



KENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees November 2006



Employee of the Month *Karen McTaggart*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected KAREN E. McTAGGART from the Department of Public Works as the November 2006 Employee of the Month.

Karen, a Kent County employee since July 2001, is an Environmental Technician I in the Division of Engineering responsible for administering the Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG) program, issuing FOG permits to restaurants throughout the County, conducting grease trap inspections, and educating the public on good techniques for keeping fats, oils and grease out of the wastewater stream.

Karen has excelled in the FOG elimination program, since it was approved by Levy Court in 2003. She has quickly grasped the concepts and has applied her knowledge as she inspects the local food service facilities. Karen is organized, detailed and is an excellent representative of the County's environmental program with the public. She has helped numerous food service facilities understand what is required of them and how they can meet their regulatory obligations under the FOG program.

Congratulations Karen on a job well done!

COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > Just how "well" are employees at the County?
- > Who is up for "Employee of the Year"?
- > Did enough pennies fall from heaven?

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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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 Zeiters. Or, call the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

2006 election results are in, & the winner is...

Democrats win Levy Court majority

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Uncontrolled growth was a theme hammered by Democratic candidates for Levy Court this election season and it apparently gained traction as voters turned out the Republican incumbents on November 7th.

The Levy Court majority switched to 5 to 1 Democratic with the election of Brad S. Eaby over four-term Commissioner RONALD D. SMITH (2nd District) and Harold K. Brode over two-term Commissioner DAVID R. BURRIS (6th District). Three-term Commissioner RICHARD E. ENNIS handily defeated his opponent for the at-large seat.

New Commissioner Eric L. Buckson won the Republican primary in September and was unopposed in the General Election. He will replace the retiring HAROLD J. PETERMAN (4th District).

A special election will have to be scheduled in the near future to fill the vacancy created by Commissioner DONALD A. BLAKEY (5th District) as he easily won a seat in the Delaware House of Representatives representing the 32nd District.

Three of the six row officers were up for election this year, including the Recorder of Deeds BETTY LOU MCKENNA, who easily bested her opponent. The easiest wins for the row officers were reserved for Receiver of Taxes JOYCE F. MELVIN and Sheriff JAMES A. HIGDON, who ran for a 5th and 4th term respectively without opponents.

The newly elected officials will officially take office on January 2, 2007. Levy Court will reorganize at the January meeting with the election of a President and a Vice-President, committee chairmanship appointments, and adoption of rules of procedure. Formal swearing in ceremonies typically occur during the month of December.

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: BILL CLEVENGER



Job: Dispatcher I

Date hired: October 20, 2006

Education: Some college

What I like most about my new job: Helping people and always something different happening

Greatest accomplishment: Completing eight years in the Marines

Greatest challenge: Buying a house

house

Future goals: To advance in my career and to be the best father

Person/event that most inspired me in my career: My fiancé and my mother

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Went to college and got a degree

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Spending time with my family and taking my kids to the park

Family: Fiancé Vicky and two sons, Sean and Connor

Most recent movie enjoyed: Waist Deep

Favorite TV shows: Parks, Rescue Me

Favorite sport: Drag racing

Favorite meal: Steak and shrimp on the grill

Favorite music: Rock

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

A dream I have is to: Be a great husband and father

If I won a million dollars, I would: Help my family

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Like to cook

Three words that describe me: Honorable, true, faithful **9871**

In Memoriam

LOUISE J. DABSON SHERWIN, a County retiree, passed away on October 16, 2006. Mrs. Sherwin started as Civil Defense Assistant in May 1965 and retired as the Assistant Director of Civil Defense (now known as Emergency Management) for Kent County on July 31, 1984.

EOM INSIGHT



Name: KAREN McTAGGART

Job: Environmental Technician – FOG Program

Years with the County: 5

Education: Attended Kutztown University in Pennsylvania; Smyrna High Graduate

What I like most about my job: Meeting new people and camaraderie with co-workers

What I'd most like to change: Protect the land, air, and water from further pollution. Make our communities and schools safer for our children.

Family: Husband, Jerry; son, Bradley

After work I enjoy: Family time

My favorite way to relax is: Go to the beach

Favorite TV shows: Two and a Half Men, Everybody Loves Raymond, Animal Planet, and Sex in the City

Favorite TV show as a child: Happy Days

Favorite sport: Football – Go Cowboys!

Favorite meal: Chicken Chesapeake, and any Italian dish

Favorite music: All kinds

Favorite Kent County restaurant: All 400+ of them! I like every food service facility I inspect.

Favorite Kent County events: Earth Day Festival and 4th of July

The hardest thing I've ever done: There have been many hard times, but every one of them has made me a stronger person.

I'm most proud of: My family, especially my son and my husband.

Pet peeve: Many

Motto: Right is right and wrong is wrong.

If I've learned one thing in life, it's: Take life day by day.

Who has had the most impact on my life: My son, Bradley. Being a mother is a life-changing experience that has taught me a lot about myself.

A dream I have is to: Travel to Italy

If I won a million dollars, I would: Make it ten million and I would retire.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Enjoy photography and writing

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: I cannot divulge that!

Three words that describe me: Determined, loving, creative **9382**



Commissioners Richard E. Ennis, Allan F. Angel, Harold J. Peterman, David R. Burris, Ronald D. Smith, and P. Brooks Banta join former Levy Court Commissioner William Paskey, Jr. (fourth from left) for his years of service to Kent County during a plaque ceremony October 24.

Complex plaques honor Paskey and Hemphill

By Bret Scott, Public Information Officer

Levy Court honored two former elected officials with separate yet distinct ceremonies in the month of October. On October 10, Commissioners unveiled a plaque dedicated to former Clerk of the Peace Edith M. "Edie" Hemphill. The plaque is mounted on the wall just outside the Clerk of the Peace office in the County Administrative Complex. Joining in the ceremony were Edie's son and daughter-in-law Bobby and Kim Hemphill, and longtime friend Frank Quillen.

"Edie was dedicated public servant," said Levy Court President David R. Burris. "She served Kent County with dignity and honor. As the official records keeper for Kent County she was tough on us when she had to be and made sure no detail went overlooked."

Hemphill served Kent County from January of 1979 to May 2004. In addition to keeping the official minutes of the Levy Court, Edie conducted over 8,000 marriages in her 25 years with the county.

On October 24, Levy Court honored retired Commissioner WILLIAM PASKEY, Jr. Paskey's name joins a plaque recognizing Commissioners with twenty years or more of service. In August, former Commissioner, the late John T. McKenna was recognized. The plaque is located in the atrium of the County Complex. Paskey was first elected to Levy
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Levy Court okays retiree benefits eligibility/trust

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Levy Court moved a step closer last month to achieving compliance with new financial accountability rules a year ahead of schedule with the approval of a Retiree Benefits ordinance. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board approved Rule 45 several years ago requiring all governments to account for the future costs of providing benefits to retirees.

Much like an employee pension plan, the new GASB rule requires governments to note the cost of retiree benefits on financial statements. That notation is a financial liability that could impact governmental bond ratings unless the future cost is pre-funded.

In 2001 the Levy Court anticipated eventual adoption of the new GASB rule and set aside \$5.1 million as recommended by an actuarial study to fund Other Post Employment (retiree) Benefits (OPEB). That decision was remarkable, particularly in light of the fact that most other jurisdictions in the country are now struggling to meet the new pre-funding requirements imposed by GASB.

Each year since the funds were designated, the County has continued to make annual contributions necessary to cover the cost of future benefits for new employees and healthcare cost inflation (\$370,000 for FY07). The current value of the designated post-retirement benefits fund is over \$6.65 million.

