

# KENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees

May 2008



## Employee of the Month *Sherry Barker*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected SHERRY BARKER from the Department of Public Works as the May 2008 Employee of the Month.

Sherry, an Environmental Technician II, in the Division of Engineering working from the wastewater treatment facility, has been with Kent County since August 2000. She started as a Laboratory Technician I responsible for wastewater sampling and various technical tasks.

Sherry was promoted to Engineering Tech II in 2001 and for the past several years has been responsible for running the industrial pretreatment sampling program. She has an excellent working relationship with many of the industrial users and has often been able to advise them on analytical and sampling techniques.

Supervisors feel Sherry sets an example for others with her special insight and initiatives. Since she started running the Microtox analyzer, Sherry has been able to help the plant avoid potential upsets that could cause violations of our NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit.

Congratulations Sherry on a job well done!

### COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > What's happening at the Employee Picnic?
- > What's the impact of the new FY09 budget on me?
- > What's likely to happen this hurricane season?

### IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- 16 - A's to Your Q's
- 4 - Mark Your Calendar
- 4 - Birthdays
- 4 - On The Move
- 6 - From The Stacks
- 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.*

## Levy Court approves FY09 budget

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It's final. The Kent County Fiscal Year 2009 budget was formally adopted by Levy Court on April 22 after months of preparation and much discussion about the economic downturn and its impact on revenues. The final plan reflects a \$3.2 million decrease from FY08.

The approved \$47.8 million all funds combined budget provides a 3% cost of living adjustment pay increase for most employees in addition to the normal 2% step increase for effective performance. Retirees will also receive a 3% pension increase. The budget also includes a very few new positions, reclassifications and re-titling, with no new budget initiatives.

The new budget features minimal staffing enhancements this year with the addition of three new positions, and deferred funding for five existing vacancies. Specifically, two new Paramedic positions in the Department of Public Safety and one new Wills Clerk in the Register of Wills office were added.

The budget also continues funding for the Paramedic Trainee program started two years ago, which pays tuition along with salary and benefits for second year paramedic students at Delaware Tech or students enrolled in the so-called paramedic academy. In return the paramedic student must agree to work a minimum of 3-years for Kent County.

The General Fund's balanced budget totals \$23.5 million with no tax increases. It anticipates a 5% increase in property tax revenues, but a 15% decrease in realty transfer taxes, and a 8% decrease in various fees collected.

The Sewer Fund operating budget totals \$14.1 million plus another \$5.8 million in capital expenditures for treatment plant upgrades  
**(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. **CHRISTAL CANNON** of the Division of Facilities Management found her number and claimed her movie ticket in April. It's easy to win, just read your newsletter!



## Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

Take a minute to visit the display case on the main floor of the Kent County Administrative Complex which features a unique collection of Longaberger® baskets amassed over the years by Computer Support Technician II **TAMI EDWARDS**. On the second floor, Tami has displayed her beautiful collection of Waterford crystal.



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.

## HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL

**PLANNING/ORGANIZING**—a. Keep a detailed diary on all projects, and schedules and update priorities daily; b. Forecast proposed project impact on your work unit, departmental and county activities and address all potential negative impacts; c. Continually compare individual plans against departmental and county objectives to achieve productivity improvements.

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

## Go Green Kent Co!

### Buy local.

Shop at your local farmer's market. Though the offerings can be more expensive, you can generally count on a higher quality product—and the entire purchase price goes directly to the farmer. Buying goods produced locally saves energy by reducing the fossil fuel needed to transport items.



# EOM INSIGHT



**Name:** SHERRY BARKER

**Job:** Environmental Technician II

**Years with the County:** 8

**Education:** Business

**My role as a County employee:** Monitor county industries to ensure they are compliant with their Kent County discharge permits. Analyze samples for toxicity.

**What keeps my job interesting:** Every day is different; I must be flexible to respond to the next emergency.

**What gives me a sense of accomplishment on the job:** Preventing upsets at the Wastewater Treatment Plant

**Family:** Husband, Ed; stepson, James; stepdaughter, Rebecca

**Civic involvement:** National Wild Turkey Federation, Ocean City Marlin Club

**After work I enjoy:** Hunting, fishing, and gardening

**Favorite old movie** Brave Heart

**Favorite TV show:** Deadliest Catch

**Favorite sport:** Pro football

**Favorite music:** 70's, 80's, 90's

**Favorite Kent County restaurant:** Olive Garden

**Favorite Kent County event:** Peach Festival

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** My son, my grandmother, my husband

**I'm most proud of:** Building and managing two extremely profitable environmental testing labs

**Pet peeve:** Procrastination

**If I've learned one thing in life, it's:** We are only passing through so live your life to the fullest

**Life goals and values important to me:** Do whatever it takes to get the job done

**Characteristics and values important to me:** Treat people the way you want to be treated, and be honest

**Who has had the most impact on my life:** My grandmother

**Personal goals I have accomplished or would like to accomplish:** I am a Licensed Laboratory Director (microbiology); Boat Captain License

**If I could have been in any profession of my choosing, I would have been a:** Marine Biologist

(Continued on Page 12)

# Levy Court okays paid military leave expansion

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Service to Country and Community has a long tradition in Kent County, and a number of employees have served or continue to serve as members of the military Reserve forces or the National Guard.



By ordinance, whenever a County employee reports for two weeks of duty each summer for training on military leave their paycheck continues. These citizen soldiers also must report for training one weekend a month,

which is not a problem for most 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. staff members, but can be troublesome for public safety and wastewater personnel often working weekends.

At the request of a public safety employee, Commissioner ALLAN ANGEL sponsored and Levy Court adopted an amendment to the personnel ordinance last month to double the number of paid military leave days from 10 to 20 to accommodate employees that have previously had to use vacation days to train one weekend a month.

According to the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act, employers must allow employees to participate in Reserve and National Guard Training and deployment, but are not required to compensate them for the training. Kent County has long paid normal wages for the 10-days of training in the summer, but had no provision for any weekend training.

"I greatly appreciate the work of those involved in getting the military leave policy amended from ten days a year to twenty days a year. I feel that the extra days given to those of us in the military will be used wisely. I extend special thanks to the Commissioners and everyone else involved for making this change," commented DYLAN CARRAR, Dispatcher II in the Division of Emergency Communications.

# Kent County Levy Court Administrative staff honored on special day

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Administrative Professionals Day, April 23, was an extra-special day for all members of Kent County's secretarial and clerical staff as each received a carnation and were honored by their coworkers and supervisors.



