at the “people-with-pets” shelter, the owner will be responsible for the security of the animal, so the travel cage will likely be the pet’s home for a while.

Large, exotic, and dangerous pets present greater problems. The best action is to evacuate them well before the trouble arrives. Even if this means pets must be moved far away (to a friend or shelter outside the danger area) and the disaster never materializes, the cost and effort will not have been a waste. The alternative if rescued in an emergency may be that the animals will get minimal care and facilities

(Continued on Page 10)

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

On behalf of the Employee Council, I would like to take this time to say “Thank You” to departing members JASON MILLER, KATHY SKINNER and MELISSA STANLEY for all their hard work and dedication on behalf of the employees. Two-thousand and six was one of the busiest years for the Employee Council in terms of events and fundraisers; and without the Council coming together and giving generously of their time, it would not have been possible. Hopefully, we’ll be able to duplicate that success into 2007 and beyond.

Since we’re saying “Thank you,” I’d also like to offer that sentiment to everyone who purchased Valentine’s Day Candy Grams as well. Sales of candy grams far surpassed last year’s, which hopefully means that there were a lot more smiles around the county on Valentine’s Day.

In other news, the Employee Council selected Hartly Volunteer Fire Company as the site for the 2007 Holiday Dinner & Dance. The event has been scheduled for Saturday, December 8.

March will see the induction of three new faces to the Employee Council when PATRICIA ORONA, LORI SHORT and JAYNE ZERANSKI join remaining (and returning) members MARY EISENBREY, CYNDI LAIRD, KATHY PHINNEY and MICHELE LAPINSKI in the election of new officers.

The Council selected LESLIE VASQUEZ of the Board of Assessment as the Employee of the Month for March 2007. In addition to a day off with pay, Leslie will also receive a \$100 stipend. Congratulations!

If you know of a co-worker who has excelled and/or gone above and beyond in the performance of their daily job duties, then nominate them for Employee of the Month. **6776** **8927**

Pension report shows so-so in 2006

(Continued from Page 3)

is determined on a biennial basis by an actuary and is currently \$831,025 each year. Employees contribute nothing toward their County pension benefit.

For more information about the County pension plan, please contact the Personnel Office.

Tech Talk



By Don Baughman, Information Technology Director

Blu-ray

The first thought the term “Blu-ray” may generate is, why talk about sunglasses? Even though it is in part vision related there is much more to it. Over recent years with the dramatic reduction in prices there has been a strong movement away from VCR’s and VHS tapes into the DVD world. Well, just as we have gotten comfortable with the DVD technology (and their associated remotes), can justify costs easier, can clearly see benefits, and began to feel safe returning to our favorite electronics store, you guessed it; the technology once again is changing. Oh, before I forget, anyone looking for a good deal on a used 8 track tape player with a half eaten tape in it?

Blu-ray, also known as Blu-ray Disc (BD), is the name of a next-generation optical disc format. The new format enables recording, rewriting and playback of high-definition video (HD), as well as storage of large amounts of data. It offers more than five times the storage capacity of a standard DVD holding up to 25GB on a single-layer disc and 50GB on a dual-layer disc. This extra capacity combined with the use of other HD video and audio components offer the user the optimal HD experience.

Current DVD technology uses a red laser to read and write data, while the BD format uses a blue-violet laser, hence the name Blu-ray. Blu-ray products are backwards compatible with CDs and DVDs through the use of a BD/DVD/CD compatible pickup unit. The blue-violet laser has a shorter wavelength making it possible to focus the laser spot with greater precision. This allows data to be packed more tightly and stored in less space, so it's possible to fit more data on the disc even though it's the same size as a CD/DVD.

Along with BD there is another competing next-generation disc format known as High Definition DVD (HD-DVD). Similarities between the 2 technologies are the use of a blue-laser and increased storage. However, HD-DVD storage maximums are 15GB (single layer disc) and 30GB (dual layer disc) respectively (significantly less than BD capacities).

