

# Kent Connections



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



## Employee of the Month *Tami Edwards*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected TAMI EDWARDS from the Department of Administration as the February 2008 Employee of the Month.

Tami, a Computer Support Technician II in the Information Technology Office, has worked with Kent County for twelve years, but was not eligible for Employee of the Month until the Information Technology office became a part of the County staff on October 1, 2007. She was previously employed by the County's contracted I.T. services provider SCT then AGS.

Tami can remember working in the basement of the Robert W. O'Brien building running "Green Screen Dumb Terminals", and when the County had no e-mail system and only Department Heads had PC's that operated DOS with Windows 3.1.

Over the years, Tami has played an instrumental role in numerous IT projects and upgrades. She is always a welcome sight to County employees having "computer issues" in all the County facilities, but in addition to those routine duties her supervisor reports Tami does extra work researching new technologies and purchasing supplies.

Congratulations Tami on a job well done!

### COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > *Who is driving defensively for the County?*
- > *How does the employee appraisal process work?*
- > *What did the County pension fund earn in 2007?*

### IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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## Employee Council election cancelled with 3 candidates

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

With the dozen candidates running for U.S. President, perhaps potential Employee Council candidates decided to wait until next time. Whatever the reason, no election will be necessary this year to fill the three expiring terms on the 7-member Employee Council.

Nominations closed January 26 and only three employees agreed to serve on the panel. The Committee bylaws permit the cancelling of the election process annually held in February if there are no contested seats.

The Employee Council nominees elected without opposition include: KIM DIXON, Tax Clerk II in the Tax office; YVONNE MESSINA, Personnel Technician I in the Department of Administration/Personnel Office; and BRENT MOLLOHAN, Recreation Program Supervisor II in the Department of Community Services/Division of Recreation.

The new Council members serve a two-year term and formally take office in March, when they will elect officers.

The new members will join MICHELE LAPINSKI, Account Specialist II in the Department of Community Services; PATRICIA ORONA, Deed Clerk II in the Recorder of Deeds office; LORI SHORT, Permit Technician I in the Division of Inspections & Enforcement; and JAYNE ZERANSKI, Administrative Secretary in the Department of Public Works, each of whom have one year remaining on their terms.

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Kim Dixon



Yvonne Messina



Brent Mollohan

## 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. SHERRY BARKER of Engineering and ALLEN KEARN of Wastewater Facilities, found their numbers and claimed their movie tickets in January. It's easy to win, just read your newsletter!



## Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

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

Got an interesting hobby or like to collect limited edition baubles? How about a collection of trinkets from far-away lands? Then show off your talent for amassing things—it may interest others as well. \*\*5263\*\*



## HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL

**ADAPTABILITY/FLEXIBILITY**—a. Easily juggle a large number of assignments and activities; b. Encourage and instruct others about the benefits of change; c. Welcome change and look for the new opportunities it provides; d. Actively seek input in addition to recognized sources & facilitate implementation of solutions.  
**ACCOUNTABILITY**—a. Set an example by accepting personal responsibility regardless of circumstances and demand accountability from others; have courage to stand by convictions; **G.A.U.G.E.**

## Go Green Kent Co!

Make your own cleaning supplies

Using simple ingredients such as baking soda, soap, and vinegar, you can make cheap, easy, and no-toxic cleaning products that really work! Save money, time, and your indoor air quality.



## EOM INSIGHT



**Name:** Tami Edwards

**Job:** Computer Support Technician II

**Years with the County:** 12 years total; 3 months as a County employee

**Education:** A.A.S.; working on B.A.

**What I like most about my job:** Every day is different. The constant change of technology keeps my job refreshed.

**Family:** Jeff (husband); Julie, 24, and Leona, 8, (daughters); Michael, 20, and Roque, 5 (sons)

**After work I enjoy:** Playing with the kids, riding my bike, roller skating and playing poker.

**Favorite new movie:** Cars

**Favorite old movie:** Pretty Woman

**Favorite TV show:** Body of Evidence

**Favorite music:** Country (Rascal Flatts)

**Favorite Kent County restaurant:** Applebee's

**Favorite Kent County event:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Mother (dead), Bill Blades (dead), and my sister Earlene (living). This would give me a chance to catch Bill up to date with County news and new jokes as well as tattle on my sister one last time.

**I'm most proud of:** My children, they do what is right not what is easy.

**Pet peeve:** People who dwell in the past, it's called the past for a reason, let it go!

**Motto:** "It's all fun and games till someone loses an eye."

**If I've learned one thing in life, it's:** Your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.

**Who has had the most impact on my life:** My husband, he has always believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself.

**A dream I have is to:** Go on a Disney cruise with my family.

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

**If I won a million dollars, I would:** Buy enough land close to me so that I could give each of my children a lot to build their homes on when they are ready.

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## “Miss America” pageant has County connection

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

What would you do if a cousin just happened to be “Miss Delaware” and was off to Vegas to participate in the “Miss America” pageant?



Mary  
Eisenbrey

You would go! And that is exactly what Property Specialist II MARY EISENBREY in the Assessment Office did last month.

Turns out that “Miss Delaware” Brittany Dempsey is Eisenbrey’s third cousin, (whose maiden name is Dempsey). She says the whole family was thrilled when Brittany was crowned Miss Delaware in Rehoboth Beach last summer.

It is traditional to hold a sendoff party for the State’s Miss America contestant, and according to Eisenbrey about 140 people, mostly friends and family, crowded into the Duncan Center in Dover a few days before her departure for Las Vegas, Nevada on January 17 to offer their best wishes and preview her evening gown, bathing suit and her talent outfit. She also performed a robust jazz tap routine for the well wishers.

Then two days before the pageant, a number of family members including Eisenbrey flew to Las Vegas, almost all for the very first time, to attend the big event. Eisenbrey said she can understand why  
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## Valentine guess contest

Cupid has dropped off a basket of Valentine’s Day treats for one sweet Kent County employee. If you have an eye for chocolate, come to the Personnel office and try to guess the correct number of goodies in the hot pink container.

The employee who has the most accurate guess will receive the basket of Hugs, Kisses and more. Submissions can be made from February 1- February 13. The winner will be announced on Thursday, February 14, 2008.



## Defensive driving courses ready, set, go

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Annual defensive driving classes have been scheduled to maintain compliance with Kent County Levy Court Policy 4-6, which requires County employees regularly driving a County-owned vehicle to achieve and maintain driving certification.



All employees are eligible to participate in the County-sponsored defensive driving training up to the maximum number permitted in the class. However, priority will be given to those employees who regularly operate County-owned vehicles.

The costs associated with the required defensive driving course and re-certification will be paid by the County for those employees who regularly operate a County-owned vehicle. Other interested employees or retirees must pay the entire cost of the course. Family members may also take the course.

