



KENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees

March 2006



Employee of the Month *Scott D. Vautard*

The Kent County Employee Council has selected SCOTT D. VAUTARD from the Department of Planning Services as the March 2006 Employee of the Month.

Scott, a Kent County employee since February 2000, is a Building Codes Inspector II in the Division of Inspections and Enforcement responsible for inspecting new construction for compliance with County codes and submitted site plans.

On a daily basis, he handles a full load of building inspections and is always willing to fit in one more site review when the need arises. Scott is known for his in-depth knowledge of the International Residential Code/2000 and is currently assisting in the field training of two new Building Codes Inspectors.

Kent County citizens appreciate Scott's inspection skills as evidenced by two recent constituent comment cards applauding his thoroughness and accuracy. Everyone benefits greatly from Scott's dedication which ensures that structures in Kent County are safe and sound for occupancy.

Congratulations Scott on a job well done!

COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > What does the Pay Study report say?
- > How is the FY2007 Budget shaping up?
- > What are the Employee Insurances bid results?

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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

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

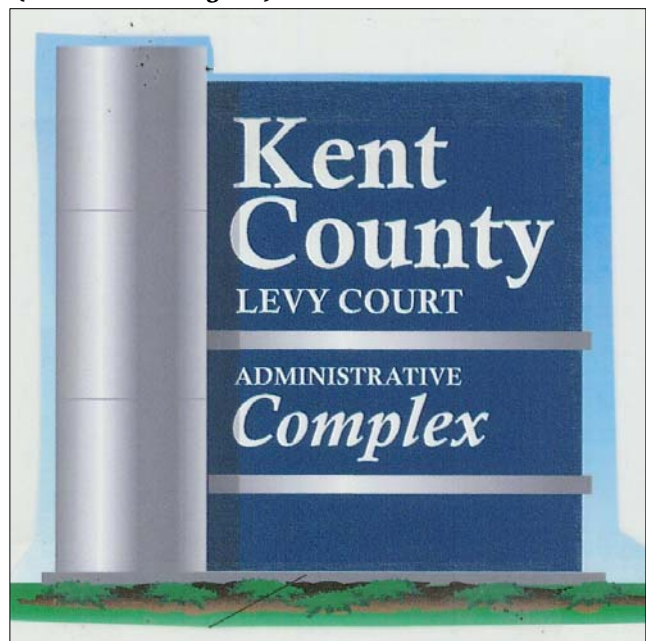
Levy Court okays Complex sign design

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Having difficulty giving directions to the new Kent County Complex? That is about to all change thanks to a decision last month by Levy Court on a final external sign design for the new Kent County Administrative Complex.

It's been almost a year since the Complex was first occupied, but prior to the move and since then there have been many, many sign versions considered. Everyone agrees that the temporary wooden sign in front of the massive structure at 555 Bay Road was unimpressive and out of place, but the approved new sign should fit right in.

After rejecting all the earlier sign proposals as out of character, too big, or just too expensive, Public Works Director HANS MEDLARZ was charged
(Continued on Page 11)



Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: CHRISTAL L. CANNON



Job: Custodian I

Date hired: February 13, 2006

Education: High school

What I like most about my new job: Working hard and meeting new people

Greatest accomplishment: Running my own business

Greatest challenge or obstacle:

Running my own business

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Stayed single and traveled the world

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: Holidays with my family

Family: Husband, George; son, George III; daughter, Stacy

Most recent movie enjoyed: Titanic

Favorite TV show: Survivor

Favorite activity: Cooking

Favorite meal: Italian

Favorite music: Country

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

A dream I have is to: Win the Powerball

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

Words that describe me: Quiet, shy, hard worker

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. JENNIFER GRAHAM and NICOLE VAUTARD of Public Safety found their numbers and claimed their movie tickets in February.

It is important for employees to read Kent Connections for it is the County's primary resource for communicating with staff. Besides, you get the chance pry a few bucks out of the Personnel Director's wallet.



EOM INSIGHT



Name: SCOTT VAUTARD

Job: Building Codes Inspector II

Years with the County: 6

Education: High school

What I like most about my job: Inspecting a variety of structures along with traveling throughout the County meeting people

What I'd most like to change: The negative attitudes some contractors have against me doing my job enforcing minimum building codes

Family: Wife of 8 years, Nicole; two sons, Logan (11) and Colton (6)

After work I enjoy: Spending time with family and being a 15-year firefighter with the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company

Favorite new movie: "Ladder 49"

Favorite old movie: "Big Daddy" with Adam Sandler

Favorite TV show: "Modern Marvels" on the History Channel

Favorite TV show as a child: "Sanford and Son"

Favorite sport: Football

Favorite meal: Chicken Alfredo

Favorite music: Classic Rock

Favorite Kent County restaurant: Applebees

Favorite Kent County events: First Night Dover and fireworks on the Green

People (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My wife's late parents and both of my late grandmothers

I'm most proud of: My family

Pet peeve: People who think rules don't apply to them.