Blu-ray is currently supported by more than
(Continued on Page 14)

KENT EOC UPGRADE FINALLY COMPLETED

By J. Allen Metheny, Sr., Assistant Director of Public Safety/Emergency Management Division

After over four years of planning, our Kent County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) upgrade is finally completed. When I started working for the County over 6 years ago, one challenge that I knew I was going to face was managing a type of emergency from the EOC which consisted of six cubicles with a small desk and a telephone with temporary walls about five feet tall. In my travels to various emergency operations center, I knew this arrangement was not conducive to good management of an emergency.

The first phase of the upgrade was to replace the six cubicles with a large table in the middle of the room with two counters built on the sides. This is not a regular table. The custom-built table contains electronics for nine positions where the decision makers would sit during an emergency. Each position has a plug for electricity for powering a computer, a telephone jack, and a computer jack. And everyone sitting around the table can see each other eyeball to eyeball. In addition to the nine positions at the table, there is ample room for other support persons in the room.

Next on the agenda upgrade was to add audiovisual technology to the EOC. After several months of developing a "Request for Proposal", a contract was awarded to a vendor to install an audiovisual system that will provide various local, county, state, and federal government officials who respond to an emergency with accurate and timely information using state of the art audiovisual equipment.

The system includes two LCD projectors that can project images on large screens on either end of the EOC/Conference Room. We also have two 45-inch displays and four 32-inch displays that have the ability to display any of the sources connected to the system.

We have the ability to display any of the following sources on every display in the EOC/Conference Room: eight computers from various locations in the building; two computers from the command table; and ten video sources (VCR, DVD, six CATV channels, Satellite TV, and video teleconferencing).

A professional audio system provides a series of high quality ceiling mounted speakers. In addition, eight headsets are provided at the command table for individuals to listen to selected audio outputs. The headsets are connected to a push button keypad that has source and volume controls for each headset. These controls, along with another 110-volt

electrical receptacle, are located in another box mounted in the command table.

All of this equipment is controlled by a wireless touch panel control interface that allows any end-user easy control and operation of the system with the push of a button. This touch panel controls all

of the equipment associated with the project. All of the equipment for this system is mounted in a rack located in an AV closet.

For added functionality, a separate DVD and VCR player are located in the Conference Room that can be operated independently from the rest of the system. This is handy for training programs that use these mediums. A separate computer connection is also available for use during training programs in the Conference Room. A permanent podium was built to facilitate such events in the Conference Room.

This complete project was accomplished with very, very little County funds. The majority of the funding was provided through the Department of Homeland Security Weapons of Mass Destruction funds over a three-year funding cycle. However, I must recognize and thank the Kent County Levy

(Continued on Page 10)



BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware has two acupuncturists offering discounts. Cynthia Crawford in Wilmington, DE (phone 302-998-4150) offers a 20 percent discount, and Paula Kristian in Berlin, MD (phone 410-289-5535) offers a 10 percent discount.

Some members have questioned whether a hospital may be used for laboratory studies. The answer is NO, unless the member is receiving in-patient care or the studies are performed as part of treatment in a hospital's emergency department. Our current in-network laboratory providers located in Kent County are LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics, Inc.

If you supply your dental provider with incorrect data or fail to make proper changes, Delta Dental will not process a claim if the data submitted by the provider does not match the Delta Dental database. Please keep your address, phone, etc. information current with your providers, so your claims will not be denied or delayed for incorrect data.

If you have any questions regarding the County's personal insurance plans or any other County benefits, please feel free to contact the Personnel Office. **2097**

KENT EOC UPGRADE

(Continued from Page 9)

Court, the County Administration, other departments, and our own Department personnel who assisted with this project during the design/implementation stages of this project.

I hope to have an open house in the near future when everyone will be invited to see the capabilities of the system and how it can help us to better manage future emergencies in the County.

Prepare ahead for disaster

(Continued from Page 7)

will not be adequate for some time.

Planning for pets is a growing concern for Emergency Managers. A basic fact of disaster management is that the normal level of services provided will not be maintained. The individual pet owner can greatly facilitate good care for their pets by planning ahead and remaining the primary care giver for their animals.