The Advanced class will include two simultaneous sessions on **Tuesday, February 12** from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Levy Court chamber (A-L) or Room 220 (M-Z) of the Administrative Complex.

The Basic class will be **Friday, February 22** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Room 220.

If you plan to attend either of these classes, please arrive early and bring your drivers license, as they ask that everyone be in their seats and ready to go at 8:45 a.m. Anyone arriving later will not be admitted.

Payroll coordinators have been sent a list of employees required to take either Basic or Advanced Defensive Driving this year. If interested in attending a course, please enroll with the Personnel Office on or before February 6, 2008. The fee for those employees not required to take these courses is \$25 for Basic and \$20 for Advanced, payable at the door.

The class instructor will not answer any questions concerning point’s credits or insurance discounts. Information concerning points credits should be directed to DMV at 302-744-2509.

Please contact Personnel 744-2310 if you have questions.



## ON THE MOVE . . .

Compiled by Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

### New Hires

01/14/08 CHRIS AMMON, Paramedic I, Grade 10, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services

01/14/08 RICHARD MOSLEY, Custodian, Grade 3, Public Works/Facilities Management

01/22/08 AMY MINNER, Permit Technician I, Grade 7, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

### Retirement

01/31/08, FLORENCE GREENE, Library Technician, Grade 7, Community Services/Libraries

### Milestones

01/05/1993 MARGARET TALLEY, Comptroller—15 years

01/12/1998 MARIBEL FABRES, Secretary, Public Works/Wastewater Facilities—10 years

01/07/2003 RICHARD ENNIS, Levy Court Commissioner, at-Large—5 years (also served 1989-97, Levy Court Commissioner, 1st District)

01/07/2003 BETTY LOU MCKENNA, Recorder of Deeds—5 years as Recorder

01/07/2003 GEORGETTE WILLIAMS, Deputy Recorder of Deeds—5 years as Deputy Recorder

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



February 5, 2008 - Perfect Attendance certificates and gifts will be presented to those employee unable to attend the Levy Court meeting on January 26 at 4:00 p.m. in the Kent County Administrative Complex, Rotunda.

February 5, 2008 - Presidential Primary day in Delaware for registered Democrats and Republicans. Exercise your right to help choose the next President.

February 12, 2008 - Advanced Defensive Driving Course, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in the Kent County Administrative Complex, Levy Court chamber (A-L) or Room 202 (M-Z).

February 13, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

February 13, 2008 - L&W Insurance rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00-2:00 p.m., Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 214.

February 13, 2008 - Blood Pressure Checks at Library at 9:00 a.m., Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 257 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

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## COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



### FEBRUARY

- 04 Stewart B. Hayes, Public Works/WWF
- 04 Amy Minner, Planning Services/Inspections & Enf.
- 05 Toby Sitler, Public Safety/EMS
- 06 Bonnie Voshell, Planning Services/Planning
- 06 Margaret Talley, Comptroller
- 08 Diane Lockerman, Assessment Office
- 09 Albert Porreca, Public Works/WWF
- 09 Bret Scott, Administration
- 11 Lorri Tanaka, Administration
- 11 Brian Costa, Planning Services/GIS
- 11 Mark Kennedy, Administration/Info. Technology
- 12 Susan Durham, Finance Director
- 12 Jesse Wallace, Public Works/WWF
- 14 Yvonne Messina, Administration/Personnel
- 15 Jerri Thompson, Public Safety/EMS
- 20 Richard Krueger, Community Services/Libraries
- 20 Deborah Palmer, Assessment Office
- 20 William Clevenger, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 21 Alan Tyson, Planning Services/Planning
- 24 Brian Lewis, Public Works/Facilities Mgmt.
- 25 Robert Rebeck, Administration/Info. Technology
- 26 John Willson, Public Safety/EMS
- 26 Kristina Rinkenberg, Comm. Services/Libraries
- 28 Brandon Olenik, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.

### MARCH

- 01 Wendy Haywood, Community Services
- 06 David Melvin, Public Works/WWF
- 07 I. Nyle Callaway, Public Works/WWF
- 09 Frances Gunning, Community Services/Libraries
- 11 Douglas Haddad, Public Safety/EMS
- 15 Shervina Miller, Public Safety/EMS
- 15 James Mollohan, Community Services/Recreation
- 19 Joel K. Crumpley, Planning Services/Planning
- 20 Bruce Chillias, Public Safety/EMS
- 21 Michael Petit de Mange, County Administrator
- 23 Dennis Clark, Community Services/Parks
- 23 Ellen Mitchell, Assessment Office
- 24 Wilson Branham, Public Works/ WWF
- 25 Georgette Williams, Deputy Recorder of Deeds
- 25 Dawnmarie Shane, Public Safety/EMS
- 26 Hilary Welliver, Community Services/Libraries
- 29 Jason Courtney, Community Services/Parks
- 30 Allen Kearn, Public Works/WWF
- 30 William Hall, Public Works/WWF

\* \* \*

*We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.*

**Bertha Calloway**

## "Go Red" by Wearing Red on February 14 for Women's Heart Health

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

National "Go Red for Women" day is officially Friday, February 1, 2008, but Kent County Levy Court employees will have the opportunity to support the fight against heart disease in women on February 14.

All County employees are encouraged to wear red and make a \$5.00 donation to the American Heart Association. They will also receive a payroll stuffer put out by the House of Representatives Women's Healthy Heart Task Force and the American Heart Association

Most people are not aware of the fact that more women die from heart disease than die from breast cancer! In fact heart disease kills more women than ANY type of cancer.

Could you be at risk? Go online to [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org), and take the Go Red Heart CheckUp. It's a quick and easy way to assess your individual risk factors. The website also offers customized advice for maximizing heart health. One suggestion is to know your numbers and work with your doctor to get them within healthy ranges.

A good way to monitor your blood pressure is to take advantage of the free blood pressure checks offered to Kent County employees every month. Also take advantage of the free wellness screening offered every year.

### High Praise

High Five to Public Works Director HANS MEDLARZ for an e-mail from a happy trash customer thanking him for quickly resolving a high volume of recyclables issue. He wrote, "It is indeed nice to have such supportive, understanding, and customer-focused people in our County government." *Sweeeeet!*

Kudos to JOSH BUSHEY, Inspections & Enforcement Division, for a Constituent Comment Card praising him for being "so kind to go out of his way and help me." *Simply great customer service!!!*

## Telephone courtesy vital for County communication

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Ring, Ring. "Good Morning, Kent County Personnel Office, Allan speaking" illustrates the proper and professional way to answer telephone calls from the general public and internal customers – your coworkers.

The proper method for answering the telephone is not written in a multi-page policy, it just takes simple professionalism to do it correctly. Every County employee has an obligation to portray the County in the best possible light.