If I've learned one thing in life, it's: Enjoy every day as though it were your last

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

A dream I have is to: Buy a motor home and travel the country

If I won a million dollars, I would: Buy a motor home and an antique fire engine

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Built my first house (a duplex) at age 20

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: "Pitfall" – a freefall of 251 feet at 65 mph at Kenneywood Park, Pittsburgh, PA

Three words that describe me: Honest, dedicated, and thorough

Complex window blinds eyed for April installation

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Just in time for the coming summer season, the window blinds for the west side of the Kent County Administrative Complex should be installed, provided the contractor meets the expected schedule.

In December, the Levy Court approved the \$46,550 window blind project bid by JP Associates, after employees and supervisors complained that the bright summer sun heated up work areas and the low winter sun cast a glare on computer monitors. At least one employee even resorted to wearing sunglasses at work to block the intense sunlight.

It is also hoped the new mechanical blinds controlled by a remote or wall switch will significantly reduce the heat created by the Complex's large windows, despite the built in ultraviolet light protection.

The blinds selected will feature a tight weave
(Continued on Page 6)

Williams wins Wyoming Council race

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It was a decisive win for Kent County Deputy Recorder of Deeds GEORGETTE WILLIAMS on February 25 when she polled the highest number of votes to win a seat on the Wyoming Town Council.

Williams scored 85 votes in the town she has called home for more than 10 years, with over 40 years in the area. While there were no hot issues in the campaign, she is excited about the Town's upcoming 150 anniversary celebration this summer.

"I'm honored and grateful for the support of the residents, and I look forward to getting to work," Williams said.



4 gain seats on Emp. Council as election nixed

1 candidate opts for 1-year term

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It was the election that almost was, but wasn't. Four candidates filed for the four open Employee Council seats by the January 27 deadline, but an election was still necessary to determine which one would serve the one year remaining on a resigning member's term.

The election was cancelled after one of the candidates volunteered to serve the one-year term,



Mary Eisenbrey



Cyndi Laird

thereby giving the other three candidates a standard term of two-years. Had the election proceeded, the candidate with the fewest votes would have served for one year.

As a result of the non-election, MARY EISENBREY of the Assessment Office and KATHY PHINNEY of the Administration Department as well as current member CYNDI LAIRD of the Finance Department will serve two-year terms, and MELISSA STANLEY of the Planning Services Department will serve the one year term.

The newly elected Employee Council members will take office at the March meeting at which the Council will elect officers. They join continuing members MICHELE LAPINSKI, JASON MILLER, and KATHY SKINNER, each of whom have one year remaining.



Kathy Phinney



Melissa Stanley

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



ON THE MOVE . . .

Compiled by Carissa Zeiters, Personnel Technician II

New Hires

02/08/06 WILLIAM ASHLEY III, Plans Reviewer, Grade 11, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

02/13/06 CHRISTAL CANNON, Custodian I, Grade 3, Public Works/Facilities Management

Promotion

02/27/06 MARTI STANSBURY Permit Technician II, Grade 8 to Building Codes Inspector I, Grade 8, Planning Services/Inspections & Enforcement

Retirement

02/28/06 ALAN SHERMAN, EMS Field Supervisor, Grade 12, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services

Resignations

02/07/06 SARAH KEIFER, Assistant Director, Grade 16, Planning Services/Planning

02/24/06 ANDREA ILLIG, Library Technician, Grade 7, Community Services/Library Services

Milestone

02/02/2001 JOHN WITZKE, Paramedic II, Public Safety/Emergency Medical Services - 5 years

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



March 1, 2006 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2-4 p.m.

March 7, 2006 - FREE Oranges available in the Personnel Office, room 214 for "National Nutrition Month"

March 8, 2006 - (Part I) Employee Training Session on "The Right Side of the Line: Creating a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace." 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.

March 8, 2006 - Blood Pressure Checks at Annex at 9 a.m., Kent County Administrative Complex Room 222 from 9:30 - 11 a.m., O'Brien Bldg. from 11-11:30 a.m.