By the way...the next most prevalent motive for refusing evacuation...valuables; followed then by concerns for elderly relatives!!

CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

Estimating Taxes Due

Weekly I am asked how to figure out what taxes a person would owe at the end of the year. Of course this whole issue is so sensitive that I am a bit wary of giving a straight forward answer. However, I can give you a method that is pretty straight forward and that should give that average tax payer an estimate of how much tax to expect to pay at the end of the year. Here goes.

First, estimate what you think your total taxable wages will be for the whole year. Do not forget to add an estimated cost of living increase and an annual step increase for the last 6 months of the year. Next to consider is what your filing status is going to be at the end of the year. Don't forget persons who are married on the 12/31 of that year must claim married. Lastly, how many exemptions will you be able to claim.

Now with this information in hand you start your estimate. The following is an example—this employee is claiming married, has 2 dependents and himself for a total of 3 exemptions and his spouse does not work:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Employee Total Taxable Wages | \$28,000 |
| Standard Deduction for Married | <u>-10,300</u> |
| (2006 amount) | |
| Taxable Income | \$17,700 |
| Subtract 3x Exemption Allowance \$3300 | <u>- 9,900</u> |
| (2006 amount) | |
| Total Taxable Income | \$ 7,800 |

To find out what the taxes will be on the Taxable Income go to the IRS.gov website and type in 2007 tax tables in the search area. This brings up the 2007 tax rate schedules. Find the appropriate schedule based on your filing status. This employee is married filing joint so his amount is subject to 10% tax or \$780 dollars.

This simplified version can give an employee an idea of the absolute minimum tax that would be due on 12/31 of 2007. A married employee whose spouse works needs to consider how much the total taxable wages will be together not on an individual basis. Anyone wanting a copy of the 2007 Tax Rate Schedule can come by the Personnel Office or call me at 744-2387. This year's tax filing due date is April 16, 2007.

Actuary eyes annual pension contribution

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Just like clockwork, every two years the County's pension fund is evaluated to calculate the actuarial valuation of the Kent County Employees Retirement Program and determine how much and how often contributions should be made to fund future pension benefits.



This year, the County's pension actuary—AON Consulting, started the review process in January with the submission of pension ordinance amendments, staffing changes, salary changes, and pension performance information by the Personnel Office.

The information will be used by the Actuary to project future salary and staffing growth, along with pension asset performance, with the final results being the necessary annual contribution to meet future obligations.

The last actuarial study was completed in 2005 and resulted in a recommendation that the

County contribute \$831,025 annually to the pension fund. The new contribution rate was in addition to a one-time \$2 million deposit to help offset the impact of the higher pension multiplier (2%), an 11% growth in employees, and a significant increase in County payroll due to the previous pay study.

While the County's pension plan assets stood at a healthy \$22.3 million at the end of 2006, up from \$20.4 million in 2005 and \$17.3 million in 2004, budget writers have signaled a likely contribution in excess of \$1 million annually.

At the same time, the actuary will review the County's retiree benefits program and determine if additional funds will be needed to fund future benefits. Two years ago the consultant actually recommended a reduced contribution of \$370,000, down from \$430,000 in the previous study. The reduction was possible due to lower medical premiums and the fact that many County employees choose to remain employed after eligible to retire with benefits.

The final actuarial reports for the pension fund and retiree benefits programs are expected later this month.

Second CPR/AED class offered in March

By Rick Schlaugh, Paramedic III

Becoming certified in CPR/AED is not only beneficial to you in the work place, but to your family and friends in the event of an emergency situation outside of work. Wouldn't you like to be able to help and maybe save a life?



Four County co-workers became certified last month by participating in a 4-hour CPR/AED class offered free of charge to employees by certified trainer/paramedics. The group included CHRIS AUSTIN, SHERRY BARKER, KELLY BLANCHIES, and SANDY HANGGI.

A second CPR/AED class has been scheduled for March 9th from 1-4pm at the Emergency Services Building. The classes are offered at no cost to County employees. Register by calling 735-2180.