Often the first contact a citizen has with their County government is via the telephone. Likewise, it is every employee's responsibility to treat co-workers with respect and common courtesy.

Whenever a telephone call is made to any place of business, the person calling expects to be reminded where they have called and then they want to know with whom they are speaking. It is also important to greet the caller pleasantly with a "good morning" or "good afternoon".

Internal calls can be tricky – you may think a friendly co-worker is calling to chat, but they may actually be transferring a citizen or the County Administrator to your desk. Play it safe – answer the phone in the same respectful manner every time.

Proper telephone etiquette demands that professionals answer the telephone within two rings, if possible. You should not rely on support staff to always answer the telephone, if all the incoming call lines are lit up, then you should give your co-worker a hand. Always be pleasant and positive, a grumbling customer service representative is always disconcerting and leaves the caller with a negative vibe.

The folks calling the County pay our salaries, so we should show our appreciation and demonstrate that we earn every cent.

Department Heads have been asked to monitor telephone calls to insure that County staff members are greeting all callers in a considerate manner, so make sure you do it correctly.



## FROM THE STACKS



By Connie Butler, Library Services Secretary

### Wizard's Daughter

By Catherine Coulter

Read by Anne Flosnik

This book on CD is 10 discs long with 12 hours of listening pleasure.

When Ryder Sherbrooke finds a child nearly beaten to death in an alley in Eastbourne, he takes her home to Brandon House. She doesn't speak for six months. Her first words, oddly enough, are a haunting song:

*I dream of beauty and sightless night  
I dream of strength and fevered might  
I dream I'm not alone again*

*But I know of his death and her grievous sin.*

Ah, and just what does this strange song mean that was seemingly imprinted on the child's brain?

She names herself Rosalind de la Fontaine since she cannot remember who she is. In her first season in London in 1935, under the aegis of the Sherbrookes, she meets Nicholas Vail, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Mountjoy, newly arrived from Macau. It is instant fascination on both their parts, but for different reasons.

With Grayson Sherbrooke, they are led to an ancient copy of a mysterious book written by a sixteenth-century wizard. The book is written in a baffling code that neither Grayson nor Nicholas can read.

But Rosalind can, easily.

Strange things start happening. Both Nicholas and Rosalind know it has to do with the old book and, perhaps, even her past, particularly the song she first sang as a child. The urgency builds as they realize Rosalind is the key to a centuries-old mystery.

## 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.



## Recipe of the Month

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

### BLT SALAD

Prep time: 25 minutes

1 cup cubed whole-wheat country bread  
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil  
4 each medium tomatoes  
3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons minced chives  
2 teaspoons distilled white vinegar  
¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
Freshly ground pepper  
5 cups chopped hearts of romaine lettuce  
3 slices center-cut bacon

Preheat oven to 350°. Toss bread with oil and spread on a baking sheet. Bake, turning once, until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes.

Cut one tomato in half. Working over a large bowl, shred both halves using the large holes of a box grater. Discard the skin. Add mayonnaise, chives (or scallion greens), vinegar, garlic powder, and pepper; whisk to continue.

Chop the remaining three tomatoes. Add the tomatoes, romaine and croutons to the bowl with the dressing; toss to coat. Sprinkle with bacon.

Four servings.

Nutritional information – 1 serving: Calories 151; Carbohydrates 20g; Cholesterol 5 mg; Dietary Fiber 4g; Fat 6g; (Monounsaturated Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 1g); Potassium 555 mg; Sodium 306 mg \*\*9382\*\*

Recipe courtesy EatingWell.com

## Employee Council election cancelled

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Retiring members include MARY EISENBREY, Property Specialist II in the Assessment Office, CYNDI LAIRD, Project Analyst in the Department of Public Works, and KATHY PHINNEY, Senior Secretary in the Department of Administration,

In addition to selecting the Employee of the Month, organizing and hosting the annual Employee Picnic, the Employee Holiday Dinner/Dance, and the Holiday Luncheon, the Employee Council regularly provides input to the County Administrator and Personnel Director on employee issues.

## Learn rest of "Rules of Money" at February staff development

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

The final chapters of **The Rules of Money** will be presented at the February training sessions. Items covered in the first two employee development sessions included creating wealth; making it grow; making it last; rules that *work*; techniques you can begin using *right away*; rules for thinking wealthy; practical rules for planning, saving, spending, and investing; and rules for uncovering hidden opportunities, handling risk, negotiating, and minimizing taxes.



The third employee development sessions on **The Rules of Money** based on the book by Richard Templar will be held Thursday, **February 21, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.** in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

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

County employees who attended a January session for the second part of **The Rules of Money** were JUNE GLADDEN, KATHY GOODEN, EVELYN JOPP, GALE MAAS, YVONNE MESSINA, SHEILA ROSS, and ALAN TYSON.

In January's *Kent Connections*, I inadvertently omitted JUNE GLADDEN'S name from the list of attendees at a December session.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to MARY KAROL (Accounting Supervisor) and her husband Matt on the birth of a son, Maxwell Scott Karol, on Wednesday, January 30, 2008. Maxwell weighed in at 6 lbs. 3 oz. and was 20 inches long. He joins brother Michael at home.

## Carbon Monoxide Mass Casualty Incident was real

By David Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

Picture it....

New Year's Eve....

You're an ice skating enthusiast...

You're planning to ring in the new year on the ice.....

Suddenly everyone in the skating rink is whisked away to another building on site and everyone is evaluated for carbon monoxide exposure.

Folks, I apologize for writing so much about carbon monoxide lately, but I'm not making this up!

This scenario played out this past New Year's Eve and it was the new carbon monoxide detectors on the Paramedic's equipment that alerted the crew to the imminent danger. The initial call was for a skater who had taken a fall and hit their head. The patient was now feeling a bit dizzy and nauseated. The call seemed straight forward enough with the 9-1-1 call from the rink resulting in both the ambulance and the paramedics being sent. The responders arrived nearly simultaneously and quickly made patient contact.

Within moments of entering the rink the Paramedic's CO detector alerted with readings in excess of the 35 parts per million threshold. This exposure level is set by national standards and is used as the trigger to take immediate action to avoid further exposure. While there is little danger from a very short term exposure at this level, the effects of CO are cumulative and therefore, a longer exposure to even lower amounts can be dangerous.

The responders took the appropriate immediate actions and while informing the staff of the problem they moved the occupants to a safe area away from the hazard. The Paramedic Supervisor was alerted and responded with another new piece of technology available to the Paramedics. This new device measures the concentration of CO in the patient's blood (carboxyhemoglobin) through the use of a simple finger probe. Nearly a hundred individuals



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## EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

The nominations are in and as there were only three, there will not be a need to hold elections in February. KIM DIXON, YVONNE MESSINA, and BRENT MOLLOHAN will begin their terms with the March Employee Council meeting. Welcome aboard!