When the Levy Court first set aside the funds in 2001, they "designated" them while waiting for the GASB rule to be finalized. What Levy Court did on October 10 was formally establish by ordinance the requirements to receive post-employment benefits and formally establishing a trust for the funds previously set aside - meaning the funds can only be spent for the benefit of those persons eligible to receive post employment (retiree) benefits.

Until now, the decision to provide health benefits to 68 retirees was made on an annual basis as part of the annual budget approval process - they were not guaranteed.

The ordinance provides such benefits to
(Continued on Page 19)



ON THE MOVE . . .

Compiled by Carissa Zeiters, Personnel Technician II

New Hires

10/03/06 JOHN DUFFY, Paramedic II, Grade 11, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services

10/22/06 WILLIAM CLEVENGER, Dispatcher I, Grade 8, Public Safety/Emergency Communications

Promotions

10/16/06 RUTH ANN MILLER, Permit Technician I, Grade 7 to Permit Technician II, Grade 8, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

10/29/06 JAMES NUNES, WWF Plant Operator III, Grade 8 to WWF Plant Operator IV, Grade 9, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

Milestones

09/09/1996 FLORENCE GREENE, Library Technician, Community Services/Libraries—10 years

10/07/1991 MIKE BISHOP, Paramedic II, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services—15 years

10/07/1991 CHARLES HURD, Paramedic II, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services—15 years

10/07/1991 ROBERT MOCK, Paramedic II, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services—15 years

10/21/1991 GEORGE KUERNER, WWF Plant Operator IV, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities—15 years

10/09/2001 MARC ST. JEAN, Permits Coordinator, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement—5 years

10/15/2001 JENNIFER GRAHAM, Secretary, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services—5 years

10/29/2001 JACK SCHULTIES, Maintenance Mechanic III, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities—5 years

10/30/2001 JAMES SMITH, WWF Plant Operator III, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities—5 years

Resignation

10/27/06 PATRICK McPHAIL, Maintenance Mechanic II, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



NOVEMBER

01 Kenneth McKenzie, Public Safety/EMS

01 Kevin Sipple, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.

04 Tim Wyatt, Public Safety/EMS

05 Bill Ashley, Planning Services/I&E

07 Susan Hitchens, Finance

08 Connie Butler, Community Services/Libraries

09 Charles Wilt, Board of Assessment

12 Christina Morton, Planning Services/I&E

13 John Schulties, Planning Services/I&E

14 Marvin Millman, Public Works/WWF

16 Frederick Strauss, Community Services/Parks

16 Scott Bundek, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.

17 J.R. Short, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.

20 Bert Crowder, Public Safety/EMS

23 Jack Webb, Public Works/WWF

25 Marc St. Jean, Planning Services/I&E

26 Rochelle Bohm, Planning Services/Planning

28 David Mick, Public Safety/EMS

29 Randy Staats, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.

DECEMBER

02 Chris Austin, Public Works/WWF

04 Albert Biddle, Planning Services/Planning

07 Rob Pierce, Public Works/Engineering

12 Eugene Tucker, Public Safety/Emergency Comm.

13 Jim Pritchard, Comptroller's Office

13 Keith Schwamberger, Public Works/WWF

16 John Zistl, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.

18 Dick MacDonald, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.

18 David Abramson, Public Safety/EMS

21 Nancy Glenn, Planning Services/I&E

25 Richard Schlauch, Public Safety/EMS

26 Robert Skripko, Public Works/Engineering

29 Scott McMillon, Public Safety/EMS

29 Dirk Yoder, Public Safety/EMS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



November 3, 2006 - Employee Council 50/50 Raffle.

November 7, 2006 - Election Day. County offices closed.

November 8, 2006 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

November 10, 2006 - Veterans Day holiday. County offices closed.

November 15, 2006 - Blood Pressure Checks at Annex at 9:00 a.m., County Administrative Complex Room 215 from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., O'Brien Bldg., 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

November 15, 2006 - Employee Training Session will include "Listen Up—Hear What is Really Being Said." Sessions will be held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

November 16, 2006 - L&W Insurance Rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00-2:00 p.m. in Room 214 at the County Adminis-
(Continued on Page 18)

Office relocates shift into high gear this month

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Relocation of the Recorder of Deeds and Register of Wills offices from the Robert W. O'Brien building to the Kent County Administrative Complex will shift into high gear this month as electricians finish extending electric service and data lines and furniture begins to arrive.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the move is expected to begin on the morning of Monday, November 13 with imaging stations and temporary staff relocating from the mostly vacant Room 238 and former Summer Youth office to the Information Technology office suite, and the Assessment Office will begin moving upstairs to Room 238/Summer Youth in the afternoon and continuing on Tuesday.

On Wednesday November 15 and continuing through Friday, arriving furniture will be temporarily stored in the former Assessment Office staging area (future Wills office), while the Finance Department and Receiver of Taxes Office is reconfigured to add two more work stations.

On Monday, November 20, a second furniture shipment is scheduled to arrive and any remaining furniture arranging in the Finance and Tax areas will be completed. In addition, a prefabricated wall separating the soon to be new Wills office from Finance/Tax will be installed.

If all the furniture arrives as expected, on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 21 and 22, the Personnel Office will be relocated from Room 214 to the vacant office space next door—Room 213.

After the two-day Thanksgiving holiday, Community Services (Parks and Recreation) will be moved upstairs into the former Personnel Office and training Room (214/222) on Monday November 27 and Tuesday, November 28. The large mobile records storage unit for the Wills Office will also be set up in the former Assessment Office.

On Thursday November 30 and Friday, December 1, work in the new Wills office and the new Deeds office located in the former Parks & Recreation
(Continued on Page 18)



As promised John McDowell, Brent Mollohan, and Keith Mumford shaved their heads when Kent County employees reached the United Way fund raising goal of \$14,000.

United Way campaign shaves past \$14K goal

By John McDowell, United Way Campaign Chairman

Kent County Employees out did themselves again this year. Employees, through direct pledges and participation in United Way campaign activities, raised a total of \$15,045.66. This was a \$3,000 increase over the 2005 campaign and was more than \$1,000 over the \$14,000 goal!

The campaign was organized by a committee of CARISSA ZEITERS, JOHN WILLSON, ROBERT SAVAGE, KEITH MUMFORD, and JOHN McDOWELL. The committee planned the campaign with a NASCAR theme. They organized events to raise awareness and raise funds in addition to contribution pledges. The committee wanted the employees to enjoy the campaign in addition to making it successful. Events included: Campaign Kickoff with an actual NASCAR race car; "Pass the Joker" game; an Employee contributed recipe book; Silent Auction; and a Carwash.

As a special incentive, BRENT MOLLOHAN along with Mumford, Willson, and McDowell agreed to have "Very Close Haircuts" if the \$14,000 goal was reached. When you see these folks, you'll know why they are now "hair-less".

Employee contributed Recipe Books are be-
(Continued on Page 19)

FROM THE STACKS



By Connie Butler, Secretary

Can't Wait to Get to Heaven

By Fannie Flagg

Whether you read this book or listen to the book on compact discs, which are both available, this is a very enjoyable book.

Combining the southern warmth with unabashed emotion and side-splitting hilarity, Fannie Flagg takes readers back to Elmwood Springs, Missouri, where the most unlikely and surprising experiences of a high-spirited octogenarian inspire a town to ponder the age-old question: Why are we here?