If you aren't currently certified, ask your department head if you can attend the March 9th class. Due to the small fee your department pays from their budget, department head approval is necessary. Cer-

tification is good for 2 years.

By attending the class, employees will be certified in CPR for adults, children, and infants. Attendees are also trained in how to use the AED's located throughout the County. Contrary to popular belief when the AED delivers a shock, it is stopping your heart not starting it. The shock allows the heart to reboot, which allows the electrical impulses to flow properly through the heart.

Four AED's are located at the Kent County Administrative Complex in silver trim wall units. The 1st floor units are located under the security desk at the main entrance and the other on the wall on the right at the entry door to the Finance Department/Tax Office. The 2nd floor units are located in the fitness center and the County Administrator's office.

In addition, one AED is located on the wall in each of the following locations: the Sheriff's Office in the Kent County Courthouse; the Kent County Library; the Brecknock Park garage; the Wheatley Pond Road Office and Paramedic Substation in Smyrna; the Wastewater Treatment Plant control tower and the garage; and the last location is in the kitchen of the Emergency Services Building.

What happens if I die before I can retire?

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

We think about it, but most employees don't want to talk about it or ask about it – *what happens if I die before I retire?*



If a vested employee dies before retiring, their spouse will receive 50 percent of the vested employee's pension,

beginning on the date the deceased employee would have become eligible to collect a pension had he lived. Other designated beneficiaries receive an aged amount calculated like the 50 percent contingent annuity. (The County's actuarial service calculates the benefit based on the age and gender of the employee, the age and gender of the designated beneficiary, the age difference between the employee and the beneficiary, and the life expectancy of each.) No benefit is paid if no spouse exists or if no beneficiary is formally designated on an official Kent County Pension Beneficiary designation form.

If the employee had a 457 account with ICMA Retirement Corporation, those funds will be disbursed to the formally designated (on an ICMA-RC form) beneficiary.

The Levy Court provides full-time employees with a group life insurance policy, with full-time regular employees insured for the amount of their base fiscal year pay.

Obviously, your County-provided health and dental insurance coverage ceases with your death. If you have dependents covered under either plan, they would be eligible to remain covered by the County's health and dental plans for a maximum of 36 months through COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 as amended), which is a federal law (Public Law 99-272, Title X). However, 102 percent of the amount of the premium is paid by those who remain on the plan through COBRA. The County would no longer pay any part of the premium. The extra two percent is the amount permitted in the COBRA law as an "administrative fee." The County currently has their COBRA continuation plan administered by CobraServ, a company in Florida. Upon the death of an employee with covered dependents, the Personnel Office would send a form to CobraServ, notifying them of the reason for loss of coverage, and the level of coverage (PPO, IPA High, IPA

Low, and dental coverage information).

If an employee suffers a line-of-duty death, Title 19 of the Delaware Code provides survivor benefits. Compensation is calculated and distributed as follows: if there is no surviving spouse entitled to compensation, 66 2/3 percent of the wages of the deceased, with ten percent additional for each child in excess of two, to a maximum of 80 percent to be paid to their guardian of the child or children; if there are no children, 66 2/3 percent of wages (the minimum amount payable will not be less than \$15 per week) will be paid to the surviving spouse; if there is one child, 66 2/3 percent of wages will be paid to the surviving spouse; if there are two children, 70 percent of wages will be paid to the surviving spouse; if there are three children, 75 percent of wages will be paid to the surviving spouse; if there are four or more children, 80 percent of wages will be paid to the surviving spouse; if there is no surviving spouse or children, then the parents, or the survivor of them, if actually dependent upon the employee for at least 50 percent of their support at the time of the worker's death, will receive 20 percent of wages; or if there is no surviving spouse, children or dependent parent, any siblings actually dependent upon the deceased employee for at least 50 percent of their support at the time of the worker's death will receive 15 percent of wages for one sibling, and five percent additional for each additional sibling, to a maximum of 25 percent, to be paid to their guardian. Wage compensation for death will not exceed the average weekly wage as announced by the Secretary of the Department of Labor for the last calendar year for which a determination of the average weekly wage has been made. However, the minimum amount payable to a surviving spouse entitled to compensation shall not be less than 22 2/9 percent of the said average weekly wage per week. This compensation will be paid during 400 weeks and in case of children entitled to compensation, the compensation of each child shall continue after such period of 400 weeks until such child reaches age 18, or if enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited educational institution, until the child ceases to be so enrolled or reaches the age of 25 years. In the case of a surviving spouse entitled to compensation, compensation shall continue after such period of 400 weeks until the surviving spouse dies or remarries. Children are not entitled to compensation during the period that compensation is payable to their parent, except as provided by Delaware Code. However, the compensation for