Who says Valentine's Day has to be just for lovers? Why not make it a day to let a co-worker know what a great person they are, or as a day to say thanks for being a friend by purchasing a Valentine's Day candy gram from the Employee Council for just \$1. Grams include a Valentine's Day card (which you can personalize) and a sweet treat, which will be hand-delivered to recipients on Valentine's Day (February 14).

Grams are on sale now until February 13 (4:00 p.m.) and may be purchased from MICHELE LAPINSKI in the Parks and Recreation office (room 222) in the main admin building (while supplies last). It's a great (and inexpensive) way to brighten someone's day!

Don't forget the bi-weekly 50/50 raffles. The next chances to win will be February 8 and February 22. Tickets are just \$1 each or 6 for \$5.00. A reminder email will go out a few days before. Good luck!

The Employee Council selected TAMI EDWARDS of the Information Technology Office as the Employee of the Month for February. In addition to a day off with pay, Tami will also receive a \$100 stipend. Congratulations!

If you know of a co-worker who has excelled and/or gone above and beyond in the performance of their 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 re-submitted.

Your current Employee Council: President KATHY PHINNEY, Vice-President MARY EISENBREY, Treasurer CYNDI LAIRD, Secretary MICHELE LAPINSKI, members PAT ORONA, LORI SHORT, and JAYNE ZERANSKI. \*\*0137\*\* \*\*2407\*\*

## Tech Talk



### Web Browser Performance Tips for Home & Work

By Mark Kennedy, Media Systems Coordinator

As the affordability and availability of computer technology grows more people will be connecting to the internet to communicate, work and do business. Web browsers, along with a modem/network connection, are essential components to your information highway travels.

Anyone who has used the web for any length of time can attest to the gradual declines in the speed at which their computer loads pages and files. One of the causes of this type of delay is due to poor browser performance. Following are some tips to help enhance the performance of the various web browsers in use today.

#### 1. Empty browser caches which are directories that the browser uses to retain copies of previously visited web pages.

*(When these caches become very large, they can consume considerable space on a Hard Disk Drive and in some cases slow down computer operation, including the display of web pages.)*

##### To clear your cache:

- A. On the Internet Explorer 6 'Tools' menu, click 'Internet Options'. The Internet Options box should open to the 'General' tab.
- B. On the 'General' tab, in the 'Temporary Internet Files' section, click the 'Delete Files' button. This will delete all the files that are currently stored in your cache.
- C. Click 'OK', and then click 'OK' again.

#### 2. Use a fast web browser. There are large differences in the speeds at which browsers render web pages. The fastest is said to be Opera, followed closely by Firefox. (\*Please be sure to check with the Information Technology Office before adding non-standard software to work place computers.)

*(The newest versions of these browsers are generally the fastest. Reasons for their high speeds include improvements in coding and in how previously visited pages are stored in the browser cache. Opera and Firefox can be downloaded from the Internet at no cost and are available for use with most major operating systems.)*

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*Success isn't permanent, and failure isn't fatal.*

**Professional Football Coach Mike Ditka**

## Heart Health: The Impact of Inflammatory Foods

By Sophie Dear, Personnel Technician II  
from the website <http://health.msn.com>

Science is finding close connections among food, inflammation and heart disease.



Think you're in the know on which health habits can help you prevent heart disease? Something as simple as regularly flossing your teeth could make a big difference in reducing heart disease risk. Since flossing keeps

plaque-forming bacteria from invading gum tissue, it helps prevent the body's immune system from launching into defense mode – a process known as inflammation. Inflammation is now understood to be both a warning sign and a trigger for a number of medical conditions including heart disease.

Today, inflammation is so widely linked to heart disease that many physicians routinely order tests for a key marker of inflammation, C-reactive protein (CRP), as cheerfully as they do cholesterol tests.

It seems counterintuitive, but inflammation begins with the body's way of defending itself against harm. We've all experienced it as part of the normal healing process after a scrape or cut. Waves of immune cells rush to the injury, combating hostile pathogens and at times causing heat, redness and swelling. The new thinking is that serious health problems begin when inflammation overstays its welcome, staying in a chronic, low-grade state in which some immune cells remain activated even though they're not needed.

We used to think heart disease resulted from deposits of fatty plaques in our arteries, like the buildup of rust in a water pipe. We now know that heart attacks rarely happen simply due to this buildup. Far from being mere "pipes," arteries are active participants in the progress of heart disease, attracting and harboring cells that release inflammatory substances. The result is a fatty

plaque that forms within the artery walls and is a target for even more inflammatory damage.

Anything you can do to reduce your level of inflammation can go a long way toward reducing your risk for heart disease. Your doctor may advise a daily dose of aspirin, the original anti-inflammatory drug. Since body fat is a source of inflammation, losing extra pounds can help – as can increasing your fitness level.

Diet can help. Studies show that individual foods and nutrients can either stoke or subdue the inflammatory process. The foods that inflame aren't new villains: they are saturated fats and trans-fatty acids, along with high-glycemic-index carbohydrates like refined starches and sweets, which the body quickly converts to glucose.

It's old news that saturated fats and trans fats increase LDL ("bad" cholesterol) in the blood, but we now know that too much LDL can start a flow of inflammatory events. When it amasses in artery walls excessively, LDL undergoes chemical changes, including oxidation; the body interprets these changes as "danger" and responds by drawing inflammatory compounds into arteries. This process eventually results in both the buildup of plaque and chronic inflammation.

The anti-inflammatory prescription begins with avoiding anything that increases LDL: Limit intake of full-fat animal product (read labels to avoid common trans-fat sources like commercial cakes, cookies, crackers, pies, breads). Focus on getting more omega-3 fats, which the body converts to substances that decrease inflammation. Since elevated blood sugar can fuel some of the chemical changes that make LDL more dangerous, it makes sense to

limit your intake of refined grains and other high-glycemic-index carbohydrates (white bread, potatoes).

Instead, try to get more "inflammation soothers": foods that inhibit LDL and help prevent reactions that spark inflammation. The list includes foods high in healthy mono-unsaturated and omega-3 fats (like extra-virgin olive oil and canola oil, fatty fish, **(Continued on Page 10)**

### *6 Ways to Help Your Heart*

- ♥ *Eat a more plant-based diet rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts.*
- ♥ *Eat fish (preferably fatty types like salmon and tuna) at least twice a week.*
- ♥ *Consume high-fat animal foods in moderation, choosing lean meat and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.*
- ♥ *Choose whole grains and other lower-glycemic-index carbohydrates like sweet potatoes and legumes.*
- ♥ *Use canola and olive oils as your primary fats.*
- ♥ *Enjoy alcohol in moderation (one glass a day for women, two glasses a day for men).*

## CAT BOX

By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator



### AFLAC Forms

The claim forms for the Flexible Spending Account offered by the County through AFLAC are now easier to retrieve.