Life is the strangest thing. One minute, Mrs. Elnor Shimfissle is up in her tree, picking figs, and the next thing she knows she is off on an adventure she never dreamed of, running into people she never in a million years expected to meet.

Meanwhile, back home, Elnor's nervous, high-strung niece Norma faints and winds up in bed with a cold rag on her head; Elnor's neighbor Verbena rushes immediately to the Bible; her truck driver friend, Luther Griggs, whom Elnor has known since he was a boy, runs his eighteen-wheeler into a ditch – and the entire town is thrown for a loop and left wondering, "What is life all about, anyway?" Except for Tot Whooten, who owns Tot's Tell It Like It Is beauty shop. Her main concern is that the end of the world might come before she can collect here social security.

As this comedy-mystery unfolds, those near and dear to Elnor each discover something wonderful, and so will you. *Can't Wait to Get to Heaven* is proof once more that Fannie Flagg "was put on this earth to write" (Southern Living), spinning tales as sweet and refreshing as iced tea on a summer day, with a little extra kick thrown in. **1741**

High Praise



Congratulations to MARY EISENBREY and AUDREY STANFORD, Property Specialists in the Assessment office for Constituent Comment cards from happy customers praising them for their helpfulness on the telephone and in the office. *Great Work!!*

Recipe of the Month



By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

CRANBERRY WALNUT CRUMB CAKES

Recipe Summary: Difficulty: easy; Prep Time: 20 minutes; Cook Time: 25 minutes; Yield: 24 individual cakes; User Rating: 4-star

Cake:

8 tablespoons unsalted butter (1 stick), at room temperature, plus more for the pans

1 cup granulated sugar

3 eggs

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup sour cream

½ cup dried cranberries, cherries, or raisins

Topping:

¾ cup light brown sugar, packed

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces

1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 4-ounce cup muffin tins with ribbed paper liners. In a mixer fitted with a paddle attachment (or using a hand mixer) cream the butter until smooth. While the mixer is running, slowly add the sugar. Add the eggs one at a time, waiting for each to be incorporated before adding the next, and mix until light and fluffy.

Sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Working in batches, add the flour mixture to the butter-sugar mixture, alternating with dollops of sour cream. Mix in the cranberries. Pour or spoon the batter into the prepared pans, filling them no more than ¾ full.

To make the topping, combine the brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Add the butter pieces and, using your fingertips, pinch the ingredients together into a sandy, crumbly mixture. Add the walnuts and mix. Sprinkle the mixture over the cakes.

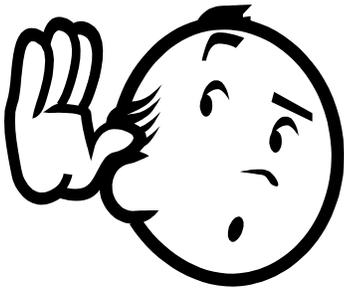
Bake until risen and browned, about 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool ten minutes in the pan.

Recipe courtesy 2006 Television Food Network; Episode #: SD1D14

Are you hearing what is said? Learn to listen

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Are you frequently frustrated when misunderstandings drain your energy and diminish your productivity? Do you want to “hear” between the lines . . . and get more out of your conversations?



Would you like to sidestep time-wasting misunderstandings by doing a better job listening to your boss, spouse or kids?

Then, November’s 60-minute “Listen Up—Hear what is really being said” video training program will teach you powerful techniques to make yourself a more effective listener. At home or at work, the tools you’ll learn in this video will become your key to unlimited potential and greater enthusiasm and confidence.

The training sessions will be held on **Wednesday, November 15**, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex. Please note the afternoon session will *(Continued on page 12)*

Flu shots reset for Nov. 17

Due to a scheduling mix-up, County employee flu shots had to be rescheduled for Nov. 17. Unfortunately, the 100 available vaccinations are all spoken for and the County cannot get additional serum.



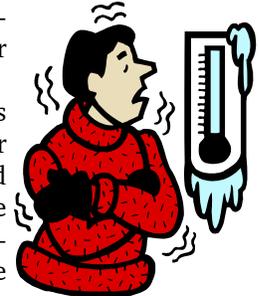
The free shots will be administered to those persons previously signed up on **Friday, November 17, 2006** from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Administrative Complex building in Room 221. Persons unable or failing to show up for this shot, will lose it to those persons on stand by.

Cooler weather can lead to heating system CO hazards

By Dave Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

Aaahhhh!!!! The chill of winter is hinting in the air. Isn’t the cooler weather refreshing? You say you can’t wait for it to get really cold?

The main focus of this article is the annual reminder about home heating safety and the perils of carbon monoxide poisoning. The goal of such repetitive publication is to create good home safety habits (if they are not already in place). If you have heard this enough before, just skip to the end of this article for the new news.



Items to consider about home heating in winter:

- Service heating units: professional cleaning of fire boxes, burners, etc. change air filters; professionally clean chimneys;
- Inspect, service wood/pellet burning units: stove-pipe seams, door gaskets, etc.;
- Replace batteries in smoke/CO detectors and test routinely;
- Practice home evacuation plan (don’t forget to plan to take something warm to wear like a blanket) and have a common meeting point; and
- Have working fire extinguishers with current inspection tags.

This time of year paramedics become more aware of the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning. A by-product of combustion, carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, non-irritating, gas that is slightly lighter than air (air = 1; CO = 0.97). This means that a person can be exposed to CO without knowing it and that upstairs bedrooms may be at higher risk than first floor rooms. When you smell an odor of smoke you are detecting other components in the gases and vapors. CO can accumulate gradually over a period of hours and even days if home ventilation is slight.

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EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

Whew! October was a busy month for the Employee Council and we're not slowing down just yet! A great big "Thank You" to everyone who participated in the Chili Cook Off and congratulations to the top three favorite recipes: LORETTA WOOTTEN, DEBBIE PALMER and AUDREY STANFORD. We didn't expect such a big response, but I'm sure that the tasters weren't complaining over the wide range of choices. I know it was hard for me to pick just three favorites amongst all the great recipes that were submitted.

With October behind us, its time to look towards the upcoming holiday season which of course means the annual Holiday Dinner & Dance and the Covered-Dish Luncheon. As has previously been reported, the Dinner & Dance will be held on Saturday, December 16 from 7:00 – 11:00 p.m. at The Outlook in the Duncan Center located on Loockerman Street in downtown Dover. Tickets for the event will be out soon, so be sure to watch your email for more information.

The Luncheon has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 20 from noon to 2:00 p.m. in room 220 of the main administration building. As usual, there is sure to be a wide assortment of tempting dishes and desserts to enjoy while engaging in some nice social time with your fellow employees. In addition to the great food, there will be door prizes and a 50/50 raffle.

The Employee Council will be sponsoring a "Fan Friday" on November 17. For a \$1 donation to the Council, employees can wear a jersey, sweatshirt, etc. in support of their favorite sport/sports team.

KAREN McTAGGART of Public Works was selected as the Employee of the Month for November. In addition to a day off with pay, Karen received a \$100 stipend and a reserved parking space in the administrative complex lot (which she graciously donated to the Council, who in turn awarded it to the winner of the Chili Cook Off).

If you know of a co-worker who deserves to be recognized for going "above and beyond" in the performance of their daily job duties, then nominate them for Employee of the Month. Nomination forms
(Continued from Page 18)

Tech Talk



By Mark Strong, Network Services Manager

Microsoft® Vista, Just Around the Corner?