(Continued on Page 14)

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: W.G. EDMANSON



Job: Levy Court Commissioner
Date hired: January 23, 2007
Education: B.S. in Business Administration from Delaware State University
What I like most about my new job: Serving the 5th District
Greatest accomplishment: Convincing my beautiful wife to marry me, and winning this seat

Greatest challenge or obstacle: Being part of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Beirut.

Future goals: Slowing growth and doing great things for the 5th District.

Person/event that inspired me: Going back to college and succeeding!

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Nothing – I wouldn't be the person I am today.

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Spending time with my children.

Family: Wife – Ana; children, Mia and Geena

Most recent movie enjoyed: Cars, with the kids

Favorite TV shows: Law & Order; Seinfeld

Favorite sports: Watching – Football; playing – beach volleyball

Favorite meal: Pizza, or crabs on the deck

Favorite music: Classic R&B, Jazz, and 80's New Wave

Favorite saying or slogan: Let's work together – TEAMwork.

Who has had the greatest impact on my life: My wife and children

A dream I have is to: Cliff dive (about 30-foot high)

If I won a million dollars, I would: Save enough for two college educations, then I'm not sure.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Was a cheerleader/stuntman at DelState.

The most adventurous things I've ever done is: Join the Navy – "It's not a job, it's an adventure."

Three words that describe me: Hardworking, outgoing, fun.

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: DALE E. JONES



Job: Building Codes Inspector I
Date hired: February 13, 2007
Education: High school diploma, vocational school, technical school
What I like most about my new job: Excellent working conditions. Able to excel and make a difference in my community.
Greatest accomplishment: Able to be very accomplished in a variety

of fields.

Greatest challenge or obstacle: To be CFO at two businesses without college.

Future goals: More education; advance in field of work.

Person/event that inspired me: My dad

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Went to college right after school

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Inventing things

Family: Married for 22 years; have two daughters, ages 12 and 15

Favorite TV shows: How It's Made

Favorite sports: Football

Favorite meal: Filet mignon, cheesy potatoes, and a vegetable

Favorite music: Southern Gospel

Favorite saying or slogan: Love people, not things; use things, not people.

Who has had the greatest impact on my life: Dad.

A dream I have is to: Fly

If I won a million dollars, I would: Help others less fortunate than myself.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Used to high-jump in school.

The most adventurous things I've ever done is: At age 18, went all over the country with MDS [Mennonite Disaster Services]

Three words that describe me: Integrity, level-headed, intelligent

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: GLENN B. BENNETT



Job: Engineering Project Manager I
Date hired: January 25, 2007
Education: B.S., Wesley College and University of Delaware
What I like most about my new job: Public service opportunity
I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Relaxing at the beach and surfing

Family: Son
Most recent movie enjoyed: An Inconvenient Truth
Favorite TV show: Dog Whisperer
Favorite sport: Surfing
Favorite meal: Prime Rib
Favorite music: Any except heavy metal
Favorite saying or slogan: Do something!
Who has had the greatest impact on my life: John F. Kennedy
A dream I have is to: Retire in Costa Rica
If I won a million dollars, I would: Live in Costa Rica
Three words that describe me: Energetic, nice guy **6101** **1677**