March 8, 2006 - L&W Rep. to answer health insurance questions from 1-2 p.m. in Room 214 at the Kent County Administrative Complex.

March 14, 2006 - FREE Pears available in the Personnel Office, Room 214 for "National Nutrition Month"

March 16, 2006 - (Part II) Employee Training Session on "The Right Side of the Line: Creating a
(Continued on Page 8)

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



MARCH

- 01 Wendy Haywood, Deeds Office
- 06 James Deptula, Public Works/Engineering
- 07 Nyle Callaway, Public Works/WWF
- 09 Fran Gunning, Community Services/Library Svcs.
- 11 Douglas Haddad, Public Safety/EMS
- 12 Carissa Zeiters, Administration
- 14 Judith Allen, Finance
- 14 Patrick McPhail, Public Works/WWF
- 14 Robert Mock, Public Safety/EMS
- 15 Shervina Miller, Public Safety/EMS
- 15 Brent Mollohan, Community Services/Recreation
- 19 Kelly Crumpley, Planning Services/Planning
- 20 Bruce Chillias, Public Safety/EMS
- 21 Mike Petit de Mange, Director of Planning Svcs.
- 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
- 29 Jason Courtney, Community Services/Parks
- 30 Allen Kearm, Public Works/WWF
- 30 William Hall, Public Works/WWF
- 31 Bonnie Hurd, Deputy Register of Wills

APRIL

- 01 Gale Maas, Administration
- 01 Mari Fabres, Public Works/WWF
- 01 Erin Moore, Planning Services/I&E
- 03 Martha Lewis, Deeds Office
- 03 Terri Misiewicz, Finance
- 03 Jason Miller, Public Works/Engineering
- 06 Katie Ridgway, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 07 Marty Hayes, Clerk of the Peace Office
- 09 Karen Cooper, Tax Office
- 10 Mark Horton, Public Safety/EMS
- 11 George Kuerner, Public Works/WWF
- 11 Craig Harvey, Public Works/WWF
- 13 Sofia Culver, Finance
- 16 Mike Bishop, Public Safety/EMS
- 17 Rodney Smith, Planning Services/Planning
- 20 Steven Seichepine, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 24 Ronald Berry, Public Works/Engineering
- 25 Robbie Watts, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 28 Dan McLaughlin, Public Safety/Emer. Comm.
- 29 Keith Mumford, Community Services/Recreation
- 30 Darren Jones, Public Safety/EMS
- 30 Walter Studte, Board of Assessment

County staff learns to drive defensively

By Carissa Zeiters, Personnel Technician II

The roadways might just be a little safer now thanks to the defensive driving course many Kent County employees completed on February 17 & 24. The safe driving course is mandatory for employees operating a county vehicle on a regular basis as provided in Kent County Levy Court Policy 4-6, but other interested employees were able to attend.



Those employees completing the Basic course included: BILL ASHLEY, CHRIS AUSTIN, KELLY BLANCHIES, ROCHELLE BOHM, JAMES BROWN, JOHN BUTLER, DANIEL DOLPHIN, JOHN duBLOIS, GROVER JOHNSON, DARIN JONES, KIM LOMBARDI, KEN MCKENZIE, PAT McPHAIL, BRANDON OLENIK, LIZ PERRY, KRISTINE RINKENBERG, JOHN SCHULTIES, JESSE WALLACE, TIM WYATT, and JOHN ZISTL.

Those employees completing the Advanced course included: ROY AUGUSTINE, JASON BERRY, MIKE BERRY, ROLAND CARTER, SOPHIE DEAR, MARI FABRES, GINA GLANDEN, DIANA GOLT, BILL HALL, CHRISTINA MORTON, RALPH NEIL, DAVID NESBIT, JAMES NUNES, BILL PENNELL, MELISSA STANLEY, ALAN TYSON and JOHN WITZKE./

The defensive driving certification is valid for three years and employees completing the program are usually eligible to receive a 10% reduction in auto insurance for taking the Basic course, 15% reduction for the Advanced course and receive a 3 point credit on their driver's license. The County benefits from the program by having safer drivers in County-owned vehicles.

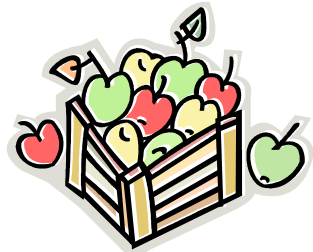
Congratulations

Congratulations to ROBERT WATTS of the Emergency Communications Division and his wife Krystle on the birth their son, Robert Lee Watts, Jr., on February 16, 2006 at 4:09 p.m. He weighed in at 6 lbs, 12 oz. and measured 20 inches. Mother and child are doing well.