Nancy Glenn

After the ballots were counted in the annual Favorite Administrative Professional poll, there was a tie between NANCY GLENN, Clerk-Typist in the Department of Planning Ser-



Angel Short

vices/Inspections & Enforcement Division and ANGEL SHORT, Administrative Secretary for the Department of Community Services, so both were named "Kent County's Favorite Administrative Professional." Each received a special flower bouquet and small gift basket.

The employees nominated for Kent County's Favorite Administrative Professional included: KELLY BLANCHIES, Sheriff's Office; SHELBY BURD, Finance; CONNIE BUTLER, Libraries; JEN DONAVON, Planning; MARI FABRES, Wastewater Facilities; NANCY GLENN, Inspections & Enforcement; CYNTHIA GOLDSBORO, Sheriff's Office; JENNIFER GRAHAM, Emergency Medical Services; WENDY HAYWOOD, Parks & Recreation; JILL JOHNS, Planning Services; EVELYN JOPP, Administration; CHARLOTTE LINDQUIST, Sheriff's Office; GALE MAAS, Administration; BARBARA MILLER, Engineering; JAN MORRIS, Administration; CHRISTINA MORTON, Inspections & Enforcement; KATHY PHINNEY, Administration; ANGEL SHORT, Community Services; NICOLE VAUTARD, Emergency Management; PATTY VIRIDIN, Planning; and JAYNE ZERANSKI, Public Works.

## High Praise

Kudos to HANS MEDLARZ, Public Works Director, for a Constituent Comment Card praising him for being an "outstanding public servant." *You're great!!*



ON THE MOVE. . .

Compiled by Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Promotions

03/24/08 DAVID W. MELVIN, Maintenance Mechanic I, Grade 6 to Maintenance Mechanic II, Grade 8, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

04/06/08 GERALD KILGORE, WWF Plant Operator I, Grade 6 to WWF Plant Operator II, Grade 7, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

04/06/08 RODNEY WYATT, WWF Plant Operator I, Grade 6 to WWF Plant Operator II, Grade 7, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

04/14/08 DONNA ZERHUSEN, Accountant II, Grade 11 to Accountant III, Grade 12, Finance

Resignation

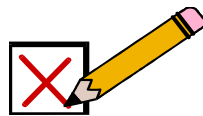
04/02/08 J. MICHAEL WILLSON, Dispatcher I, Grade 8, Public Safety/Emergency Communications

Milestones

04/18/1988 DONALD WILLIAMS, Operations Foreman/Laboratory—20 years

04/21/2003 RONALD BERRY, Utility Locator—5 years

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



May 7, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

May 9, 2008 - Employee Council Car Wash from 1:00—4:00 p.m. at the north end of County Complex. Cost is a \$5.00 donation. Reserve your ticket in the Parks & Recreation office.

May 13, 2008 - AFLAC Insurance rep. available to answer questions from 9:00—12:00 noon, Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 213.

May 14, 2008 - L&W Insurance rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00—2:00 p.m., Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 213.

May 14, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at Library at 9:00 a.m., Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 257 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

May 15, 2008 - Youth in Government Day. High School students will learn about County government in day-long events.

May 21, 2008 - Staff Development Session will be held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in Room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

May 26, 2008 - Memorial Day Holiday. County Offices are closed.

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



MAY

- 01 Jill Johns, Planning Services
02 Harry VanSant, Director of Community Services
05 Ronald Eby, Board of Assessment
05 Jack Loftin, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.
10 Audrey Stanford, Assessment Office
12 Dale Jones, Planning Services/Inspections & Enf.
15 Patrick Quillen, Community Services/Parks
15 Sheila Ross, Assessment Office
19 Terry Gentry, Public Works/Facilities Management
19 Jennifer Immediato, Public Safety/EMS
19 Joshua Bushey, Planning Services/Insp. & Enf.
21 Jennifer Donavon, Planning Services/Planning
22 Richard Washington, Public Works/WWF
24 Mary Ellen Gray, Planning Services/Planning
26 Larry Warner, Sheriff's Office
28 Keith Powell, Public Works/WWF

JUNE

- 03 Barbara Schroeder, Finance
03 Danielle Lamborn, Planning Services/GIS
10 David Nesbit II, Public Safety/EMS
11 Kimberly Dixon, Tax Office
13 Ruth Semans, Deputy Register of Wills
15 P. Brooks Banta, Levy Court President
18 Kathryn Gooden, Assessment Office
21 Barbara Stough, Finance
22 Michael Evans, Public Works/WWF
22 Mike Rigby, Community Services/Parks
23 June Gladden, Assessment Office
23 Richard Baker, Public Works/WWF
23 Catherine Brown, Tax Office
25 Robert Savage, Public Works/WWF
25 Christopher Ammon, Public Safety/EMS
27 Gina Glanden, Planning Services/Insp. & Enforce.
28 Joyce Melvin, Receiver of Taxes
29 Joe O'Connell, Planning Services/Insp. & Enforce
30 Summer Desaulniers, Public Safety/EMS

Discount Movie Tickets

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

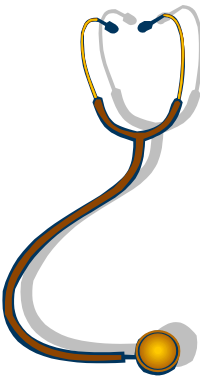


The discount tickets cost \$6.00 each and can be used at any scheduled time, but cannot be used during the first 14 days of any Sony® movie. All other movie studios allow ticket use at any time. \*\*5335\*\*

## Employee health ins. premiums jump 9.9%

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Blue Cross Blue Shield took back the 6.6% rate cut delivered last year and added a little more by proposing employee health insurance renewal rates 9.9% higher beginning July 1.



Last month, Kent County Commissioners reviewed proposals submitted by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware and Aetna, as well as third party administrators costs if the County chose to self-insure coverage for the first time in ten years.

For several years health insurance rates under the former insurance carrier (Mid-Atlantic Health Plan) increased by double digits, but last year Blue Cross Blue Shield won Levy Court approval with a welcome 6.6 average rate decrease.

While the final contract is not yet executed, there is no change to the current coverages provided by the Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO and HMO options including mail order prescriptions costing the same one month pharmacy rate \$10/\$15/\$35 for a 90-day supply.

For eligible retirees on Medicare, the Blue Cross Special Medicfill prescription coverage charges \$10 for generic, \$20 for brand name, and \$40 for non-formulary, but has no maximum. Retirees might remember that Mid-Atlantic had a \$2,000 annual max, but there is no annual prescription maximum under the Blue Cross plan.

Last year Blue Cross noted that medical trends indicated a 9.88 percent rate increase would be necessary this July 1, and predicts a 10.26% rate

increase for July 2009 if trends continue.