Go out to <http://www.aflac.com> which will take you to the main page of the AFLAC website. Click on word "Policyholders", then on the Policyholders page click on "Get Claim Form". On this page click on the "State of Delaware" (if the map does not appear, click on the nonflash version and select Delaware.) Scroll down to the Reimbursement forms and select "Flex One". This will bring up an Adobe version of our reimbursement forms.

You can then type all the information needed right into this form. This form can be used for Dependent Care expenses and eligible Medical Spending expenses. You cannot save the entries, however you can save the form itself for reuse.

The initial steps do take a few minutes, but the ease of use and the 24/7 availability of the form on whatever computer you are using makes it worth it. This form is also saved out on the County's computer network on the V-drive under CountyInfo/Forms/fsarequestforreimbursementform.pdf.

You will need Adobe reader to access the form from either of these methods.

If you have any questions please give me a call at 744-2387.

## POLICY REVIEW



By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

### §2-16 Staff development & training.

Kent County Levy Court Policy 2-16 provides for the review and approval of courses, seminars, classes, workshops, or conferences utilized for staff development and training purposes.

County staff members are encouraged by the policy to participate in training activities which enhance their knowledge and improve performance to better serve the citizens of Kent County.

The procedure for participating in a specific staff development/training activity requires requests to be submitted in advance to the department head for review and consideration for approval. Such approval can be granted if participation will improve the employee's knowledge or ability to perform his or her duties and if adequate funds have been budgeted for the proposed training activity.

At the conclusion of said training the employee is required to submit a report to the approving authority outlining the personal/professional knowledge gained through attendance.

The policy also permits a department head or the County Administrator to mandate specified training for any or all staff members. *For more information consult the Kent County Levy Court Policy Manual.*

## Heart Health: The Impact of Inflammatory Foods

(Continued from Page 9)

nuts and seeds – particularly omega-3 rich walnuts and flaxseed), and anti-oxidant-rich fruits and vegetables. (A few surprising "extras" like red wine, cocoa and turmeric have shown promising anti-inflammatory activity in some studies.) Whole grains and legumes are also key, any phytosterols, cholesterol-lowering plant compounds that are turning up in some brands of low-fat yogurt, orange juice, butter-like spreads and granola bars, also may help reduce inflammation.

Rather than just concentrating on individual foods, focusing on an overall dietary pattern combining these foods for additive and/or synergistic effects is recommended. The Mediterranean Diet pattern,

rich in plant foods and seasoned with olive oil, is one of many health models that fit this description.

Of course, lowering LDL cholesterol remains the cornerstone of reducing your risk of heart disease. It's clear that inflammation plays an important role, too, and soothing the flames on inflammation is within our power.

Lose weight if you need to, take a daily aspirin if advised and make sensible food choices. There's plenty of common ground between anti-inflammatory eating and healthy eating in general. You've heard this advice before, but there are new reasons to act on it.

Oh, and don't forget to floss.

# Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: AMY MINNER



**Job:** Permit Technician I  
**Date hired:** January 22, 2008  
**Education:** Associates in Business Administration  
**What I like most about my new job:** How welcoming everyone is  
**Greatest accomplishment:** Moving to Delaware and adapting well with everyone

**Greatest challenges or obstacles:** My children; juggling family and work

**Future goals:** Slowing down and enjoying the precious times with my small children

**Person/event that most inspired me in my career:** My brothers

**If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently:** Stayed in college and received my Masters degree

**I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this:** Sleeping

**Family:** Two young girls and a wonderful husband

**Most recent movie enjoyed:** Hitch

**Favorite TV show:** Hell's Kitchen

**Favorite sport:** Tennis

**Favorite meal:** Anything I don't have to cook!

**Favorite music:** Anything that has a good dance beat

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

**A dream I have is to:** Go to a salon and be pampered

**If I won a million dollars I would:** Give some to my family and pay off bills and finish my house renovations.

**Three words that describe me:** Caring, loving, dependable

## EOM INSIGHT

(Continued from Page 2)

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** Have 17 brothers and sisters; yes, I said seventeen.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Adopt two children. I have four children, two are adopted, I forget which two.

# Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: RICHARD I. MOSLEY, JR.



**Job:** Custodian  
**Date hired:** January 14, 2008  
**Education:** Some college  
**What I like most about my new job:** The work  
**Greatest accomplishment:** Buying a home  
**Greatest challenges or obstacles:** My kids

**Future goals:** To give my kids a better life than I had

**Person/event that most inspired me in my career:** My family

**I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this:** Spending time with my two little girls

**Family:** Wife and two girls, ages 5 and 1

**Most recent movie enjoyed:** I Am Legend

**Favorite TV show:** Prison Break

**Favorite sport:** Basketball

**Favorite meal:** Pizza

**Favorite music:** R&B

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

**If I won a million dollars I would:** Give it to my family and friends

# Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: CHRISTOPHER J. AMMON



**Job:** Paramedic I  
**Date hired:** January 14, 2008  
**Education:** Montgomery County  
**What I like most about my new job:** Meeting new people and co-workers at a progressive paramedic unit  
**Most recent movie enjoyed:** National Treasure

**Favorite TV shows:** Rescue Me and Flyers games

**Favorite sport:** Ice hockey

**Favorite music:** All types

**If I won a million dollars I would:** Be thankful and help people out

# Work nears end on 2007 Comp. Plan Update

By Mary Ellen Gray, Asst. Director of Planning Services

The Kent County Planning Services Department is continuing their work on drafting the 2007 *Comprehensive Plan (Plan)*. As discussed in the September employee newsletter, Delaware state law requires that Kent County review and update its comprehensive plan every five years. The last update was in 2002.



The Comprehensive Plan represents the County Policy with regard to regional land management, growth, and development issues, the provision of essential community services and facilities, and safeguards to promote quality living environments.

The 2007 *Comprehensive Plan Update* is not a decision on specific land use proposals or a zoning map and ordinance. Rather, it is a framework of goals and policies that will guide decision making in order to ensure that development occurs in an efficient and logical manner while minimizing short and long-term costs to the citizens of Kent County.



### Workshop Draft Released

With considerable input from the citizen member Comprehensive Plan Working Group, the

Planning Division has released a second draft of the Plan. Hard copies have been distributed to Levy Court Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, and members of the Working Group. An electronic version has also been posted on the Kent County website at: <http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/Planning/Zoning/compplanupdate.htm>.

### Public Meetings Scheduled

In conjunction with the second draft of the Plan, a public meeting schedule has also been released. This schedule includes 3 public workshops, a joint meeting with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and the Levy Court, public hearings by the Levy Court and RPC, and meetings with the State entities responsible for reviewing the Plan.