Free Fruit Tuesdays promote good Nutrition & Health

By Carissa Zeiters,, Personnel Technician II

March is National Nutrition Month and to help County employees maintain a healthy lifestyle, the Personnel Office will sponsor Free Fruit Tuesdays beginning March 7. Each Tuesday, employees are invited to stop by the Personnel Office for a free orange, pear, banana, or apple.



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

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

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

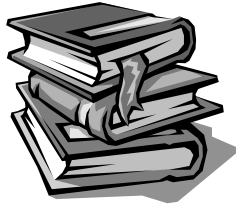
Pears are a good source of the B-complex vitamins and also contain vitamin C. They contain small amounts of phosphorus and iodine.

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

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

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

FROM THE STACKS



By Richard L. Krueger, County Librarian

The DaVinci Code

By Dan Brown

Controversial. Yes, some believe it to be controversial, but it is fiction!

It a good story with some fact, some fiction, and some just plain old good story telling. It is available from the libraries in Kent County in book form and on CD. I have read the book and also listened to the CD. If you're not into reading, try the audio form.

While in Paris on business, Harvard symbolologist Robert Langdon is called to the Louvre where the elderly curator has been murdered. As the story unfolds, Langdon and a gifted cryptologist, Sophie Neveu, sort through riddles, and are stunned to discover the trail of clues hidden in the works of DaVinci.

It is discovered that the late curator was a member of the Priory of Sion—an actual real society whose members included Sir Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, and Da Vinci. The race to find the answer to the message of the curator and the Priory's secret leads them on a frantic race through Paris and beyond.

As the book cover says, "The Da Vinci Code is simultaneously lightning-paced, intelligent, and intricately layered with remarkable research and detail."

This is a great book and it will keep you involved and not wanting to put it down. It has been on the best seller list for months, and after you read it you will know why it is so popular. Give it a try, you will have an enjoyable experience and will learn some interesting history in the process. **0505** **2570**

Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

The display case on the main floor of the Kent County Administrative complex reminds us all that our area was once the home of thousands of Native Americans. It features a collection of arrowheads found over several years on the Darling Farm just west of Dover by Recorder of Deeds BETTY LOU McKENNA and her husband, former Levy Court Commissioner John McKenna, who passed away in 2001.

Also check out the upstairs display case featuring a collection of Cats Meow® wooden keepsakes depicting various structures and sites in Kent County accumulated by Personnel Technician II SOPHIE DEAR.

Recipe of the Month



By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

MINT TRUFFLES

1 package (10 ounces) mint chocolate chips
1/3 cup whipping cream
¼ cup butter or margarine
1 container (3½ ounces) chocolate sprinkles

Line baking sheet with waxed paper; set aside. Melt chips with whipping cream and butter in heavy, medium saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally. Pour into pie pan. Refrigerate until mixture is fudgy, but soft, about 2 hours.

Shape about 1 tablespoonful mixture into 1¼ inch ball. To shape, roll mixture between palms. Repeat procedure with remaining mixture. Place balls on waxed paper.

Place sprinkles in shallow bowl; roll balls in sprinkles. Place truffles in petit four or candy cups. (If sprinkles won't stick because truffle has set, roll truffle between palms until outside is soft..) Truffles may be refrigerated 2 to 3 days or frozen several weeks.

Makes about 24 truffles.

Tip: Truffles can also be coated with unsweetened cocoa, powdered sugar, chopped nuts, colored sprinkles, or cookie crumbs to add flavor and prevent the truffle from melting in your fingers.

Recipe courtesy Irish Food, Fun & Crafts, 2006

Complex window blinds

(Continued from Page 3)

allowing staff to still see through to the outside in most cases, but sufficiently blocking light penetration. The dark color selected is also expected to reduce glare.

The blinds will be installed on the south side of the building including the Finance Department, Clerk of the Peace Office, the Personnel Office, future office space, and the Conference Room (220 A & B). The mechanical design was selected so that the shades will be evenly set across the Complex office windows.

"The timing could not be better with the upcoming summer season fast approaching," commented Finance Director SUSAN DURHAM, whose office space runs the length of the sunny western side of the Complex. **2652** **2655** **3112**

Learn if you are on the right side of the line at training

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

This month there will be two different voluntary training sessions on “The Right Side of the Line: Creating a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace.” This topic will be split into two parts. Everyone, regardless of position title or level in an organization, is responsible for creating a respectful and harassment-free workplace.