What happens if I die

(Continued from Page 12)

any child shall not be less than \$10 per week unless the total maximum benefits are being paid. Compensation to alien dependent surviving spouses and children not residents of the U.S. will be one-half of the amounts provided in each case for residents. Alien parents and siblings not residents of the U.S. shall not be entitled to any compensation. If death results from a workplace injury, the employer or insurance carrier shall pay the reasonable burial expenses of the employee, not to exceed \$3,500. Any bill for reasonable funeral expenses resulting from the death of an injured employee contracted for in an amount in excess of \$3,500 may be approved by the Industrial Accident Board. For more information about Delaware Workers Compensation, the full text can be located at www.delcode.state.de.us/title19/c023.

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: ROBERT LANKFORD JR.



Job: WWF Plant Operator I
Date hired: January 26, 2007
Education: GED
What I like most about my new job: Job security and benefits
Greatest accomplishment: Raising three wonderful children
I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Playing Texas Hold 'Em

Family: Wife, Kristi; three kids – Robert, Rebecca, Katie
Most recent movie enjoyed: Gridiron Gang
Favorite TV show: That 70's Show
Favorite sports: Football, Nascar
Favorite meal: Pizza
Favorite music: Rock
Who has had the greatest impact on my life: My wife
If I won a million dollars, I would: Quit my job

Valentines Day Candy Guess

Congratulations to JAMES BROWN, Parks Worker II in the Parks Division for winning the Valentine's Day Candy colorful bucket with his guess of 256. He was closest without going over the actual count of 259.

Tech Talk

(Continued from Page 8)

180 of the world's leading consumer electronics, personal computer, recording media, video game and music companies. The format also has broad support from the major movie studios as the successor to the current DVD format.

Seven of the eight major movie studios (Disney, Fox, Warner, Paramount, Sony, Lionsgate and MGM) are supporting the Blu-ray format. If HD-DVD actually makes it to the retail market, my guess is the BD and HD-DVD options will follow the same path as the VHS and BETA tape alternatives. I'm betting on Blu-ray. **1394** **9141**

Employee performance appraisal process starts in March

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It's that time of the year when supervisors dust off the G.A.U.G.E. system handbook and begin preparation for the annual employee performance appraisal (evaluation) process—or they should be.

The GAUGE format, introduced five years ago, has been used consistently throughout the years with great success. Employees who were having performance problems either began to measure up or found themselves without a job.

The format has been praised as more objective with scoring more easily understood by both parties, the employee and the appraiser.

The comprehensive performance appraisal system rates each employee on "Core Value Competencies", such as customer service; ethics and integrity; job knowledge and skills; professionalism; and self-management.

The system also rates each employee on "Performance Essential Competencies", such as communication; development of self; initiative; interper-

sonal skills; quality of work; and teamwork. Each employee is further rated for performance in a specific skill group, such as Clerical, Maintenance/Trades, Technical, Professional, Supervisory and Management.

The levels of performance achievement are divided into five areas - Ineffective, Somewhat Effective, Effective, Highly Effective, and Exceptional. A typical employee would score at different levels in each competency. The lower levels would indicate a need to improve, and the new format would give clear examples of the type performance required to achieve the higher level.

The annual performance evaluation process is required by the Kent County Code and should be viewed by employees as a meaningful opportunity to discuss areas of improvement and goals for the upcoming year.

An employee's performance appraisal score determines if the employee receives an annual step increase and, more importantly, determines whether an employees should keep his/her job. The Personnel Chapter of the County Code provides for the termination of employees failing to achieve two consecutive satisfactory or "effective" scores of 3.0 or better.

Basically, performance appraisals or evaluations are a management tool used to measure, maintain, and improve employee job performance. It is an opportunity for the supervisor to advise and counsel employees on areas that need improvement as well as those areas where performance is satisfactory or better than expected.

A training session on the employee performance appraisal system will be conducted by the Personnel Office on **Thursday, March 7 at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.** in Complex Room 220.

During this two month long evaluation period, supervisors will meet with each employee to discuss his/her performance for the past year. In situations where performance has declined, both the supervisor and the employee should jointly establish a performance improvement plan. This plan must be written into the evaluation and acknowledged by the employee.