If you believe Microsoft this time, they're long anticipated replacement for Windows XP is about to be released. It is scheduled to go to the large PC manufacturers (Dell, HP, Gateway, IBM) by Q4 2006 in time for the holiday season, but many have their doubts. Most of these manufactures are expected to sell "Vista Ready!" PCs with Windows XP installed instead. Vista is also scheduled for global retail release in Q1 2007.

Vista (originally codenamed "Longhorn") began development in 2001 before the release of Windows XP. It was originally due to be shipped in Q4 2003. The release date has slipped numerous times since then. Personally I'm in the "I'll believe it when I see it" camp. My greatest fear is that Microsoft will ship an incomplete product and "patch it later". We all know they've never done that before.....

To quote an article from Forbes Magazine Microsoft Vista: Not 'People Ready' "Microsoft can't afford to screw up like this. There are free alternatives to everything Microsoft sells, like the Linux operating system and the Open Office application suite. Rivals like **Novell**, **Red Hat**, **Sun Microsystems**, and, yes, **IBM** are pushing those programs big time".
– Daniel Lyons

Several people have asked me what's my advice if you're looking at a computer as a holiday present? My advice, get the "Vista Ready!" model with Windows XP installed. Let somebody else do the beta testing. **4857**

Discount Movie Tickets

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



The discount tickets cost \$5.50 each and can be used at any scheduled time, but cannot be used during the first 14 days of any Sony® movie, but all other movie studios allows ticket use at any time.

FY2008 budget development underway

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Fiscal year 2008 may not start for another eight months, but the budget development process started last month with the October 20 submission deadline for annual budget requests by the various departments.

The annual process, which actually starts in early August with the dissemination of budget documents, requires departments to estimate costs and submit proposed personnel actions, and capital projects for review by the County Administrator—who in turn prepares a recommended or draft budget for the Levy Court Commissioners to use as a starting point when budget hearings begin in March. In November and December, department managers meet with the County Administrator to explain and justify desired budget increases.

This year the County Administrator anticipates another tight budget with several unknowns impacting the new fiscal year which begins July 1, 2007. Primary among these unknowns is the financial impact of growth in emergency services needs, the implication of roller coaster fuel costs, and the potential slowing of revenue growth due to the depressed housing market.

Another item with potential impact on the budget is the biennial valuation of the County's pension and retiree benefits plans, which may dictate higher contributions next year, as well as the always unpredictable cost for employee medical insurance coverage.

"The upcoming budget year will likely be focused on energy conservation efforts and mitigating slower revenue growth. Kent County has a good history of accurately predicting revenues and expenses, thanks to our people in Finance and the efforts of our managers to control costs," explained County Administrator ROBERT S. McLEOD.



Annual summaries show high value of County benefits

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Employees now know exactly what their benefits cost the County government during Fiscal Year 2007 thanks to Benefit Summaries distributed to all full-time employees on November 3.

The summaries are prepared and distributed by the Personnel Office in order to make employees aware that benefits add up to a significant cost, oftentimes totaling more than one-half of the employee's annual salary.

The Benefit Summary specifically details the cost of 12 paid holidays, annual vacation leave, the value of sick leave, the County's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes (7.65%), life insurance, long-term disability insurance, medical insurance, dental insurance, Blood Bank membership, longevity pay, a retiree benefits contribution and a pension benefit estimate, which assumes the employee vests with 5 years of service.

A value was not estimated for the following benefits, but the County bears a cost to provide them: compassionate leave, unemployment insurance, service recognition awards, tuition assistance, training costs, deferred compensation, personal supplemental insurance plans, Family & Medical Leave Act protection, deferred compensation (457) benefits, travel accident insurance, and the Section 125 cafeteria plan, which permits the deduction of medical expenses from gross pay before state and federal taxes are calculated.

During Fiscal Year 2007, a total of \$5,335,060 was budgeted for employee benefits. Many times employees forget that they are compensated more than just the gross amount indicated on their biweekly direct deposit statement. For instance, a County employee earning \$25,000 per year with 5 years of service would typically receive an annual benefit value of \$17,243.12.

For more information about County provided benefits, contact the Personnel Office at 744-2310.



BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

If you're looking for a new Primary Care Physician or in need of a specialist, Bayhealth Medical Center's website has a listing of providers taking patients under Blue Cross Blue Shield. Simply go to www.bayhealth.org, scroll down and click on "Need a Doctor?" Select your hospital, fill in the required slots, and submit the information. Currently, there are 15 names on the Family Practice list and another 15 names on the Internal Medicine list.

If you are covered by more than one health plan, please make sure your providers have the primary and secondary carriers (and the third carrier, if you actually have more than two carriers) listed in the proper order. However, some providers will not bill the third carrier, but will balance-bill the patient. If you find yourself in this situation, please call your third carrier and ask how they would like to have you submit the balance bill, and what additional information they will need regarding the original claim and billed amount.

PLEASE do not file your medical bills in your trash can until you are absolutely sure the unpaid amount is not your responsibility and the insurance carrier will reprocess for payment. The same goes for the statements received from any insurance carrier regarding payment on a claim – please hold them until the provider acknowledges that the claim has been paid to their satisfaction and you won't be balance-billed. All it takes is one file folder to hold your documents until they are eligible for filing in the trash. One lady brought her papers to me – filed in a large potato chip can. Okay, it's a bona fide filing system that works for her. She knows where her "file" is at all times (it doesn't get lost in a pile of papers or shoved in drawer) and she knows where she put all health insurance statements and bills from the providers.

Last but not least, please fully complete and sign your enrollment or change form before forwarding it to the Personnel Office. We've been receiving forms with missing information, including employee signatures.

If you have any questions regarding County benefits, please feel free to contact the Personnel Office. **7804**

* * *

"If everything seems under control, you're just not going fast enough."

Mario Andretti

CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

Changes to Direct Deposit

Over the next few months County employees will start making withdrawals from their Christmas Club Savings accounts. It is also at that time that many start thinking, "I just did not save enough."

So begins the process of increasing/changing the amount of the Direct Deposit into a Christmas Club Account. After increasing/changing the amount with your banking institution, your second stop should be in the Personnel/Payroll office.

In order to change your Direct Deposit you must submit a Direct Deposit form with your signature. When making changes to Direct Deposit information keep in mind that the only information we have directly at hand is what is currently on the payroll system.

If you only want to change the amount of your direct deposit, mark the top of the form "Change". The amount should be for the **TOTAL** you want the deposit to be, not the amount of the change.

If you are interested in adding a new account please include the information for that account and any accounts that you wish to leave in place. Keep in mind that one account must always be designated to receive the net amount after all other exact dollar figure deposits have been made. This account should be marked 100% to indicate that all remaining funds get deposited into this account.

Please do not rely on your banking institution to send us a notice of change. We must have your signature on file to make changes to your Direct Deposit. You can access the form under CountyInfo/Forms on the V-drive.

As always, please call me if you have any payroll questions at 744-2387.

High Praise

High Five to ROBERT WATTS, Dispatcher II in the Division of Emergency Communications, for a job well done according to the Chief of Carlisle Fire Co. in Milford, who praised Robbie for his outstanding efforts to handle multiple dispatches during a recent storm. *Great!*

Help a needy family this holiday with change jars

By Carissa Zeiters, Personnel Technician II

Pocket change is not falling very fast into the numerous "Pennies From Heaven" jars situated in various County offices for the annual Adopt-A-Family project. Jar levels are low, so it is important for employees to go through junk drawers, look under car seats, and empty piggy banks for coins and dollar bills.