Sometimes the boundaries that separate acceptable versus unacceptable behavior in the workplace are not clear. Employees need to be able to recognize situations that cross the line in order to prevent the lost productivity, low morale, and even costly lawsuits that result. The forms of harassment or discrimination addressed in these training sessions are unprofessional teasing and hazing; inappropriate humor; racial discrimination and stereotyping; sexual orientation and religious beliefs; gossip and defamation of character; and third-party sexual harassment and retaliation.

The first sessions will be held on **Wednesday, March 8**, at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex. The second sessions will be held on **Thursday, March 16**, at the same times and location. To sign up for the sessions, contact me in Personnel at 744-2312, by e-mail (if you have a list), or in person.

Thank you for your continued interest in voluntary training!

High Praise

Way to Go to KEITH MUMFORD and the rest of the Recreation Division for a letter praising them for the golf learning program. The husband and wife team appreciated the quality of the instructors and the courtesy of County staff. *Keep up the good work!*

Kudos to the DIANE LOCKERMAN in the Assessment Office for a letter from an Ohio resident praising the assistance he received from her while in Delaware settling a late uncle's estate. *Outstanding!*

First responders must beware safety system hazards

By Dave Mick, EMS Operations Support Officer

The majority of employees at Public Safety are emergency responders. Obviously, the Paramedics operate in the field, but many of the Dispatchers and Administrative personnel are active with local fire and ambulance services. There are many other County employees who are volunteer responders, as well. When you think about all the motor vehicle crashes that Medics and Firefighters respond to you can easily imagine the hazards from flammable liquids, broken glass, and twisted metal. What explosive hazards do these folks encounter on a daily basis?

Almost every vehicle on the road today has pyrotechnic and high-pressure cylinder systems that can release dangerous amounts of energy. Generally these systems operate as intended or remain relatively safe even after an accident. Responders must remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety should one of these systems function abnormally.

Did you know that your seat belt has a small bomb attached to it? The device is called a restraint system pre-tensioner. What it does is tighten the seat and shoulder restraints to remove the slack that keeps us comfortable while we drive. The way the system does this is by “functioning” (bomb-talk for exploding) a pyro-technic load (an explosive charge the size of a “cherry bomb”). This function is timed to secure you in your seat just prior to a rapid deceleration. The result is your body is better protected from the physical forces Paramedics call the “mechanism of injury”. The system functions momentarily and the tension is released before you know it. The hazard exists when the system hasn't functioned (rear or side impact) or the system is damaged and responders are working to extricate a patient. If a responders hands or face are near the device when it accidentally or improperly functions serious injury can result.

How long have there been hatch-back model
(Continued on Page 12)



EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Member

The Employee Council is happy to report that the Valentine's Day Candy-grams were a smashing success, as we received a lot of positive comments from both senders and recipients. The participation was more than we could have hoped for, and we look forward to offering them again next year.

March will mark the start of terms for two new and two returning members. MARY EISENBREY and KATHY PHINNEY, who have both served on the council in years past, will begin their two-year terms with the Council's next meeting on Thursday, March 16.

CYNDI LAIRD and MELISSA STANLEY will also return, with Mel volunteering to take the one year term that was available due to a resignation earlier in the year. During its March meeting, the Council will also elect new officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary).

The Council would like to take a moment to thank outgoing member and current secretary, JENNIFER GRAHAM, for all her hard work and dedication on behalf of the employees of Kent County. Jennifer was a great asset to the Council and will be missed.

In other news, the Council will be holding monthly 50/50 raffles with proceeds going towards the 2006 Holiday Dinner and Dance. As has previously been mentioned, the event will be held on Saturday, December 16, in the ballroom of the Duncan Center in downtown Dover.

The Employee Council would also like to extend its congratulations to SCOTT VAUTARD of the Inspections and Enforcement section on his selection as Employee of the Month for March 2006. In addition to a day off with pay during the month, Scott will also receive a \$100 stipend and a reserved parking space.

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, why not recognize them as Employee of the Month? Nomination forms are available in the "forms" folder on v: drive, and also in the mail room.

Upcoming Employee Council events that we
(Continued on Page 10)

Tech Talk



By Mark Strong, Network Services Nabager

You may have noticed that the County does not purchase many "name brand" PC's for everyday use by county employees. Instead we purchase a PC by the name of ADel. Why?