The County will continue to fully fund individual employee and eligible retiree health insurance and pay 60% of the dependent cost. In addition, single employees with the lower cost HMO High coverage will receive \$35 cash back each month, and employees with HMO Low coverage will receive \$50 cash back each month. Those employees and eligible retirees waiving health insurance coverage will receive \$100 cash back each month—but must provide proof of adequate coverage elsewhere.

With the bidding process complete, the Personnel Office has scheduled Open Enrollment for the month of May. During open enrollment employees can change health, dental and supplemental life coverage options, add or delete dependents, or begin to participate in Section 125 - Cafeteria Plan supplemental insurance options offered by AFLAC. Cafeteria Plan and health/dental/life plan option changes can only be made during open enrollment.

Since there are no major changes to the County's health/medical plan, there will be no need for special informational meetings or to complete enrollment forms, unless a change of current coverage options or levels is desired.

The AFLAC representative will be making 3 information presentations on Tuesday, May 13 and will schedule appointments afterwards. Stop by the Personnel Office if you would like to schedule one. Remember, open enrollment is the only time health, dental or supplemental life insurance option changes can occur and the only time employees can add, delete or make changes to most AFLAC supplemental insurances such as cancer, accident, sickness, short-term disability, or intensive care plans, and tax free **(Continued on Page 11)**

<b>FY09 DEPENDENT RATES</b>	<b>SPOUSE COVERAGE</b>	<b>CHILD(REN) COVERAGE</b>	<b>FAMILY COVERAGE</b>
PREFERRED (PPO)	\$318.21/month	\$146.87/month	\$440.61/month
IPA HIGH (HMO)	\$272.78/month	\$115.26/month	\$385.30/month
IPA LOW (HMO)	\$236.44/month	\$89.98/month	\$341.06/month
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT	\$124.94/month		
<b>INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE</b>	<b>PREFERRED (PPO)</b>	<b>IPA (HMO) HIGH</b>	<b>IPA (HMO) LOW</b>
County pays 100% of Cost	\$611.95/month	\$562.57/month	\$523.07/month

## FROM THE STACKS



By Connie Butler, Libraries Division Secretary

### 311 PELICAN COURT

By Debbie Macomber

Everybody in this town (Cedar Cove, Washington) knows that Zach and Rosie recently got a divorce. Everybody also knows that Judge Olivia Lockhart decreed a pretty unusual custody arrangement.

It won't be the kids moving between homes, Rosie and Zach are the ones who'll be going back and forth! Olivia isn't immune to gossip herself. Will she stay with Jack, the guy who runs the local paper, or will she get back with her ex?

But the really big gossip has to do with the dead guy—the man who died at a local bed-and-breakfast. Who is he and why did he show up there in the middle of the night? Roy McAfee, the local private investigator, is absolutely determined to find out.

This is an audio book with 10 discs with a total of 11 hours of listening pleasure. \*\*4910\*\*

## FY09 budget

(Continued from Page 1)

(\$3,320,000), conveyance system upgrade (\$1,500,000), and the new Meadowbrook Acres Sewer District (\$1,200,000), and other smaller projects.

The General Fund Capital Projects Budget totals \$1,563,500 and allocates \$500,000 toward gymnasium construction, \$700,000 for open space land preservation and smaller amounts for other potential projects. The capital budget is a planning document and does not mean a project will be constructed next year or ever.

Various other budgeted funds include \$2.4 million for contracted trash collection at almost 11,000 lots, \$695,000 for street lights serving 10,000 lots, and \$1.3 million for community development block grant program, among others.

The document also incorporates a \$1.2 million pension fund contribution, a \$475,000 post-retirement benefits fund contribution, as well as operating cost increases for fuel and utilities. The County tax rate remains at 25 cents per \$100.

## Recipe of the Month

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

### FRESH STRAWBERRY- CREAM CHEESE TART

*This easy fruit tart is so versatile that it also tastes good topped with raspberries, blueberries, or even grapes, instead of strawberries.*

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup confectioners sugar (see Step 1)
- 3 tablespoons confectioners sugar (see Step 5)
- 10 tablespoons butter or margarine chilled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons ice water
- 6 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese (Neufchâtel), softened
- ½ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 3 tablespoons chopped crystallized ginger
- 1½ pounds strawberries, stems and leaves discarded, each berry cut lengthwise in half

(1) In food processor with knife blade attached, combine flour, salt, and 1/3 cup sugar; pulse until blended. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add vanilla, then ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time, pulsing until moist clumps form. Gather dough into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm enough to roll, about 1 hour. (If chilled overnight, let dough stand 30 minutes at room temperature before rolling.)

(2) Preheat oven to 375° F. On large sheet of parchment paper, with floured rolling pin, roll dough into 12-inch round. Using 11-inch dinner plate as a guide, and with a sharp knife, cut 11-inch round from dough; discard trimmings.

(3) Transfer round, still on parchment, to large cookie sheet. Press one index finger against outside edge of dough round; with index finger and thumb of other hand, push dough around fingertip toward center to form a flute. Repeat around edge to make a decorative border. Refrigerate or freeze, on cookie sheet, about 10 minutes to firm dough slightly.

(4) Bake dough 20 to 25 minutes or until golden. Cool crust completely on cookie sheet on wire rack, about 20 minutes.

(Continued on Page 14)

## Learn how to use ArcView program at May training session

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

May's Staff Development session will cover Arc-Reader, and will be presented by Information Technology staff. The sessions will be held Wednesday, **May 21, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.** in the Caucus Room (near the Levy Court Office) 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.

Attendees at the second session of **"the green book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time"** finished up with a roundtable discussion of the homework assignment received at the first session and continued with a discussion of more cost- and earth-saving measures. County employees who attended an April session for the second part of **"the green book"** were JUNE GLADDEN, KATHY GOODEN, EVELYN JOPP, GALE MAAS, YVONNE MESSINA, SHEILA ROSS, and JAMES WELSH.

Employees who attended the previous Arc-Reader session in March were DONNA BARNES, RONALD BOWMAN, JOSHUA BUSHEY, BOB BUTLER, LOU COX, KELLY CRUMPLEY, KEVIN CURTIS, GEORGE DEBENEDICTIS, TAMI EDWARDS, MARY EISENBREY, DEBBIE EVERETT, GINA GLANDEN, KATHY GOODEN, SHIRLEY GOODWIN, DALE HAMMOND, TREY HOLLAND, CYNTHIA JOHNSON, DALE JONES, RUTH JONES, MARK KENNEDY, DIANE LOCKERMAN, KIM LOMBARDI, AMY MINNER, SHANNON MORRIS, CHRISTINA MORTON, JOE O'CONNELL, LESLIE PERSANS, MARY RATLIFF, ROBERT REBECK, SHEILA ROSS, MERRITT SAVAGE, JOHN SCHULTIES, LORI SHORT, KATHY SKINNER,

(Continued on Page 14)

## Mrs. Smith has a "Bad Day"— How did we do?

By David Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

Last month, at the first annual Delaware Hazmat Conference dinner, the speaker for the evening related a new twist on the topic of "customer service". This may not be the first time you've heard about it this way, but I thought his perspective was refreshing.