### Further Information

Planning staff continues to encourage citizens to take advantage of the various opportunities to share their concerns, issues and ideas through the various stages of the public process for the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

More information including the materials from the public workshops can be found on the Kent County Levy Court website [www.co.kent.de.us](http://www.co.kent.de.us). You may also contact the Kent County Department of Planning Services directly at 744-2471

DATE	ACTION
February 5, 2008 at 6:00	Levy Court/Regional Planning Comm. Workshop
February 6 from 7:00 to 9:00 at Caesar Rodney H.S.	Public Workshop
February 11 from 7:00 to 9:00 at Cheswold Fire Hall	Public Workshop
February 13 from 7:00 to 9:00 at Lake Forest H.S.	Public Workshop
Mid-February	Livable Delaware Advisory Council
February 27	PLUS Meeting
April 2	Special RPC hearing
April 15	Levy Court hearing
Late April	Livable Delaware Advisory Council      **5744**

## Proposed WWF Renewable Energy Park is gaining energy

By James Newton, Environmental Program Manager

Over the past couple of years, Kent County's wastewater treatment facility near Frederica has proposed and discussed locating a renewable energy park there to generate enough energy to operate the wastewater treatment facility.



To that end, the Department of Public Works has discussed this project with staff at

Constellation Energy and a concept has been developed. Under this concept, energy would be created by utilizing three different renewable energy sources. These are wind, solar and biomass. Recently, local newspapers have included several articles about our plans for the renewable energy park.

The wastewater treatment facility has been monitoring the wind resources at the 110 foot level using a weather system located on the treatment facility's radio tower. The department has realized that the radio tower is insufficient for the SCADA system and is in the process of designing and building a 200 foot tower. As a part of this tower, an additional wind monitoring system will be installed to measure the wind at 200 feet. This information will be extremely useful since the center hub for any wind turbines would be at that level.

It is expected that sufficient wind data will be available by the end of 2009 to begin design on an energy conversion system. It is also our intent to incorporate this measuring system with the "Weather Bug" to offer real time weather information on the Web for the treatment facility. This will not only provide useful and interesting data to all those who access the County's website, but also provide useful data to emergency responders should the need arise.

The Kent County Levy Court last month took a large step towards ensuring that the biomass option is available at the wastewater treatment facility. The biomass option is viewed as the most important renewable energy source at the wastewater treatment facility.

Under this option, an anaerobic digester would generate methane gas which would then be converted to electricity utilizing fuel cells. The digester would use the wastewater treatment facility's

current sludge as its fuel; however, there is not sufficient sludge generated to make the use of biomass cost effective, so alternate sources are needed. One such excellent source is grease trap waste. Up until recently, the wastewater treatment facility could only accept grease trap waste generated in Kent County. The Levy Court approved an expansion of the service area from which grease trap waste can be accepted to include all of Delaware and the surrounding Maryland counties. It is not the department's intent to compete with private industry, but it is hoped that this expansion will add sufficient feedstock to make anaerobic digestion cost effective. It is hoped that design on the digester can begin in 2008 and that the system will be ready to operate in 2010.

Once biomass and wind systems are operating, a solar system can be installed to supplement the energy produced by the other two options. It is hoped that an education center will also be constructed here to help the public understand these renewable energy options and how the wastewater facility works. This effort complements the County's current initiative to be a "green" County and to promote sustainability.

Will the energy park generate all the energy needed? Will it be cost effective? Can this green approach be a model for other communities, as our environmental health and safety management system is? The answer to these questions is still blowing in the wind.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*(Continued from Page 4)*

**February 14, 2008** - Wear Red for Women Day at Kent County. Wear Red to Work and make a \$5 donation to the American Heart Association.

**February 18, 2008** - President's Day Holiday. County offices closed.

**February 21, 2008** - Staff Development Session on "The Rules of Money" (Part 3). 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.

**February 22, 2008** - Basic Defensive Driving Course, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in the Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 220.

**February 22, 2008** - Banking Services Outreach & Information by Citizens Bank, 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. in the Kent County Administrative Complex, Rotunda.

## BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

There are new leave entitlements under FMLA!



President Bush has signed into law the Support for Injured Servicemembers Act, which grants additional leave under the FMLA to employees who have family members in the military.

The legislation creates two new categories of

FMLA leave – Active Duty Family Leave and Injured Servicemember Leave. Under Active Duty Family Leave, employees with a spouse, parent, or child who is on or has been called to active duty in the Armed Forces may take up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave when they experience a “qualifying exigency.”

Under the Injured Servicemember Leave, employees who are the spouse, parent, child or next of kin of a servicemember who incurred a serious injury or illness on active duty in the Armed Forces may take up to 26 weeks of leave in a 12-month period (including regular FMLA leave). Employees may take injured servicemember leave intermittently, but must use it up within 12 months. There is no 12-month time limit on active duty family leave, which is more like traditional FMLA leave.

The Department of Labor is expected to issue proposed regulations within the next few weeks that will define “qualifying exigency” and interpret other aspects of the new leave requirements.

If you are injured on the job or ill as a result of your job and seek medical attention, and you are able to make a phone call, please notify the Personnel Office prior to visiting a provider. If we do not know of the incident, we can't authorize your medical evaluation or treatment and you may find yourself spending unnecessary time in the waiting room. Please don't assume that your supervisor will make the call; remember, the ultimate responsibility is on the injured or ill employee.

Effective January 15, 2008, BCBSD will no longer cover treatment of complications of non-covered procedures. BCBSD defines a complication as an additional medical concern that is a consequence of a non-covered service and requires either revision



to the original treatment plan or additional services or treatment. With respect to a surgery, for example, the informed consent form signed before the surgery identifies any possible complications of the procedure. One of BCBSD's Medical Directors will make all determinations about whether a claim is for a complication of a non-covered procedure. They will use as a guideline for these decisions, among other considerations, whether or not the consequence was identified in the informed consent.

If you have any questions regarding any of the items mentioned in this article, or any other benefit question, please feel free to call the Personnel Office. \*\*6299\*\* \*\*2549\*\* \*\*0382\*\*

## “Miss America” pageant

(Continued from Page 3)

the town has been nicknamed “Sin City. “If you have never been to Vegas the hotels are decorated to the extreme,” she explained.

A group of five family members took the opportunity to visit about 10 hotel/casinos and many of the numerous unique shops as well as Fremont Street, where the very first casinos are located. The group also coincidentally got a live glimpse of the rooftop fire at the “Monte Carlo” casino/hotel located on the “Strip”. “We could see the smoke billowing from the roof and flames. I called my fireman husband to give a first hand account of what I was seeing,” she reported.

The day before the pageant, Eisenbrey and family members were able to watch the talent performances of all 51 contestants. This was the first time the group rang their cow bells at the mention of Brittany's name or the State of Delaware. “Brittany was raised on a Kent County dairy farm,” explained Eisenbrey, “So we rang cow bells so she would know we were there to support her.”