Because ADel is a locally owned and operated company base in Kent County. Also the PC's they provide are made from name brand parts (Intel processor, Western Digital hard drives, Asus mother boards, Microsoft Windows XP, et). We have approximately fifty (50) ADel PC's in our production network and have found these PC's to be very durable and reliable. They're affordable too! We have purchased high end Pentium IV 3.2 GHz PC's with, 1Gigabyte RAM, 128Mb video card, 80Gb hard drives with Windows XP Pro pre installed for less than \$900.

So the next time you are looking into buying a PC, check out the local guys first!

ADel

280 South Dupont Hwy.

Dover, DE 19901

<http://www.adelcomputers.com>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

(Continued from Page 4)

Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace." 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.

March 21, 2006 - FREE Bananas available in the Personnel Office, room 214 for "National Nutrition Month"

March 23, 2006 - G.A.U.G.E Employee Performance Appraisal system training session for new employees and those needing a refresher. One session will be held at 9:00 a.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

March 24, 2006 - The Division of Wastewater Facilities cordially invites staff to join them at 12 noon for a luncheon to celebrate the award of three new certifications for EHS-Ms. Contact Mari Fabers at 335-6000 to confirm attendance.

March 28, 2006 - FREE Granny Smith Apples available in the Personnel Office, room 214 for "National Nutrition Month"

2005 pension report shows fund performed well

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

The recovering stock market has had a dramatic impact on the County's pension fund, with all three fund managers reporting positive growth in 2005 and in most cases well exceeding the policy indices.

At the end of the calendar year, the fund stood at \$20.4 million with an annual return of 8.2% outpacing the Policy Index by over 4%. For the year, the equity portfolio (stocks) outperformed the S&P 500 by over 6% with a return of 11.7%. The bond portfolio slightly underperformed the Lehman Brothers Aggregate Bond Index earning 2.2% compared to 2.4%.

The County's pension fund is allocated between large capitalized growth equities (stocks), large capitalized value equities (stocks), and bonds (fixed income) with an average 30/30/40 ratio. The pension assets are used to pay monthly pension benefits to County retirees totaling about \$792,000 per year.

Each year the County contributes to the pension fund to ensure that adequate assets are available to pay benefits when employees retire. The amount is determined on a biennial basis by an actuary and is currently \$831,025 each year. Employees contribute nothing toward their County pension benefit.

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



Combined County publication debuts in March

By Bret Scott, Communications & Research Assistant

Levy Court will debut its new publication *Kent County Levy Court Community Newsletter and Parks and Recreation* brochure on March 14. The new publication is intended to keep residents updated on news regarding the Levy Court and provide an overview of its seasonal parks and recreation and library programming. The new publication replaces the former Kent County Focus and the Parks and Recreation brochure.



The merger is the result of an initiative by Commissioner ALLAN F. ANGEL who sees the publication as an opportunity to enhance communication between the Levy Court and its constituents. The publication is mailed to county residents to ensure the Levy Court reaches as many of its constituents as it can.

"I am thrilled to unveil this publication to our constituents," says Commissioner Angel. "This is an initiative that I feel is overdue. We have a single publication that reaches out to our residents and keeps them well informed."

The publication is broken into three distinct sections beginning with Levy Court news followed by parks and recreation programming, and closing out with library services information. The Levy Court will produce four issues of the new 24-page publication with each edition coinciding with the seasons.

Commissioner Peterman to seek 33rd District House seat

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Commissioner HAROLD "JACK" PETERMAN announced over the President's Day holiday that he will run for the 33rd District seat in the Delaware House of Representatives and not seek reelection to Levy Court after almost 16 years.

The House seat covers the Milford, Frederica, and south Magnolia areas and will be an open seat this



fall due to Rep. Wallace Caulk's planned move out of the district. At least one other candidate has filed for the Republican Party nomination, so a primary election is anticipated.

In his announcement, Peterman recounted the many positive accomplishments of Levy Court and praised Kent County as "the best local government in our nation." He specifically mentioned Brecknock Park as well as Brown's Branch and Big Oak Parks, Transfer of Development Rights, the removal of derelict mobile homes, and improvements at the award winning wastewater treatment plant.

Welcome to Levy Court!