We generally look at ourselves as being Paramedics in the medical business, Dispatchers in the communication business, or Emergency Managers in the emergency management business. We have lots of training; we respond with lots of fancy equipment; we take charge and have certain authority to impact people's lives; we are part of an elaborate system!! Maybe we should take a different look.

Let's look at it from the public's point of view. What if "Mrs. Smith" calls 9-1-1? I doubt Mrs. Smith is going to call just to say she's glad that Dispatchers are there to answer the phone, or that she feels safer because Medics are on duty, or that she knows the next major incident will be managed efficiently.

When Mrs. Smith calls 911 it's because she is having a Bad Day. She might even be having the worst day of her life. What she wants from us is simply for her Bad Day to go away.

She doesn't much care how we do it, she just wants us to "fix" it. Mrs. Smith doesn't know about our education, our training, our equipment. It doesn't matter to Mrs. Smith that our radios cost thousands of dollars, or that our shifts are 10 and 14 hours long, or that there are eleven other incidents working throughout the County. Mrs. Smith wants us to get there five minutes ago and make her problem a thing of the past. At this point she doesn't care about anything besides results. If the Bad Day goes away Mrs. Smith thinks we have done a good job.

We say we are in the Public Safety business.....what we are really in is the "Bad Day" busi-

(Continued on Page 14)

## EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

As you may have heard, the Employee Council will sponsor a car wash on **Friday, May 9** from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the main administrative building. Washes are \$5 (standard passenger cars/trucks/SUVs only please). Reservation tickets are available from MICHELE LAPINSKI in the Parks & Recreation office while they last. Volunteer car washers are more than welcome too. If you're interested in helping out, please contact BRENT MOLLOHAN via email or by phone (x2491).

As mentioned in last month's column, the Employee Appreciation Picnic has been scheduled for June 11 on the grounds of the main administration building. This annual Levy Court-sponsored event has been a popular staple over the past eleven years, and I'm sure this year's picnic will be no exception. The Employee Council will be soliciting employees and department managers to help with set up, cooking, serving and clean up. If you can spare the time, we'd really appreciate it.

Wow, seems like people can't wait for 50/50 Friday roll around. The response to the bi-weekly raffle has been overwhelming, with the jackpots growing with each drawing. The next chances to win will be May 2, May 16 and May 30. Good luck!

Congratulations to SHERRY BARKER, Public Works department, who was chosen as the Employee of the Month for May 2008. In addition to a day off with pay, Sherry will also receive a \$100 stipend. Way to go!

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 nomination forms are eligible for a three month period and may be resubmitted.

Your Employee Council: President BRENT MOLLOHAN, Vice President LORI SHORT, Treasurer JAYNE ZERANSKI, Secretary MICHELE LAPINSKI, members KIM DIXON, YVONNE MESSINA and PAT ORONA. \*\*9945\*\* \*\*1783\*\* \*\*3254\*\*

*Truce is better than friction.*

**Charles Herguth**

## Tech Talk



### ArcReader Software by Esri

By Dorothy A. Martin, Technology Administrator

If you look around today, you will notice that maps have been incorporated more into our daily lives than ever before. When we need to go on a trip, we can get visual driving directions via Map Quest. If we want to see an aerial view of our next vacation spot, we can download Google Earth and see all the buildings or even landmarks. On most home pages like Yahoo, MSN, AOL, & Comcast, there is a link for a map tool.

Our need for using some sort of mapping software at the county is no different. We have been using maps for sometime now. However, being able to share updated maps electronically between departments was becoming more difficult. The company Esri created software to make map sharing easier.

Today, the County's GIS Division creates maps to document our Land Management/Parcel information. The Planning Division would use the Esri ArcReader software package to view this information to help make the planning decisions affecting our community. They were able to see the updated parcel information with the latest input from the State regarding wetlands, blue line streams, & tax ditches.

Since the Permit Technicians are the first County contact for permits, a suggestion was made to have the Permit Techs start to use ArcReader. This would allow them to use the same mapping software to view the same data as the Planners. Any updates to the maps could be seen by all and provide consistent guidance to the permit customer.

ArcReader, which is a free piece of software, provides the user with the ability to have 'read-only' rights to published maps. The map has layers of information that can be turned on for viewing. These layers display data such as parcels, aerial images, wetlands, flood plain, growth zone, tax ditches, blue line streams, fire districts, school zones, Levy Court districts, etc... There are tools in ArcReader that enable measuring distances or area quite easily. Also, ArcReader provides tools for searching parcels, marking tools to highlight sections, and a special "My Spaces" option to allow certain locations to be put into a 'favorites' folder for future reference.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



## Allergies common malady for millions of Americans

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II, from NCPG/DCGP

More Americans than ever (50 million) suffer from allergies. It is among our most common diseases -- the fifth leading chronic disease in the U.S. among all ages and the third most common chronic disease among children under age 18.



The substances that cause allergic disease in people are known as allergens.

“Antigens” (protein particles like pollen, food or dander) enter our bodies through several

ways: inhaled into the nose and lungs (airborne pollens of trees, grasses and weeds, house dust with dust mite particles, mold spores, cat/dog dander, latex dust); ingested by mouth (shrimp, peanuts, other nuts); injected (medications delivered by needle like penicillin or other injectable drugs, and venom from insect stings/bites); absorbed through the skin (poison ivy, sumac, and oak, and latex);

Allergy is an overreaction of the immune system to a foreign protein substance (“allergen”) that is eaten, inhaled, injected or touched. This overreaction causes coughing, sneezing, itching eyes, runny nose and scratchy throat. More severely, it can result in rashes, hives, lower blood pressure, difficulty breathing, asthma attacks, and death. There are no cures for allergies. Allergies can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.

Approximately 75 percent of allergy sufferers have indoor/outdoor allergies as their primary allergy. About ten million people are allergic to cat dander, the most common pet allergy. Indoor/outdoor allergy triggers are tree, grass, and weed pollen; mold spores; dust mite and cockroach allergen; and cat, dog, and rodent dander, and dust mite feces. Outdoor allergens are tree/grass/weed pollen and mold spores.