The County has a needy family to support for the upcoming holiday season! According to Adopt-A-Family the husband of the family was attacked in July of 2006 and the beating resulted in a serious brain injury which required surgery. He is unable to return to work at this time and does not know if he will ever be able to return to work. His wife is currently receiving workman's compensation for her own work-related injury, but it is not enough to cover the bills and transportation costs to Wilmington for her husband's treatments. The family has lost their home and are struggling to make ends meet. They have two sons ages 10 and 14. This family needs help to celebrate the season as most of us do.

All money raised will be used to purchase gift cards. The amount of money expected to be raised per child is \$125. We would also like to add additional gift cards for the family such as gasoline, food, haircuts, pharmacy, etc.

All jars will be collected on December 4 and the gift card will be dropped off at the Williams State Service Center on Wednesday, December 6.

Remember, the Division/Row Office that raises the most money per capita will WIN 3 MEDIUM PIZZAS.

If you fill your jar please contact Personnel at 744-2310 to turn in your current amounts.

Last year we were able to raise \$1,100, so I know we can match that this year. Besides, 3 pizzas based on per capita collections is a great prize for giving up some loose change.

* * *

"We didn't lose the game, we just ran out of time."

Coach Vince Lombardi

Accident reporting: please follow step-by-step instructions

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

The Personnel Office has noticed that, despite our repeated attempts, there may be some confusion by employees regarding the proper reporting of work-related injuries, exposures, and illnesses.

The employer's name and address is to be reported to all medical providers as: **KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT, 555 BAY ROAD, DOVER, DE 19901**. The employer's name and address is not to be reported as your department or division. It is important not to use an address other than 555 Bay Road, Dover, DE 19901.



The worker's compensation insurance plan name is **KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT**, not your department or division name.

All incidents must be reported to the Personnel Office the day they occur. If it is a weekend or holiday, please send an e-mail to "Personnel" to ensure that someone in the Personnel Office receives the message, especially if I am out of the office or on vacation or sick leave.

If you do not have e-mail, call the Personnel Office and leave a voice message. Our worker's compensation carrier is firm about prompt and proper reporting. Additionally, the State of Delaware expects prompt and proper reporting to the Office of Worker's Compensation.

All incidents are to be reported on the County's incident reporting form, located on the "V" drive. Please do not use your departmental or a State of Delaware reporting form to report incidents to the Personnel Office. For consistency, all County employees are to use the County's reporting form.

The verification of the work-relatedness of an incident by HealthWorks, Walk-In Medical Care, any hospital, or any physician's office is to be done by Personnel Office staff. Letters have been sent to the HealthWorks sites in Dover, Milford, and Middletown, and both Emergency Departments for Bayhealth Medical Center, requesting that the employee

(Continued on Page 12)

Cooler weather & CO

(Continued from Page 7)

Signs and symptoms of CO poisoning can range from a feeling of drowsiness and mild confusion to headache, nausea, fatigue, unresponsiveness, and possibly death. As you can see, early CO poisoning can mimic other problems. One key to a poisoning is the presence of multiple occupants experiencing similar effects, however, children and the elderly can present with more severe symptoms than healthy adults and this can present earlier in the at-risk populations.

Treatment of CO poisoning can range from simply moving the victim to fresh air and supporting breathing and ventilation to aggressively protecting the airway and transporting the victim to a facility with a hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) delivery system.

The new item for our division for this home heating system is a device that can detect the level of CO poisoning (carboxyhemoglobin) through a finger probe. This adjunct was acquired through Homeland Security funds at a cost of \$4,500.00. The cost has limited this acquisition to only one unit. Should CO poisonings begin to occur at unusually high numbers, this unit can be put out to the field to assist in treatment and transport decisions. **4248**

Wellness Screening rescheduled

Due to a scheduling snafu, the annual wellness screening originally set for October 27 has been changed to November 17 starting at 9:00 a.m. for those employees previously making an appointment. The free wellness screening is provided to Kent County employees in hopes of identifying health risks and mitigating future health insurance increases.

The Wellness Screening will consist of the following procedures:

Cardiovascular screening is done by a simple finger stick for total cholesterol, high density lipoprotein (HDL) and a ratio between the two. Nurse educators will explain the results and give each participant education as well as positive lifestyle changes.

Glucose will be checked by the same finger stick as the cholesterol test. Participants will receive results and information from a Certified Diabetic Educator.

These tests are non-fasting screenings and take approximately 20 minutes per person.

Are you hearing what is said?

(Continued from Page 7)

start at 3:00 p.m., instead of the usual 3:30 p.m. start time.

To sign up for the sessions, 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 for a session and wish to attend, or discover that you will be able to attend on the day of the training session, please let me know.

In October, County employees who received credit for attending a conflict-resolution training session were: MARY EISENBREY, JUNE GLADDEN, KATHY GOODEN, CYNTHIA JOHNSON, EVELYN JOPP, DIANE LOCKERMAN, GAIL MAAS, ELLEN MITCHELL, SHEILA ROSS, AUDREY STANFORD, LESLIE VASQUEZ, WILLIAM VINCENT, JAMES WELSH, and CARISSA ZEITERS.

Thank you for your continued interest in voluntary training!

Accident reporting steps

(Continued from Page 11)

be treated if the incident occurs when the Personnel Office is closed. The employee must sign a self-pay policy to be treated at that time, but won't have to pay at that time. Signing their policy is to cover the provider in case they are informed the incident was not work-related or in the event the worker's compensation carrier denies the claim.

If there are any questions regarding incident reporting or medical treatment, please feel free to contact me. **9334**

Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

The display case on the main floor of the Kent County Administrative Complex features a unique collection of political campaign buttons and badges amassed over the years by Recorder of Deeds BETTY LOU MCKENNA.

On the second floor, the campaign season continues with a display of Sussex County Return Day memorabilia collected by Personnel Director ALLAN KUJALA, who also serves as Treasurer of the one-of-a-kind-in-the-nation event.

Got an interesting hobby or like to collect limited edition baubles? Then show off your talent for amassing things—it may interest others as well. Contact the Personnel Office for more information. Share your obsession!

Newton & NASCAR legend unite to help U.S. bobsledders

Kent County Environmental Program Manager JIM NEWTON and Geoffrey Bodine, voted one of NASCAR's top drivers during its first fifty years, are working together to help the US Olympic Bobsled team. Both are former residents of the Elmira, NY area.

Newton planned to run the 25th Wineglass Marathon from Bath, NY to Corning, NY on October 1, 2006 to raise funds for Geoffrey Bodine's Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project. (Unfortunately, his children became ill so he was unable to run.) The money raised is to be used to assist the US Olympic Bobsled team in providing them the best available equipment to ensure that the US is competitive in the next Winter Olympics.

Newton has been running marathons for the past thirty years. He has recently run several NYC Marathons and raised over \$7,000 to help fight pediatric cancer as a part of Fred's Team.

"I have always run to help worthy causes," Mr. Newton said, "and this year, I thought it would be great to run the Wineglass Marathon and help Geoff Bodine's bobsled efforts. I have admired his desire to excel in NASCAR and now to help the US Olympic Bobsled Team excel on the world arena."

When asked to support Newton's efforts, Geoff Bodine said: "Sounds like a great deal. I wish I could run too."

The mission statement of the Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project, Inc. is:

"To sponsor and promote design, technology, engineering and manufacturing of products made in the USA through the construction of bobsleds to be used in international competition. To provide a forum of public education through the leverage of sponsorship and promotion to increase awareness of bobsledding both nationally and internationally."

Bodine had a vision of providing American athletes with the very best "Made In The USA" equipment to compete in the international arena and win. Following this vision and working closely with Geoffrey over the years has created a passion within all of us to make this program work. With the financial support of some great companies and contributions from people like you we are able to provide the funding for the design, testing and manufacturing of the Bo-Dyn Bobsleds, simply the best in the world!