Finally on January 26, the day everyone was waiting for, the “Miss America” pageant was held live at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino.

“I sat with about 40 family and friends among a crowd of about 6,500 people waiting with anticipation for the 51 contestants to be narrowed to 16 and then the final pick of Miss America”, explained Eisenbrey. “We were all so disappointed that Brittany did not make it into the finals. I even commented that we could now leave, but we all stayed until the end.”

“Brittany may not have been chosen as Miss America, but we all are proud of all she has accomplished!” commented Eisenbrey.

Instead, the winner was “Miss Michigan.”

## Wellness event reveals cholesterol concern

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Once again, high cholesterol topped the list of employee health concerns, as indicated in a report from the annual wellness screening conducted by Christiana Care Health Services on December 6, 2007



Eighteen employees joined in cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, Body Mass Index (BMI), and osteoporosis screenings. Fifteen followed up with input in a voluntary and private

online questionnaire.

Data from the health screenings indicated 67 percent of the 18 screening participants had blood pressure of less than 140/90; 33 percent had total cholesterol of less than 200; and 40 percent had HDL cholesterol in the healthy range. In the BMI category, 20 percent were in the 18.5 to 24.9 range and 20 percent had a BMI of 30 percent or higher. No one had excessive waist girth (more than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men).

Of the 15 employees who responded to the questionnaire, the majority indicated “needs improving” in personal health problems such as asthma, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and chronic back problems.

Healthy lifestyle indicators included non-smokers (93 percent); physical activity of 20-30 or more minutes, three or more days per week (47 percent); eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily (no one admitted to this one – perhaps the Personnel Office should begin including veggie and fruit recipes in *Kent Connections*); eating whole-grain breads and cereals most of the time (47 percent); eating low-saturated fat foods most of the time (53 percent); eating breakfast most mornings (60 percent); seldom adding additional salt to meals or eating salty foods (87 percent); seldom eating typical snacks each week (80 percent); seldom or never drinking alcohol or limiting their intake to no more than six drinks per week (33 percent); feeling happy most or all of the time (40 percent) and getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep daily (7 percent).

Thirteen percent of the questionnaire participants responded to two or more stress signals, indicating high stress levels; 13 percent indicated often having trouble coping or being unable to cope; no

one indicated feeling downhearted or blue most or all of the time; and 7 percent said they have no social support from family or friends to help with problems. However, no one indicated they are not very satisfied or dissatisfied with their job or work life!

Ninety-three percent reported that they wear seat belts all of the time when traveling in a vehicle, but only 73 percent said they never drive after drinking or ride with those who do. Sixty-seven percent reported wearing protective clothing and sunscreen, or avoiding sun bathing, and 80 percent had a physical examination within the two years.

On the list of health interests, the majority was in cholesterol reduction, a healthy back, and stress management; followed by weight management, joining a walking group, fitness evaluation, and nutrition improvement. Coming in third were smoking cessation, CPR training, and health evaluation; in fourth place were aerobics to music, blood pressure control, cancer risk reduction, medical self care, women’s health, and communication skills.

Participating employees received a goody bag of small items provided by Christiana Care Health Services and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware. Additionally, there were lots of giveaways at each educational table.

Want to change your body with weight management, but can’t stick with a diet? Don’t go on a diet -- modify your eating plans. Don’t build a plan below 1200 calories a day, or one that purges whole food groups or is too strict to maintain, and don’t forget to check with your doctor first. **Aim for balance.** Your plan should be composed of 40 percent healthy carbohydrates (whole grains, fruits, vegetables) 30 percent lean protein (chicken, fish) and 30 percent healthy fat (olive oil, nuts). **Don’t skip breakfast.** Studies show that people who miss breakfast often consume more calories later in the day. Try having unsweetened cereal with skim milk or an egg-white omelet with a slice of whole-wheat toast. **Fill up on fiber.** Eating fiber-rich foods such as apples, almonds and spinach helps you feel full. **Don’t be afraid of fat.** A little fat provides satiety. Foods with omega-3 fatty acids – found in walnuts, salmon and soybeans, among others – are healthy sources of unsaturated fat. **Cut down on processed foods.** Sugar contains empty calories and can cause spikes in blood sugar that leave you feeling hungrier. Most processed foods also contain excessive amounts of sodium, which can lead to high blood pressure.

## Mass Casualty event

(Continued from Page 7)

were evaluated with this instrument to help determine if they had been exposed enough to warrant going to the hospital. Even though it meant that the holiday event was ruined very few of the patrons protested and eventually all those who remained on site cooperated fully with the responders.

The Medical Control Physician at the hospital had been contacted while the Supervisor responded from Headquarters. The doctor's advice was to transport anyone who was symptomatic and then encourage anyone who tested with a carboxyhemoglobin greater than 20% to be seen, even if they had no symptoms at that time. Of all those evaluated, two were sent to the hospital. One patient who tested higher than 20% did not wish to be transported and therefore was treated with 100% oxygen for several minutes and re-evaluated. The CO concentration fell to less than 5% and Medical Control granted the patient refusal of transport. Everyone was informed of the risk of delayed symptoms and advised to seek medical attention if symptoms occurred.

The local Fire Department became involved with this incident as did the State Public Health Division. Both agencies thoroughly investigated the premises and although CO concentrations were found throughout the building, no specific source was identified. Continuing investigation the next day revealed a possible reduction in air exchange through the HVAC system. The staff and Public Health workers were unable to recreate the situation. A robust monitoring system was installed and all equipment that could produce CO was tested for efficiency. Everything measured up and the facility was re-opened.

The new CO detectors have alerted Paramedics to a potential danger several times since they were put in service several months ago. The bottom line is CO is more prevalent than we may have imagined. Nobody wants to be like "Chicken Little", but it's comforting for all to know that a simple device can trigger a measured response and potentially avert a larger impact from the menace that used to be called the "Silent Killer". \*\*1376\*\* \*\*4900\*\*

### CONNECTIONS corrections

EVERLYN JOPP of the Administration Department achieved Perfect Attendance in 2007, which made the total for the year 60. We missed her in the January 2008 story titled "Employees to be rewarded for perfect attendance". We apologize for the error.

## Tech Talk

(Continued from Page 8)

-ing systems.

**3. If you're using dial-up to access the internet make certain that the maximum speed setting for your modem is as high as the modem allows in order to obtain maximum modem speed. This setting can be easily confirmed using the utility that is used to dial the modem.**

(Most modern operating systems usually take care of this automatically. However, some older modems have a default setting that is slower than the current 56Kbps dial-up modem maximum, which can be changed by a switch or the device driver software settings.)