About seven percent of allergy sufferers primarily have skin allergies. The most common are poisons ivy, oak and sumac. Skin contact with cockroach and dustmite allergen, certain foods, or latex may cause symptoms. Allergies occur when skin comes in contact with an allergen that the skin is *sensitive* or allergic to. Allergies to food or inhaled proteins may

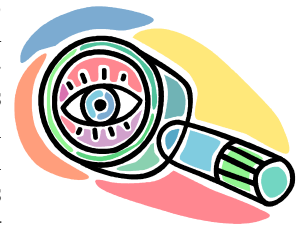
cause symptoms to appear on the skin, such as hives or rashes. The reaction usually appears within 48 hours after the first exposure. Usual symptoms are redness, swelling, blistering, itching, hives and rashes. The allergen can be in a product that you have used for many years -- not even a new product.

About six percent of allergy sufferers primarily have food/drug allergies (more common among children than adults). 90 percent of all food allergies are caused by milk, soy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. Penicillin is the most common drug allergy trigger. These allergies are serious. They are indicated by a broad range of reactions to ingredients in the foods we eat or the medications we take. Food allergy is an overreaction of the immune system, different than food intolerance or food sensitivity.

About four percent of allergy sufferers primarily have natural latex allergy. Some are affected by latex powder if inhaled, others by skin contact with latex, such as surgical gloves. Severe cases can cause anaphylaxis, the most serious type of allergic reaction. Synthetic latex is not an allergen.

Many people look forward to summer, which brings the promise of long days in the sun, picnics, beaches and baseball. Summer also brings unwelcome visitors in the form of stinging insects. For most people, these critters are an annoyance that threaten to ruin outdoor fun. For two million Americans, insects pose a far more serious threat of life-threatening allergic reaction. About four percent of allergy sufferers primarily have insect allergies: bee/wasp stings and venomous ant bites. Cockroach and dust mite allergen may also cause nasal or skin allergy symptoms.

About four percent of allergy sufferers primarily have eye allergies, called “pink eye.” It is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the tissue that lines the inside of the eyelid and helps keep the eyelid and eyeball moist. Allergens (pollen, mold spores, pet dander, etc.) irritants (dirt, smoke, chemicals, chlorine, etc.) and viruses and bacteria can cause conjunctivitis. Pink eye caused by allergens is called “allergic conjunctivitis.” When caused by bacteria or viruses it can spread easily from person to person but is not a serious health risk if diagnosed quickly; allergic conjunctivitis is not contagious.



(Continued on Page 10)

## **Allergies common malady**

*(Continued from Page 9)*

Pediatricians, internists, general practitioners, pulmonologists, and allergists can treat allergies. Allergists or immunologists are internists and pediatricians who have extra training in the immune system and special skills in evaluating and treating allergies. Allergists tend to see more allergic people than other kinds of doctors, and are more experienced in treating them. This is important because about 90 percent of children and 50 percent of adults with asthma have allergies that trigger asthma symptoms. Identifying and learning how to control these allergies can be the key to better asthma control.

Your primary care physician (PCP) may refer you to an allergist for testing. County employees, retirees, and family members covered by the County's Blue Cross Blue Shield of DE health plan can find an allergist in the Provider Network Directory. Good allergy treatment is based on allergy tests, medical history, and severity of symptoms. It can include various treatment strategies: avoiding allergens; medication; and/or immunotherapy (allergy shots). The best way to prevent symptoms and minimize the need for allergy medicine is to avoid allergens as much as possible and eliminate the source of allergens from your home and other environments.

Some people don't take allergy medicines because they don't take their symptoms seriously ("Oh, it's only my allergies"), resulting in painful complications such as sinus or ear infections. Don't risk it -- there are so many safe prescription and over-the-counter medicines to relieve allergy symptoms! Antihistamines and decongestants are the most common medicines used for allergies. Antihistamines help relieve rashes, hives, sneezing, itching, and runny nose. Prescription antihistamines are like their non-prescription counterparts, but many do not cause drowsiness. Decongestant pills, sprays, and nose drops reduce stuffiness by shrinking swollen nasal membranes, but respect that using a non-prescription nasal decongestant spray more than three days in a row may cause nasal swelling and stuffiness to worsen, even after stopping the medicine. This is called "rebound" reaction. Some non-prescription "cold" medicines blend an antihistamine, a pain reliever like aspirin or acetaminophen, and a decongestant. Aspirin can cause asthma attacks in some people. Don't take a chance. If you have asthma, see your doctor before taking non-prescription allergy medicine. Eye drops may provide short relief from burning or bloodshot eyes. Only prescription allergy eye drops contain antihistamines that can reduce itching, tear-

ing, and swelling. When it is not possible to avoid your allergens and treatment with medicine does not solve the problem, immunotherapy can often prevent allergy symptoms. The person receives increasingly higher doses of their allergen over time and gradually becomes less sensitive to that allergen. This can be effective for some people with hay fever, certain animal allergies, and insect stings, but not for allergies to food, drugs, or feathers, or for hives or eczema. Once your allergies are better controlled, expect to visit your allergist less often as he works with your PCP to keep your allergies in check. If you are carefully following your doctor's instructions and you are still experiencing the following problems, you may need to seek a second opinion. With proper medical treatment, your allergy symptoms should not interfere with daily activities; wake you up at night; cause you to miss school or work; cause you to wheeze during strenuous physical activities; or send you to the emergency room.

*(Information from Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website)*

## **Tech Talk**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

Once the Permit Techs were provided with ArcReader, it was felt that the Assessment Office could benefit from using this software as well and possibly Deeds and Title Searchers in the future. Training classes were held so that all could be given an opportunity to show how this software can be used and provide another tool for processing their work.

Those who took the class for ArcReader will be given credit towards their Employee Development points. For those who did not attend and would like to, the next training session will be held on May 21. Please email me to let me know you are interested in signing up for the class.

ArcReader is a great tool that some can use to help provide information for making decisions. If you feel that you might be interested in using it in your job, please contact me. We can start discussing what needs to be done in order for you to become connected in the map world. \*\*5260\*\*

### **Congratulations**

*Congratulations to MARY WOZNIAK (Chief Deputy Register of Wills) on the birth of a granddaughter, Jacqueline Sophia Freedman on Friday, April 18, 2008 at 2:14 a.m. in St. Joseph Hospital in Towson, Maryland. Jacqueline weighed in at 7 lbs 1 oz. and was 20 inches long. Best wishes to the whole family.*



## County Bookmobile plans summer events

By Hilary Welliver, Associate Librarian

Kent County Bookmobile is a mobile unit offering free library service to Kent County residents. During the summer months of June, July, and August, the bookmobile offers a variety of programs.