Since Jim missed the marathon on October 1

he went onto the web and found the Steamtown Marathon in Scranton, PA on Sunday October 8. The marathon is billed as one of the fastest marathon courses in the country. It has an elevation decline of nearly 900 feet.

It started in Forest City, PA and ends in Scranton, PA. There were over 2,000 who started the race. Jim started near the back and finished there too. He finished in 6:12:03. It was not his fastest marathon, but was quicker than last year's in NYC. He finished in 1,671st place. At times, he was running with no one visible in front of him and no one behind him. He only knew when to turn by the orange cones in the road.

He ran it trying to help Geoff Bodine raise funds for the US Olympic Bobsled Team. He does not know how successful he was since all the funds were sent directly to the Bodyn Bobsled Project. It was advertised locally in the Milford Beacon, and on the Geoff Bodine Fan Club site. Anyone who wants to contribute can go to Geoff's website at www.geoffbodinefanclub.com and send a check noting that they were contributing based on Jim's marathon effort.

Donations can be mailed to Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project, Inc., P.O. Box 4337, Waterbury, CT 06704-0337, made out to "The Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project," with a notation in the subject line that it was part of



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. No one from the wastewater treatment facility came forward to claim their movie ticket in October.

We make it easy for employees to pry a few bucks from the Personnel Director's wallet in the form of a free movie ticket. All you have to do is read your Kent Connections!



STRESS CAN CHANGE HOLIDAYS FROM FESTIVE TO BLUE

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

People often feel “blue” during the holidays. They rush around shopping, decorating, and cooking; are inviting people to their homes and are being invited to others’.



But are they having fun? Although the holidays are supposed to be a time full of joy, good cheer and optimistic hopes for a new year, many people experience seasonal “blues.”

The holiday season is a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past “failures” and anxiety about an uncertain future. It’s also the time of the year when the weather is cold, and snow or ice-filled streets make everything an effort. The lack of sunlight seems to affect everyone’s mood.

The “*holiday blues*” can be caused by many factors: increased stress and fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization and the inability to be with one’s family and friends. The increased demands of shopping, parties, family obligations, and family reunions and houseguests also contribute to these feelings of tension. Even people who do not become depressed can develop other stress responses during the holidays such as headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating and difficulty sleeping.

Although many people become depressed during the holiday season, even more respond to the excessive stress and anxiety once the holidays have passed. This post-holiday letdown after January 1st can be the result of emotional disappointments experienced during the preceding months as well as the physical reactions caused by excess fatigue and stress.

Below are several ways to identify potential sources of holiday depression that can help individuals cope with seasonal “*blues*”:

- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable by not trying to make the holiday “the best ever.” Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the most important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not spend too much time preparing for just one day (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Eve).
- Remember that the holiday season does not automatically banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely;

there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.

- Let go of the past! Don’t be disappointed if your holidays are not like they used to be. Life brings changes. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way.
- Avoid controversial subjects at family gatherings. If you know other family members’ “hot buttons,” make a decision not to engage in those discussions.
- Don’t measure your gift giving against any other family members’ gifts.
- You set yourself up for sadness if everything has to be just like the “*good old days*.” Look toward the future.
- Do something for someone else. It is an old remedy, but it can help. Try volunteering some time to help others.
- Enjoy holiday activities that are free such as driving around to look at Christmas decorations. Go window-shopping without buying anything.
- Don’t drink too much. Excessive drinking will only make you more depressed.
- Don’t be afraid to try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a way you have not done before.
- Spend time with people who are supportive and care about you. Make new friends if you are alone during special times. Contact someone you have lost touch with.
- Find time for yourself! Don’t spend all your time providing activities for your family and friends.
- Don’t whine.

Kent County Levy Court offers a confidential employee assistance program (EAP) to eligible employees. The EAP can be contacted at (800) 367-3273. Phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The confidential services (three counseling sessions) are available at no cost to you. If you should need more than three sessions, please coordinate with the mental health provider for your health coverage. For employees with Blue Cross Blue Shield, the mental health/substance provider can be contacted at (302) 421-3500 or (800) 572-2872. Hopefully, they can negotiate with your mental health professional so you will only have to pay the BCBS co-pay instead of the full amount for each additional counseling session.

If you would like further information about the County’s employee assistance program, please contact the Personnel Office at 744-2312.

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: JOHN DUFFY



Job: Paramedic II

Date hired: October 3, 2006

Education: Two years of college

What I like most about my

new job: The challenge of the job

Greatest accomplishment:

Being a Paramedic/Firefighter for 29 years

Greatest challenge or obstacle: To finish college

Future goals: Retirement

Person/event that most inspired me in my career: After 23 years in EMS my wife continues to support me

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Nothing

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Camping or working in the garden

Family: Tammy (spouse); kids Megan and Joseph

Most recent movie enjoyed: Rarely go to movies

Favorite TV show: Rarely watch TV, the kids always have the TV

Favorite sports: NASCAR and football

Favorite meal: Whatever my wife cooks is fine with me.

Favorite music: Anything that I understand the words to

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

A dream I have is to: Win the lottery and retire

If I won a million dollars, I would: Retire

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Like to get my hands dirty

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Work for the military

Three words that describe me: Down to earth

High Praise



Kudos to BILL ASHLEY, Plans Reviewer, for passing the Permit Technician and to MARC St. JEAN, Permits Coordinator, passing the Residential Energy/Plans Examiner exams given by the International Code Council. Both work in the Division of Inspections & Enforcement. *Way to go!*

Wintery weather could close offices

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It has been a rather mild autumn this year, which may mean another mild winter. Or is it the calm before the winter storms of the century?

No one knows for sure, so now may be the best time to review the County's inclement weather policy.

Kent County Levy Court Policy 4-2 embodies the procedures for addressing treacherous weather conditions.

If County offices are closed or have a delayed opening, it will be announced on the following radio stations WKEN-1600, WDOV-1410, WDAD-92.9, WRTX-94.7, WAFL-97.7, or WXPZ-101.3 as well as television stations WBOC and WMDT.

The message to be broadcast will likely be one of the following (listen for "Delaware", since Kent County, Maryland is just across the State line):

- Kent County Delaware employees—Liberal leave is in effect. Essential employees report as scheduled
- Kent County Delaware employees—Delayed arrival (one or two) hours. Liberal leave in effect. Essential employees report as scheduled.
- Kent County Delaware employees—Offices closed for the day. Essential employees report as scheduled.

"Liberal leave" means an employee should report to work as normal, but is NOT required to report to work. The employee must promptly call his/her supervisor to advise if they will not be in. The time off will be deducted from accrued vacation.

"Essential employees" are those persons required to deal with the emergency. These include paramedics, dispatchers, and some wastewater workers. Employees should ask their supervisor now if they are "essential", so you know if you have to come to work when it snows.

For additional information about special holidays as a result of inclement weather, please contact your department head or the Personnel Office at 744-2310.



Quit smoking Nov. 16 for chance to win a turkey

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

The American Cancer Society (ACS) holds the Great American Smokeout® every year on the third Thursday in November. The Great American Smokeout® will take place on November 16, 2006. The purpose of the event is to set aside a day to help smokers quit smoking or quit using tobacco products, for at least one day, with the hope that they will quit completely.

Ready to quit? Smokers often say, "Don't tell me *why* to quit, tell me *how*." There is no one right way to quit, but there are some key elements in quitting smoking successfully.