Name: WILLIAM M. ASHLEY II



Job: Plans Reviewer, Division of Inspection & Enforcement

Date hired: February 8, 2006

Education: High school and some college

What I like most about my new job: The interaction among my co-workers

Greatest accomplishment: My family and being a father

Greatest challenge or obstacle: Getting up early
Future goal: Further my career in the Design & Engineering field

Person/event that most inspired me in my career: My high school Vo-Tech teacher

If I had it to do over, I would have done this differently: Finished college

I'm most relaxed and happy when I'm doing this: At home with my family

Favorite TV show: King of Queens

Favorite sport: Football

Favorite meal: A nice steak dinner

Favorite music: Country

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

A dream I have is to: Travel the U.S.

If I won a million dollars, I would: Travel, buy a new house, and enjoy every day

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Like all kinds of music other than Country

Three words that describe me: Quiet, honest, trustworthy **3112** **3202** **4939**

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

(Continued from Page 8)

are or will be working on include the Employee Appreciation Day picnic and another possible fun fundraiser coinciding with St. Patrick's Day or Easter. More information will be forthcoming in both *Kent Connections* and through e-mail.

Your Kent County Employee Council members are: MARY EISENBREY, CYNDI LAIRD, MICHELE LAPINSKI, JASON MILLER, KATHY PHINNEY, KATHY SKINNER and MELISSA STANLEY. **6832**

County employees wear red to fight cancer

By Carissa Zeiters, Personnel Technician II

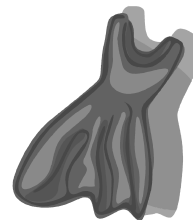
Heart felt employees participated in national GO RED DAY on February 3 by giving a small donation to wear red and support the American Heart Association.

Twenty employees participated and \$120 was raised to support the ongoing study of heart disease in women. Employees wore red clothing, a red dress pin or red dress sticker to show their support.

According to the American Heart Association, "heart disease and stroke are the greatest health threats women face, but only 13 percent of American women realize it. Did you know ...?"

- Coronary heart disease and stroke are the No. 1 and No. 3 killers of women over age 25.
- Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, claims nearly twice as many women's lives as all forms of cancer.
- One in 2.5 women will die of heart disease or stroke, compared with one in 30 from breast cancer.
- 38 percent of women die within one year after a heart attack, compared with 25 percent of men.

You can reduce your risk of heart disease by getting a yearly checkup, exercising, quit smoking, lower calorie intake, and reduce your intake of salt.



High Praise

Congrats to JASON COURTNEY in the Parks Division for successfully achieving his Commercial Driver's License. It will come in handy on numerous parks projects. *High five!!*

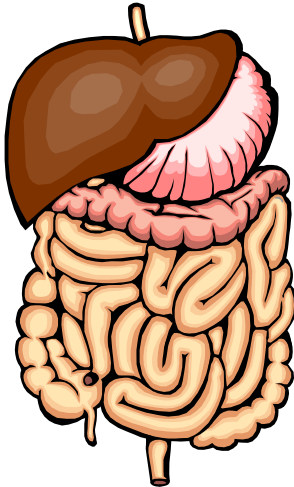
Kudos to KAY BROWN in the Tax Office for a Constituent Comment Card for her helpfulness and kindness. She also said Kent County was "the best place in the world." *Happy taxpayers make great citizens!*

Round of Applause for ERIN MOORE and MARTI STANSBURY in the Inspections and Enforcement Division for a note of thanks from a company customer praising their excellent customer service. *Make it a standing ovation!*

Detect cancer early with colon exam at 50

By Sophie Dear, Personnel Technician II

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month!



Colorectal cancer is a term used to refer to cancer that starts in the colon or rectum. Colon and rectal cancers begin in the digestive system, also called the GI (gastrointestinal) system, where food is processed to create energy and rid the body of waste matter.

After food is chewed and swallowed, it travels down to the stomach, where it is partly broken down and sent to the small intestine.

At about 20 feet long, it is really the longest segment of the digestive system.

The small intestine continues breaking down the food, absorbing most of the nutrients. It joins the large intestine, also called the large bowel, a muscular tube about five feet long. The first part of the large bowel, called the colon, absorbs water and nutrients from the food and serves as a storage place for waste matter. The waste matter moves from the colon into the rectum, the final six inches of the large bowel, and from there passes out of the body.

The colon has four sections, and cancer can start in any of the four sections or in the rectum. The wall of each of these sections (and rectum) has several layers of tissues. Cancer starts in the inner layer and can grow through some or all of the other layers. Knowing a little about these layers is helpful because the stage (extent of spread) of a cancer depends to a great degree on which of these layers it affects.