**Enter a contest!** We'll have a new challenge for you on the bookmobile the first week of June, July, and August! Visit at any of our weekly stops to play!

**"Craft"ernoon Projects:** Join the bookmobile staff for a simple craft at Big Oak, Brown's Branch and Brecknock Parks during the second visit we make there in June, July, and August.

**Games! Games! Games!** These games all have a "novel" twist – match your wits against our bookmobile staff! Third week only, throughout the summer.

**Fourth Friday Storytime:** Stop by Brecknock Park and listen to a story or two read by Kent County librarians as your family enjoys a visit to the bookmobile and Picadilly Castle!

The bookmobile also participates in the state-wide **Summer Reading Program**. Children and teens are encouraged to register on the bookmobile at any scheduled stop.

**Stops and times may vary from the previous three-month schedule.** Please check the new June-August schedule carefully to see if these changes will affect you.

*(Continued on Page 12)*

## Congratulations

Congratulations to MARK KENNEDY (Media Systems Coordinator) and his wife Paula on the birth of their daughter Salome Adin Kennedy. She was born Wednesday, April 23, 2008 at 6:02 pm. Salome weighed in at 7 lbs and is 19" long. She joins brothers Jaren age 7, Lemuel age 6, sisters Niomi age 4 and Nalla age 2 at home. Congratulations to the whole family!

## New rules to help eliminate Direct Deposit debacles

By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

After much effort trying to make direct deposit a simple and easy process, as it should be, we find ourselves in the position of having to return to an old standard.

As of May 1, all bank account numbers will have to be included on the direct deposit form each time a change is



made to an existing direct deposit set up. This way we have a true picture of where you want all of your money to be on any particular payday.

The Personnel Office will no longer be able to accept changes for single accounts such as union dues or organizational accounts unless these accounts are included on a direct deposit form from the employee with all of their accounts included.

Any deposits to a Credit Union or to a savings account must be accompanied by a letter from the institution verifying the account number for deposit and the routing number. For all checking accounts, we will require a voided check or a letter from online banks. It will not be necessary to resend these documents for changes to the amounts deposited into each account—only when adding an account for the first time.

The form needed to make changes to direct deposit is available on the V-drive under [Countyinfo/Forms/directdepositform](#).

If you have any questions or are not sure as to what accounts you currently have on your direct deposit please call 744-2387.

## Employee health rates jump

*(Continued from Page 5)*

flexible spending accounts for medical expenses (such as co-payments, prescriptions, etc.) and child care. Anyone currently with a flex spending account must reenroll annually.

For more information about the County's annual open enrollment as well as the various benefit plans offered, contact the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

## County Bookmobile plans summer events

(Continued from Page 12)

D	LOCATION	TIME
A		
Y		
M	Wild Meadows	10:45-12:15
O	Spring Meadows	1:15-2:45
N.	Big Oak County Park	3:15-5:00
T	Harvest Years	10:45-12:15
U	Byler's (Route 8, East Lot)	1:15-2:15
E	Hartly (across from church)	2:45-5:00
S.		
W	Cheswold (Fire Hall)	10:45-12:15
E	Crossroads Christian Church	1:15-3:00
D.	"Name of the Games" Golf Range (next to Willis Chev.)	3:45-5:00
T	Frederica (next to Post Office)	10:45-11:45
H	Veterans' Home	12:45-1:45
U	Brown's Branch County Park	2:15-3:15
R.	Felton (across from Fire Hall)	3:45-5:00
	Camden Town Center	10:45-12:00
F	(near Dollar Tree)	
R	Kent County Admin. Complex	12:30-1:30
I.	(Route 113 & Bay Road)	
	Brecknock County Park	2:45-5:00

### **The Bookmobile & Library will be CLOSED on July 4.**

The Bookmobile has scheduled maintenance on the first Wednesday of each month. This may disrupt the schedule on those dates.

To verify where the bookmobile will be, please call 698-6440 or our website at [www.co.kent.de.us](http://www.co.kent.de.us) select "Community Services," "Library," then "Bookmobile". \*\*5966\*\*

### *High Praise*

High Five to GINA GLANDEN, Inspections & Enforcement Division, for a constituent e-mail praising her for her "courtesy and professionalism" and providing the exact information he needed. *Kudos!!!*

High Praise to JESSICA STEELE, Recorder of Deeds office, for a constituent e-mail praising her for being "very helpful, understanding, patient and professional." He said "it was a very pleasant experience" since he was in a hurry. *Outstanding!!!*

Give a Gold Star to JASON MILLER, Engineering Division, for his diligent effort helping prepare the bid package for Browns Branch County Park on behalf of the Parks Division. *Applause, Applause!!!*

## Discount coupons available for Six Flags

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

We now have tickets for Six Flags Great Adventure & Wild Safari Super Saver program. Six Flags Great Adventure Theme Park has 13 world class coasters, including the tallest and fastest coaster on Earth, Kingda Ka. The Theme Park also has four areas exclusively for children to explore and experience a magical journey. There is entertainment for all ages from action-packed shows to sensational concerts.

Six Flags Wild Safari is the largest drive-thru safari outside of Africa and features the Wild Safari Exploration Station. Six Flags Hurricane Harbor is one of Americas largest water parks.

New this year is Glow in the Park Parade. Starting Memorial Day 2008 this new nighttime parade will bring the park's streets to life with state-of-the-art floats and the sounds of cirque-type music, plus thousands of sparkling lights.

Scheduled to debut late this spring is the Dark Knight Coaster. You'll venture through hallways of mind-bending twists, turns and hallucinatory imagery ultimately leading to a distressed, vandalized train platform. Villians lurk around every corner as you speed through six 180 degree hairpin turns, climb unseen hills, plunge into pitch darkness and dip into unforeseen depths.

For more information, visit their website at [www.sixflags.com](http://www.sixflags.com). The Personnel office has Super Saver Program coupons. They can be used for Buy One Get One Free Monday thru Friday May 15<sup>th</sup> thru September 1, 2008 or any regular operating day September 6th thru October 5, 2008. They also will save you \$20.00 any regular operating day through May 11, 2008 or \$15.00 Saturdays and Sundays May 17 thru August 31, 2008.

## EOM INSIGHT

(Continued from Page 2)

**If I could have two wishes, they would be:**

For my son to still be here with me, alive and well

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** Fished in the White Marlin Open for two years, but unfortunately didn't win the million dollars.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** After graduating I moved to Smith Island, Maryland, for three years and was a commercial waterman harvesting crabs, oysters, and fish. \*\*2664\*\*

## CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

### AFLAC in your Pocket

Tax Season is over and once again I am amazed at the number of employees who have had to increase the amount of their withholding. I am further astounded by the fact that only a few of our employees participate in our Flexible Spending Account plan that saves you money and puts it into your pocket immediately.