Make the decision to quit, pick a quit date, and mark it on your calendar. Tell friends and family about your Quit Day. Get rid of all the cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and place of work. Stock up on oral substitutes – sugarless gum, carrot sticks, and/or hard candy. Decide on a plan – will you use nicotine replacement therapy or medicines: Will you attend a class? If so, sign up now. Practice saying, "No, thank you, I don't smoke." Set up a support system. This could be a group class, Nicotine Anonymous, or a friend or family member who has successfully quit and is willing to help you. Think back to your past attempts to quit. Try to analyze what worked and what did not work for you.

On your Quit Day, do not smoke – this means not even ONE puff! Keep active – try walking, exercising, or doing other activities or hobbies. Drink lots of water and juices. Begin using nicotine replacement if that is your choice. Attend stop smoking class or start following a self-help plan. Avoid situations where the urge to smoke is strong. Reduce or avoid alcohol. Think about changing your routine – use a different route to work, drink tea instead of coffee, eat breakfast in a different place or eat different foods.

Deal with withdrawal. Withdrawal from nicotine has two parts – the physical and the psychological. While the physical symptoms can be annoying, most people find that the bigger challenge of quitting is the mental part. To help you keep your commitment to quitting, avoid people and places where you are tempted to smoke (later on you will be able to handle these with more confidence). Alter your habits – switch to juices or water instead of alcohol or coffee, take a different route to work, take a brisk walk instead of a coffee break. Use oral substitutes such as sugarless gum or hard candy, raw vegetables such as carrot sticks, or sunflower seeds. Do activities to decrease your stress. Exercise or do hob-

bies that keep your hands busy – needlework, wood-working, etc. – that can help distract you from the urge to use tobacco. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book. Deep breathing – when you were smoking, you breathed deeply as you inhaled the smoke. When the urge strikes now, breathe deeply and picture your



lungs filling with fresh, clean air. Remind yourself of your reasons for quitting and the benefits you'll gain as an ex-smoker. What you're doing is not easy, so you deserve a reward. Put the money you would have spent on tobacco in a jar every day and then buy yourself a weekly treat. Buy a magazine, go out to eat, call a friend long-distance. Or save the money for a major purchase. You can also reward yourself in ways that don't cost money: visit a park or the library, start a new hobby, or take a yoga class.

Stay quit (maintain success). Mark Twain once said, "Quitting smoking is easy. I've done it a thousand times." Why is quitting and staying quit hard for so many people? The answer is nicotine. If you have tried to quit before, you know that staying quit is the final, most important, stage of the process. Think ahead to those times when you may be tempted to smoke, and plan on how you will use alternatives and activities to cope. More dangerous, perhaps, are the unexpected strong desires to smoke that occur sometimes months (or even years) after you've quit. To get through these without relapse, try the following:

- ✦ Review your reasons for quitting and think of all the benefits to your health, your finances, and your family.
- ✦ Remind yourself that there is no such thing as just one cigarette – or even one puff.
- ✦ Ride out the desire. It will go away, but do not fool yourself into thinking you can have just one.

The information printed in this article is from the American Cancer Society website, which is loaded with information about smoking.

From a local man who is quitting with the help of the Delaware Quitline, here are some reasons to quit smoking: Short or extended running periods during sports aren't as demanding; having to go outside to smoke and missing part of a televised game in
(Continued on Page 18)

Take precautions as winter weather begins

By J. Allen Metheny, Emergency Management Div. Manager

Because winter is now approaching us, I want to provide some safety tips for your winter safety. Please discuss these tips with your family and friends. We often do not think of winter weather safety until it is too late. So hopefully, you will consider the following ideas.



When CAUGHT in a Winter Storm:

AT HOME OR INSIDE A BUILDING—

- Stay inside.

When using ALTERNATIVE HEAT from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc.:

- Use fire safeguards.
- Properly ventilate.

If you have no heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Cover windows at night.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat.
- Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill.

OUTSIDE IN THE WEATHER—

Find shelter:

- Try to stay dry
- Cover all exposed parts of the body.

No shelter:

- Prepare a lean-to, wind-break, or snow cave for protection from the wind.
- Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
- Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat.
- Do not eat snow: It will lower your body temperature. Melt it first.

INSIDE A CAR OR TRUCK—

- Stay in your car or truck. Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid

carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.
- Make yourself visible to rescuers:
- Turn on the dome light at night when running engine.
- Tie a colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna or door.
- Raise the hood indicating trouble after snow stops falling.
- Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

The Division of Emergency Management will notify you through Groupwise of pending winter conditions that require added precautions.

Operation North Pole lands at Admin. Complex

By Robert Probst, Recreation Program Supervisor III

Christmas is just around the corner and once again the Kent County Administrative Complex will be transformed into Santa's workshop for "Operation North Pole" on Monday, December 11.



"Operation North Pole" gives children the opportunity to talk with Santa on the telephone. Volunteers act out the part of Santa Claus and telephone operators.

Last year, thanks to our volunteers, we called over 600 children. This year, we expect to call just as many children, if not more. We need volunteer Santas and telephone operators on Monday, December 11 from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. (If you have participated before, you may show up at 5:15 p.m.). Participants will meet in the front atrium of the Administrative Complex. Please call me at 744-2493 if you would like to participate in our event.

Spread the word to friends, relatives and co-workers who may also be interested in spreading a little Christmas cheer. Since this will be held during the dinner hour, food will be provided.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



(Continued from Page 4)

trative Complex.

November 17, 2006 - Wellness Screening provided by Bayhealth Medical Center. By appointment only (9 a.m. - 1 p.m.) in room 220 at the Administrative Complex.

November 17, 2006 - Flu Shots available to employees previously signed up from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (who have signed up) in Room 221 at the Administrative Complex.

November 17, 2006 - Employee Council "FAN FRIDAY". \$1 donation employees can wear a jersey, sweatshirt, etc. in support of their favorite sport/sports team. Also, 50/50 Raffle will be held.

November 23-24, 2006 - Thanksgiving Day holiday. County offices closed.

November 30, 2006 - ICMA-RC Representative Rosemary Knapp will be available from 10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. in Room 221 to speak with employees about setting up a deferred compensation account or making changes to existing investment strategies. Contact the Personnel Office to make an appointment. **4855**

Office relocates get moving

(Continued from Page 5)

office near the County Administrative Complex entrance is expected to be completed.

Finally, during the week of December 4-8, the Recorder of Deeds and Register of Wills offices will be fully relocated to the Administrative Complex.

Employees involved in the move will be directed by supervisors to box up items located in overhead bins, book cases, and storage closets. Employees should tag their desk chair as well as their rolling file cabinets, if any, with their name, so each can be relocated to the new office space.

Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled and provide assistance where needed, although professional furniture installers/movers will handle all furniture set up and movement.

The State has slated the current home of the two row offices for demolition by the end of the year, and plans to construct a new court system structure on the site of the County's former administrative office building. **7857**

Quit smoking Nov. 16

(Continued from Page 14)

a restaurant; being outside in "unseasonable" weather; and other health hazards, such as driving down the road and the cherry of your cigarette falls in your seat. While you're driving, you're looking for it. It's also a health hazard for other drivers on the road, while you're looking down to find the rest of your cigarette. Ever think about the money you spend on lighters and cigarettes? If you smoke one pack a day at \$3 each, it's \$1,095 (lighters not included). What could you do with \$1,100? 73 CD's at \$15 each. Tickets for you and 18 of your friends to a Toby Keith concert (\$57 each). Big screen TV at \$999.91 (Rear Projection HDTV) with \$100.01 left to spend. Vacation for two to Orlando -- \$508 for airfare/hotel combo with \$587 left for car rental, meals, etc. Three computers at \$329 each (still money left over). A family of four could see a movie at the theater 39 times (\$28 per visit, refreshments not included). 366 games of bowling at \$3 each. 547 gallons of gas at \$2.01 per gallon. Ipod and 808 songs to download; Ipod for \$300 and music downloads at 99¢ each. Eleven tickets to see the NASCAR Nextel Cup Race in Dover at \$95 each.