**4. Turn off pop-up windows.**

(Pop-up windows are un-requested windows, which are usually used for advertisements. They consume bandwidth and can slow down the rendering of desired pages by browsers. They are also a nuisance because the user has to click them to close them. The ability to turn off pop-up windows is a feature in all of the popular browsers the most common being Internet Explorer.)

If you are using Internet Explorer:

Temporary solution: Hold the Control key whenever you click a link to a new section.

Permanent solution: Go to the following menu item within Internet Explorer: *Tools > Pop-Up Blocker*

**5. Turn off web page images. With the Firefox browser, for example, this is accomplished by clicking on the Edit menu to open the Preferences panel, clicking on the Web Features icon and then removing the check mark from the Load Images check box. Finally, click the OK button at the bottom of the panel.**

(This is probably not desirable for most people, but for those who are interested solely in text, it can speed up the rendering of pages considerably, particularly those which contain numerous advertisements or other images.)

If your browser continues to run slow after implementing some of these steps it would be wise to consult with a computer technician or your internet service provider to help diagnose problems that are more serious.

Got a computer challenge? Contact the I.T. Helpdesk at 744-2458.

## Media Relations policy adopted

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Levy Court acted last month to formalize the County's media relations practices which limit formal contact with newspapers, television and radio stations, etc. to only elected officials, County Administrator, County Attorneys, Public Information Officer, Department Heads/Office Directors and others specifically authorized to have such interaction.

The purpose of the new policy (§29-2) is to facilitate the flow of timely and factual information to the news media and general public. Employees are generally not authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the County and those that are personally contacted should refer any journalist to Public Information Officer BRET SCOTT.

Whenever any employee speaks with the media, they should promptly inform the Public Information Officer, so he can prepare a response and inform Levy Court Commissioners that an issue may appear in the media.

The policy instructs authorized persons to be prompt, helpful, and honest and avoid speculation or gossip. It also advises against saying "no comment". Issues such as personnel matters, litigation, and land acquisition cannot be commented upon.

## Public event/program coordination required

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Public events and programs such as ribbon cuttings, open houses, festivals, and similar programs are common activities in County government, but until the adoption last month of Kent County Levy Court Policy 29-1, there were no formal guidelines for such.

Under the new policy, Public Information Officer BRET SCOTT has overall responsibility for coordinating publicity, media relations, and Commissioner participation in any event/program. All such events/programs must also be approved in advance by the County Administrator.

Outside agencies desiring to use County owned property or facilities for a public event, must submit such requests to the County Administrator for review and recommendation to Levy Court. The policy further requires outside organizations to provide proof of insurance, and they could be assessed a fee to reimburse the County any costs associated with the use of such property or facilities.

The Department of Public Safety, which has numerous public events, must coordinate such activities through their Director, but still such activities require advance approval by the County Administrator.



Sixty employees were recognized last month by Levy Court for achieving perfect attendance in 2007. Pictured are (l.tor.) Harry VanSant, John Witzke, Reinhold Bestchel, Harold Venable, Katie Ridgway, Allan Kujala, Mike Petit de Mange, John Willson, Commissioner W.G. Edmanson, Hans Medlarz, Commissioner Allan Angel, Hillary Welliver, Commissioner P. Brooks Banta, Dale Hammond, and Commissioners Harold Brode, Brad Eaby, and Richard Ennis.

## SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

**Q.** *I was wondering if I am eligible for compensation or comp time whenever I attend a Levy Court meeting?*

**A.** Excellent question. Your eligibility for compensation is based on whether or not you are required to be there. Voluntary events like accepting a perfect attendance award or supporting a co-worker being honored, are not compensable. Other events like new employee introductions and testifying at a hearing or attending at the direction of your Department Head would be eligible for compensation or compensatory time. You would only be eligible for the actual time spent in the meeting; commuting time or waiting around until the 7:00 p.m. start time is not eligible for compensation.

**Q.** *What if I don't want to go to a Levy Court meeting to be recognized. Do I have to go?*

**A.** No, you don't have to go to a Levy Court meeting unless specifically directed to by your department head. Although, it is very nice to demonstrate your appreciation to the Commissioners by attending events where you are being recognized for an accomplishment.

**Q.** *I think County office hours should be 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. I realize it is only 1/2 hour, but employees would be able to spend more time in the evening with family, exercising or just relaxing. I believe employees would get to work quicker. It might be safer in the evening due to the heavy traffic volumes at 5:00 p.m. Maybe the employees should be polled about this idea. What do you think?*

**A.** Interesting idea. But you know it has only been a year and one half since the County expanded office hours from 8:30 to 4:30 to the current 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It was primarily done to accommodate the public—our customers, not County employees. Most people expect normal office hours to be 8-5, so many customers were disappointed when they arrived early at 8 a.m. or late at 4:31 p.m. Employees with young children might have concerns about a 7:30 a.m. start time, with many children boarding the bus around that time in the morning. As far as evening traffic, it seems heavy all the time now. Back when we left work at 4:30 p.m., we had to deal with all the State employees leaving at the same time—I'm guess-

ing about 10,000 of the 30,000 statewide probably work in Dover. I think if we wanted to accommodate more customer schedules (whom may work 8-5), they would probably want us open until 5:30 p.m. rather than at 7:30 a.m. Or we could mimic the State schedule of staying open until 8 p.m. on Wednesdays.

**Q.** *It may just be me, but I notice a lot of 40-hour employees leaving for the day between 3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. These are the same employees leaving early day after day, so I can't imagine they are using vacation. It doesn't seem fair that they get to leave early while the rest of us stay until 5 p.m.*

**A.** You did not provide any names, so it is difficult to say exactly what might be happening in this situation, but there are a number of employees that start before 8:00 a.m.—especially Building Codes Inspectors. They have to get into the office and then out to the respective home/commercial property sites to perform the inspection. Contractors tend to start work at daybreak. We still have a number of 35-hour employees that now start at 8 a.m. and leave at 4 p.m. while some staff in the office start at 9 a.m. and leave at 5 p.m. Of course exempt or salaried employees are only required to average 40-hours per week, so if they regularly attend Levy Court or some other work-related meetings in the evening, they can leave early another day—with their department head's approval, of course.

**Q.** *It occurred to me that perhaps, these employees are taking their one-hour lunch period at the end of the day, but I thought we were not able to take our lunch break at the end of the day. Right?*

**A.** County ordinance requires most employees to take an unpaid lunch period to avoid unnecessary accrual of overtime. Lunch is logically in the middle of the work day, so for the most part employees should take the lunch break during that time—the State law on this subject also provides that the lunch period be taken mid-point of the workday. However, nothing prohibits the employee and supervisor from agreeing to flex the lunch period for some specific reason, like an appointment or due to mid-day short staffing situations. In my opinion, it is important from a productivity and customer service standpoint for employees to take a regular mid-day lunch period, because a growling stomach can be very distracting.