Keep in mind that the medical and dental expenses that you can claim on the Flexible Spending Account are only allowable for itemized deductions, on your income taxes, for the amount that exceeds 7.5% of your adjusted gross amount. This is where you get the direct saving on your medically related expenses using a Flexible Spending Account. A flexible spending account for medically related expenses is a direct savings for the employee by reducing the amount of your taxable income thus reducing your taxes due.

Here is how it works. You estimate an amount of expenses that are medically related, i.e. doctor visit copays, prescription copays, dental copays, medicines (Claritin, cold medicines, bandages, ointments), and amounts due over the allowable of dental bills, etc. for the whole fiscal year. This amount is divided by the 26 biweekly payrolls in a fiscal year and deducted from your biweekly pay before taxes are calculated in equal increments for the entire fiscal year. You are reimbursed for your expenses, small or large amounts at any time, as you accumulate receipts up to the total amount allotted for the fiscal year.

Flexible spending accounts for Child Care Expenses work slightly different. The amount that you are reimbursed cannot be disbursed until you have actually accumulated the amount requested in your Flexible Spending Account. The difference is that these funds are a direct reduction in your adjusted gross amount when completing your tax forms. Both account types require receipts to be turned into Personnel with specific information included on the form.

For more information on what is reimbursable you can locate that information on the AFLAC website at [www.aflac.com/us/en/benefits/empoweryouemployees](http://www.aflac.com/us/en/benefits/empoweryouemployees) click on the FSA Handbook or contact the Personnel office at 744-2387.

## POLICY REVIEW



By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

### §2-9 Dual Compensation.

Kent County Levy Court Policy 2-9 ensures that taxpayers are not paying employees for duties performed for another entity. The policy requires that each full time unclassified or classified employee's primary occupation be their County government position.

The policy requires that any employee with another paid position, including any elected or appointed State or local government position, must deduct from accrued leave or wages any time used to perform the duties of that other position during normal working hours.

Employees with a second paid position must keep detailed records documenting time taken for non-County work during the normal working hours. This includes exempt employee, which are not normally required to keep track of partial day absences.

The policy prohibits employees from "making up" time taken during normal operating hours to perform outside paid duties. The County Comptroller is responsible for auditing such time records to insure compliance.

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

### Look for BBBS info table in June

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) will be setting up an information table in the Kent County Administrative Complex building in June.

For employees who are interested in, or want information about the programs offered by BBBS – this would be a great opportunity to speak with Julie Edwards, Case Manager – School Mentor Program. Watch for the date and time in the June issue of



Kent Connections!

Big Brothers Big Sisters. Little Moments. Big Magic.™

# BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

A benefit that the County offers to employees that most other employers do not offer is listed under Special Leaves of Absence in Chapter 68 (Personnel Policy) of the Kent County Code: "Any County employee whose place of employment is in a town wherein he/she is a resident, active volunteer fireman may, with the approval of his/her department head, be permitted to respond to fire calls during his/her regular hours of employment without loss of pay, vacation leave, sick leave or personal leave."

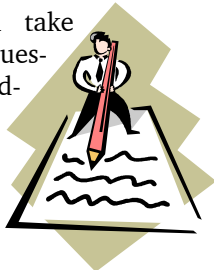


When the siren wails or your pager alerts you, please keep the following key points in mind:

- Your place of employment (also known as your main work site: Kent County Complex, WWF, Library, etc.) must be in the town in which you are a member of the volunteer fire company. For example, I would not be able to respond to alerts for Camden-Wyoming from Dover without loss of pay or leave (if I were allowed to leave).
- You must have the approval of your department head. This means talk it over before it's time to run for the car and drive to the firehouse. If you have a severe case of firefighting fever and enjoy getting up before dawn and responding to alarms that would result in an inability to report to work on time, please discuss this with your division and department managers.

Also, remember that the public doesn't mind reporting lapses in judgment by the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of volunteer firefighters within County employees. A County vehicle at a firehouse often prompts a call to the Personnel Office by the ever-watchful public, which is followed by the employee receiving a phone call from the Personnel Director. Do you really want to hear from the Personnel Director about this?

**Open Enrollment** will take place this month! If you have any questions about adding qualified dependents to your health, dental, or life insurance plans during the Open Enrollment period, please feel free to call the Personnel Office at 744-2312.



# May training session

(Continued from Page 7)

MARC ST. JEAN, AUDREY STANFORD, MELISSA STANLEY, MARTI STANSBURY, MARK STRONG, SCOTT TANNER, LESLIE VASQUEZ, SCOTT VAUTARD, BONNIE VOSHELL, JAMES WELSH, MIKE WEYANT, GEORGETTE WILLIAMS, and SUSAN WILLSON.

Employees who attended an Introduction to NaviLine session in April were KAY BROWN, DEBBIE CLINE, KAREN COOPER, LISA COOPER, JODY COULBOURNE, LOU COX, SOFIA CULVER, KIMM DIXON, DEBBIE EVERETT, RUBY FARMER, PENNY GIBBS, JUNE GLADDEN, GINA GLANDEN, SUSAN HITCHENS, SHARON IVORY, DANIELLE LAMBORN, MARTHA LEWIS, JANET LLOYD, JOYCE MELVIN, BARBARA MILLER, CHRISTINA MILLER, DEBBIE MOORE, CHRISTINA MORTON, PAT ORONA, BARBARA SCHROEDER, JESSICA STEELE, BONNIE VOSHELL, GEORGETTE WILLIAMS, SUSAN WILLSON, and CRYSTAL YERKES.

Thank you for your continued interest in employee development! \*\*1394\*\*

# Mrs. Smith has a "Bad Day"

(Continued from Page 7)

business. The "Mrs. Smiths" of the world really only need us on Bad Days. We are pretty good at dealing with Bad Days and we work hard to make Bad Days into Better Days. I think one way of assessing ourselves would be to ask: Did Mrs. Smith's Bad Day go away? \*\*5161\*\*

# Recipe of the Month

(Continued from Page 6)

5) When crust is cool, in medium bowl, with spoon, mix cream cheese, sour cream, crystallized ginger, and remaining 3 tablespoons sugar until blended. Spread cream cheese mixture on crust. Arrange strawberries, wide ends down, in concentric circles in cream cheese mixture to cover.