So **NOW** if you're interested in quitting, call the Delaware Quitline (1-866-409-1858) to talk to a counselor. The program is for Delaware residents 18 years of age or older.

In addition, any County employee who smokes and gives the Personnel office either a half-pack or whole pack of their cigarettes will receive a raffle ticket for a "cold turkey." The drawing will be held on the day of the Great American Smokeout®. Please contact the Personnel Office if you're willing to be a "quitter"! **8583**

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS

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can be found in the mailroom and also in the "forms" folder on the V: drive. All Employee of the Month selectees are also eligible for consideration for the Employee of the Year award which will be announced at the Holiday Dinner & Dance.

Your Employee Council members are: President JASON MILLER, Vice-President KATHY SKINNER, Secretary MICHELE LAPINSKI, Treasurer CYNDI LAIRD, and members MARY EISENBREY, KATHY PHINNEY, and MELISSA STANLEY.

County practices Mayhem at the State Fair

By J. Allen Metheny, Emergency Management Div. Manager

It is a typical Thursday night at the Delaware State Fair near Harrington and there is a large crowd, including the Governor and many high-ranking government officials, since it is Governor's Day after all. A concert is being performed in front of the Wilmington Trust Grandstand – a country music act. It is 92 degrees and muggy with only a slight breeze from the west. There are approximately 30,000 people on the Fair Grounds tonight.

All of a sudden, numerous people begin showing up at the First Aid Station complaining of breathing difficulties and watery eyes. They report a terrible smell on the Grounds. As these people are being evaluated, cared for, and questioned about their activities, a loud explosion is heard in the grandstands and people become panicked.

This was the general scenario for a full-scale "Mayhem at the Delaware State Fair" exercise that was held at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, October 28th. This exercise was the third part of a program that has been on going at the Fair for the past 12 months. These exercises were conducted by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency as part of our planning processes for the Department of Homeland Security's program to be better prepared to protect America and care for our citizens in case of a terrorist attack. For this exercise, there were approximately 250 "victims" with injuries ranging from very minor to death.

The emphasis for this exercise was to test emergency plans that the various responding agencies have in place to handle such as event. The overarching objectives of the exercise included the ability to form a unified command with the agencies participating, to demonstrate a working knowledge of the National Incident Management System, to identify key issues needing to be addressed with a response to the Delaware State Fair, and to demonstrate the ability of the responding agencies to transfer command and control from one agency to another.

Participating emergency responders to the exercise included, but were not limited to, the following agencies: volunteer fire and ambulance companies, Delaware State Police and Harrington Police,



Kent County Paramedics, Kent County DECON team, Kent County 911 Communications with the Mobile Command Vehicle, Kent County Emergency Management, Kent County Public Information Officer, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Bayhealth Medical Center, DelDOT, Delaware Division of Public Health, the FBI and ATF, and of course the Delaware State Fair.

As with any exercise, the event pointed out some areas for improvement. All of the participants, the controllers, and the evaluators will be providing an "After Action Report" to us in a few weeks for our comments. The final report will provide recommendations for improvement. In addition, we will be working with the Delaware State Fair to improve their Emergency Operations Plan in case of a real emergency during Fair week or other events that are constantly going on down there.

Plaques honor Paskey/Hemphill

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Court in 1968 and served as the 6th District Commissioner until 1998.

Paskey served fourteen years as Levy Court President. Among the highlights of Paskey's career is the opening of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the development of the first Comprehensive Plan, the hiring of the first county librarian, and the opening of Kent County's first park.

Retiree benefits trust approved

(Continued from Page 3)

those County employees retiring from active service or meeting the rule of 70 – a combination of age years of service. The funds will be invested much like the pension fund and proceeds will be used to pay benefits. Any eligibility disputes would be resolved by the County's Personnel Administration Board.

For more information contact the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

United Way achieves \$14K goal

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being published and should soon be available for distribution to those who signed up for one. Additional books may be available, if you didn't get your name on the list. See Carissa Zeiters.

United Way to go Kent County Employees!!

SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Q. I noticed that right after last month's newsletter, employees that used to always park to the left of the Administrative Complex entrance right next to the building, now are parking to the right as the sign at the entrance clearly directs?

A. Isn't the power of the "media" amazing? It is the right thing to do after all.

Q. The area around the front door of the Administrative Complex is covered with bird droppings. It looks terrible. Why doesn't someone scrub it off?

A. Unfortunately something about the new County Complex has attracted some sort of foul fowl. No one has reported actually seeing the offending birds, save the telltale evidence in the morning. Some have speculated pigeons, but none have been observed during daylight hours. Typically, they would be. Someone else suggested buzzards, since they usually fly all day and roost at night. Another suggested seagulls. Do they even roost? Usually, one will see them just standing on the beach or in a fast food parking lot. According to Facilities Management Division Manager Dick MacDonald, his staff cleans up the droppings regularly, but perhaps not before you enter the building. If you happen to observe the type of bird or birds making the mess, please let Dick know.

Q. If my probationary period is extended and it crosses over into the new calendar year, does that mean I don't get a pro-rated amount of personal leave?

A. The Personnel ordinance (Chapter 68 of the Kent County Code) includes language which states that personal leave cannot be requested until the employee's probationary period has been completed. Based on that rather plain language, I have to say you miss the opportunity to take personal leave during that calendar year, but the good news is that you will be eligible for a full 3-days of personal leave once you complete probation during the seceding calendar year.

Q. I was wondering if you could answer this question. If I work with a pregnant employee, is it possible for me to start feeling the effects of morning sickness or similar symptoms?

A. I hear it's been known to happen.

Q. Why is the Employee Entrance to the Administrative Complex now locked all the time?

A. For security purposes. You might remember a question on this page a few months ago when an employee observed a "stranger" skulking around the back door and the employee bathrooms. Eventually the County's full security system will be up and running, which will require use of the security access code to enter the building after hours.

Q. If I attend a training seminar, do I get paid for the one-hour lunch break?

A. You gotta eat lunch whether your are working at your desk or somewhere else. So, unless you are actually receiving training while eating lunch, then your lunch period is unpaid.

Q. If I attend a training seminar, does the cost of my lunch get reimbursed by the County?

A. Yes, if the seminar is held outside of Kent County. You are permitted under Policy 6.1 to spend up to \$17.50 for lunch, but you must submit a receipt for the reimbursement.

Q. What can be done to get smoking employees to do so away from the doors? I do not want to have to walk through a cloud of cigarette smoke to get inside the building.

A. It's a good question. Perhaps, additional ashtrays and seating could be placed in another area away from the employee entrance for the smokers to use.

Q. Recently, my father-in-law passed away and when I asked to take compassionate leave to attend the funeral it was denied, due to the fact that after 40 years of marriage—my wife and I recently divorced. I was as close to that man as my own father. How is that fair?

A. We're sorry for your loss, but the personnel ordinance is very clear on the loss of in-law status once a couple divorces or the spouse dies. Your supervisor was correct to deny use of compassionate leave, but you could take personal leave or vacation.