The GAUGE evaluation forms, including the self-appraisal forms recommended to be completed by employees, are on the County's intranet on the V: drive, in the *CountyInfo* folder, in *Forms* file under *GAUGEPreappraisalDoc*.

For more information, call 744-2310.



Congratulations

Congratulations to *CARISSA ZEITERS*, Personnel Technician II in the Personnel Office and *PATRICK McLOUGHLIN*, Systems Development Specialist in the IT Department who were united in marriage at Wyoming United Methodist Church in Wyoming on February 10, 2007 at 3 p.m. A reception followed at 4 p.m. at the Wild Quail Country Club. The couple honeymooned in Aruba.

SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Q. *I recently attended a training conference as part of my job with the County, but was denied compensation for my time traveling to the airport and back home again. That just doesn't seem fair, since I was traveling to the airport to catch a flight for a job related seminar.*

A. As I understand it, you wanted to attend the training conference—you were not compelled to do so. But whether you volunteered to go or not, this compensation issue is specifically addressed in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and related court/Department of Labor opinions. The travel time to the airport falls under the “portal to portal” exclusion, which says compensation is not required when employees travel to and from the work place—wherever that might be for the particular workday in question. Interestingly, if you had reported to work that day and departed for the 1:00 p.m. flight from your normal worksite, then your time driving to the airport would have been compensable. Upon your return, if you had driven directly to the normal worksite rather than home, that driving time would have been compensable as well.

Q. *So how come I was compensated for the hours I was on the airplane and while at the conference itself over a weekend?*

A. Since you were traveling during normal working hours as part of or on behalf of your job, the flight time is compensable. The conference itself was job related, so the time you spent attending seminars and workshops, even on the weekend when you normally aren't scheduled to work, is compensable. Your compensable time, however, would typically exclude any social activities, conference business meetings or similar non-job related activities. Oddly enough, if you had flown on a so called “red-eye” flight after normal working hours, your time on the plane would not be compensable under FLSA.

Q. *Your payroll office recently contacted me to tell me to change compassionate leave to sick leave on a timesheet for an employee attending his uncle's funeral. How come?*

A. Just because a person attends a funeral doesn't mean that the time is automatically compensated through compassionate leave. According to the personnel ordinance, an uncle is considered a near relative and that qualifies for time off on the day of the

funeral to be deducted from sick leave. If the service is over 50 miles away, two days off are permitted and if over 200 miles away, you get 3 days off. Compassionate leave of three consecutive workdays consisting of the day of, before, and after can be used only for immediate family. Five workdays of compassionate leave are available to employees upon the death of a parent, spouse, or child.

Q. *My supervisor keeps threatening to discipline me for not taking a lunch. I don't eat lunch. Never have. I just prefer to keep working and earning compensatory time off whenever I may need it in the future. Can't I work through lunch if I want to?*

A. Under State law, you are entitled to a 30-minute lunch break if you work more than seven hours per day. Therefore, you must take a lunch unless your job is such that you cannot leave your work station. This is especially true of emergency workers or single employee workplaces. If the above statement does not apply, you must secure permission from your supervisor on those rare occasions whenever the workload necessitates that you work through lunch. Working overtime always requires the permission of your supervisor.

Q. *I have noticed a specific County employee's County vehicle parked in front of the Dover fire hall regularly during working hours. Why doesn't someone do something about it?*

A. County employees are permitted to respond to fires when summonsed by their fire company, if the employee/fire fighter happens to be in the area. Employees may also eat lunch pretty much anywhere they want—including their fire hall. If, however, you regularly observe a County vehicle at the fire hall outside of these situations, please note the tag number, day, and time and contact the Personnel Office for a follow up investigation.

Q. *Does the Personnel Office notify employees when they are due for Defensive Driving and renewal of the certificate?*

A. Yes, we do. We provide each department/division with a listing of those employees required to take the defensive driving course and up for renewal. Those failing to attend the County sponsored class must take another on their own time.