Recipe courtesy Good Housekeeping

# High Praise

Special thanks to JUNE GLADDEN, Assessment Office, for a Constituent Comment Card describing her as "extremely polite, professional & very helpful." He also said her "pleasant personality puts you at ease." Another example of excellent customer service!

## Enroll in optional employee life ins. in May

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

About one third of the employee population takes advantage of the County's optional/voluntary payroll deducted term life insurance program through Cigna, which is available for up to three times salary. The rates are unchanged from the current year.

In order to estimate your monthly rate—if eligible, multiply your likely FY09 annual salary by 0.5, 1, 2, or 3 times, then round up to the nearest \$1,000, then divide by 1,000 and multiply by the rate in the table.

The County provides at no cost to each full-time employee, term life insurance and accidental

death and dismemberment coverage, which is equal to one time salary rounded up to the next \$1,000. The County also provides at no cost a long term disability insurance program.

To sign up or for more information, stop by the Personnel Office in May.

### FY09 Supplemental Term Life Insurance Rates

AGE	<30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Rate	\$0.07	\$0.09	\$0.11	\$0.17	\$0.26
AGE	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
Rate	\$0.42	\$0.67	\$0.87	\$1.47	\$2.21

## Term life insurance for dependents available through Cigna

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Open Enrollment during May is the only time existing employees can add voluntary term life insurance for themselves and dependents through Cigna insurance.

The monthly premium for a spouse is the same as the employee's age category for a minimum \$10,000 and can be increased up to a maximum benefit of \$50,000 with an acceptable medical history. Coverage terminates at age 69.

Parents may also purchase term life for their children up to \$500 for newborns from 14 days to 6 months, and up to \$10,000 from 6 months to age 19 or age 25 if a full-time student. The rate for child coverage is 20 cents per thousand or \$2.00 per month. Retirees are not eligible for the dependent coverage.

For more information about eligibility for this unique voluntary insurance, contact the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

## LEVY COURT CHANGES PENSION MANAGER

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Low interest rates can impact more than personal loan costs, it can reduce revenues for large fund management firms, apparently so much that the County's current pension fund fixed income manager Weiss, Peck & Greer has opted to focus all efforts on the stock market effective June 1.

Last month Levy Court selected Amalgamated Bank's Longview Core Bond Index Fund as the new fixed income manager as recommended by the Pension Review Committee. The new fund manger will mimic the performance of the policy index, which is expected to remove most volatility in these unstable economic times.



Amalgamated joins three other fund managers responsible for investing County pension funds in large capitalized (blue chip) stocks or equities, large capitalized value equities, and international equities.

The County's pension fund as of December 31, 2007 was valued at \$24,625,737, of which about \$8 million is composed of County contributions, with about 68% invested in equities and 32% in fixed income. In calendar year 2007, the pension fund returned 6.68% compared to 6.06% for the policy index.

Kent County currently has 136 former employees receiving a pension.

The Pension Review Committee which advises Levy Court on pension matters is composed of three citizens, Chairman David Craik, Vice-Chairman Duke Strosser, and Tom Leary, and two employees, Finance Director SUSAN DURHAM, and employee representative KELLY CRUMPLEY. The County Personnel Director serves as Pension Administrator.

## **SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS**

*By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director*

**Q.** *I recently got a divorce and was wondering what I am supposed to do to remove him from my County insurance policies?*

**A.** Thanks for the question. Kent County is small, so fortunately or unfortunately we often know what is happening in the personal lives of our County employees. This is important because once a divorce is final, the spouse is no longer eligible for County health, dental or optional life insurance. If we don't know about it, there can be all kinds of issues with the insurance company and reversal of any claim payments. It would technically also constitute insurance fraud. So, it is vitally important that you inform the Personnel Office as soon as an insured spouse is no longer eligible for insurance benefits.

**Q.** *I recently retired and selected the 100% contingent annuitant option for my pension with my wife as the beneficiary, which was explained to mean that when I died she would receive my pension benefit for the rest of her life. Well, six months after retirement, my spouse has passed away. If I get remarried, will my new spouse get that benefit? Can I pick another pension beneficiary?*

**A.** We're sorry for your loss and offer our sincerest condolences. The pension ordinance makes no provision for the selection of alternative beneficiaries after the retirement. If your beneficiary passes away or you divorce, you cannot replace them and your existing pension benefit is NOT recalculated to account for the loss. While it seems unfair, it is important that all factors remain the same whenever the viability of a pension plan is actuarially determined. The age of the retiring employee and the age of the beneficiary is factored into the determination of the benefit amount using mortality tables. It is unfortunate when someone dies early, but in a pension plan that loss is offset by the occasional retiree that lives to be 100.

**Q.** *My boss is telling me that my current position is being defunded in favor of a new position and if I don't apply for and compete for the new position, I will find myself unemployed. Is that true?*

**A.** Yes, it could be. The Levy Court approved several new positions that match the needed skill requirements for specific jobs in your division. We no longer have need for the existing number of positions you

currently hold, so if enough employees do not apply for and successfully demonstrate the skills needed for the new positions, the current position could be eliminated. I say "could" because the personnel ordinance provides for the transfer of existing staff to another vacant position for which they are qualified (if one exists) whenever a position is eliminated or defunded. I encourage you to apply for one of the new positions, since you have been doing the work anyway.

**Q.** *Why does your office sponsor so many silly contests? It seems to me that the same people always win and the non-Complex offices rarely participate. So why bother?*

**A.** The same could be said about elections, but they are important to do. We sponsor employee contests for the fun of it. It is important to have fun at work and the contests are a good way to introduce co-workers to the entire County staff. I wonder how many County employees would know the name of the secretary at the Wastewater Treatment plant if she did not win a contest every now and then? Contests are sometimes popularity contests—the biggest department wins, and in some contests the smallest office wins. It is all done in the spirit of fun and friendly competition. Best of all, the prizes for the Personnel Office-sponsored contests are all compliments of yours truly, so no taxpayer funds are expended. Besides, it's always fun to win something.

**Q.** *What gives? I have noticed recently that you are only giving out one movie ticket each month on the hidden Social Security number contest in the newsletter and where was the 5th movie ticket in the Easter egg hunt?*

**A.** Employees still have two opportunities to win a free movie ticket each month by finding the last 4-digits of their social security number, and being the first to call in—but lately only one person has been calling. Which either means no one reads the newsletter or no one cares about a free movie ticket. As far as the fifth Easter egg movie ticket, it is still out there. I usually keep track of where I put the five tickets, but when you are hiding over 100 colored plastic eggs it is not surprising that you might lose track of one. I did, but will still award a movie ticket to the lucky person that finds it. Check your desk drawers.