Cancer that starts in the different areas may cause different symptoms. In most cases, colon and rectum cancers develop slowly over a period of several years. We now know that most of these cancers begin as a polyp – a growth of tissue into the center of the colon or rectum. A type of polyp known as *adenoma* can become cancerous. Removing the polyp early may prevent it from becoming cancer.

Over 95 percent of colon and rectal cancers are *adenocarcinomas*. These are cancers of the cells that line the inside of the colon and rectum. There are some other, more rare, types of tumors of the colon and rectum, but the facts given here refer only

to adenocarcinomas.

Colon and rectal cancer have many features in common and are often referred to simply as “colorectal cancer.” They are discussed together here except for the section about treatment. At that point they will be discussed separately.

Even though we don’t know exactly what causes colorectal cancer, steps you can take to reduce your risk are screening tests, diet and exercise, aspirin and other drugs, hormone replacement therapy for women, and family history.

The exact causes of most colorectal cancers are not known, but the known risk factors are family history of colorectal cancer, certain family syndromes (groups of symptoms), ethnic background, prior colorectal cancer, a history of polyps or bowel disease, age, diet, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol, and being overweight.

In many cases, screening tests for people who do not have symptoms can find colorectal cancers at an early stage and greatly improve the chances of successful treatment. Tests used for colorectal cancer are the stool blood test, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, barium enema with air contrast, and virtual colonoscopy.

The County’s current health coverage through Mid-Atlantic Health Plan covers routine colonoscopies beginning at age 50 and earlier for high-risk individuals. After age 50, a routine colonoscopy is covered every ten years, a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years, or fecal occult blood testing annually, unless done with a flexible sigmoidoscopy, then every five years. A barium enema with air contrast can be done every five years after age 50.

Complex sign design

(Continued from Page 1)

with trying find the right sign company within the budgeted price range. He did with SignPros of Dover, the firm that submitted a tasteful 14 foot high by 10 foot wide dark blue square with white lettering adjacent to a thick silver post reminiscent of the support pillars in front of the Complex.

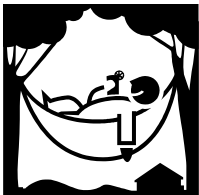
The \$31,800 metal sign, which is slightly over the \$30,000 cost estimate originally allocated in the overall Complex budget, is expected to be installed by the end of April or May.

“It is a handsome sign,” commented Public works Director HANS MEDLARZ. “It was a long time coming and I look forward to its installation.”

BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Many times employees have asked if a spouse can be added to the health or dental coverage when the employee retires. Retirement of a County employee is not a qualifying event for their spouse. If the spouse is not covered when the employee retires, they must wait until the next open enrollment period, unless the spouse has a qualifying event of their own. When the qualifying event occurs, the spouse can be added to the employee's health coverage.



A misconception that some employees have is that if they leave County employment and are vested, their benefits will be restarted when they begin collecting their monthly pension benefit. This is not correct – an employee must retire directly from active service to receive any benefits (health, dental, life, and/or Blood Bank coverages) that may be offered at the time of their retirement.

Please read your Mid-Atlantic Health Plan statement as soon as it arrives, and notify them (or the Personnel Office) of any errors. I recently received a MAHP statement that listed a radiology provider in Florida. I knew I was not in Florida on the date of service on the statement, so I contacted MAHP and the matter was resolved in minutes.



Also, if you receive a bill from a provider, please do not pay it unless you are certain that the billed amount is actually your responsibility. Sometimes participating providers will balance-bill the patient when they are supposed to make an adjustment (write it off). When this happens, MAHP can penalize the provider. If you are balance-billed by a provider, and should not be, MAHP wants to know.



Reminder – if you don't receive a bill from a provider, but have a MAHP statement indicating that you are responsible for part of the charges, and you don't think you are, the appeal time starts from the date you receive the first document, whether it is a MAHP statement or a bill from the provider. If you have any questions regarding County benefits, please feel free to contact the Personnel Office. **9141**

CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

Payroll Errors: Should I tell?

Ok let us start by saying we are all honest and never make mistakes. However, if a mistake does happen who is responsible for correcting the issue? Some employees are under the impression that errors in their favor do not have to be corrected. However those same employees would want immediate restitution if any error was in the favor of the County.

If an employee is overpaid, he or she has an obligation to report the error to Payroll. On the Payroll side it is our obligation to correct errors that we discover whether it be in favor of the employee or in favor of the County. Every effort is made to not make errors but admittedly payroll input is done by humans. Humans make mistakes. Errors in information can have many effects including financial costs to those that use the incorrect information generated from that error.

Checking for errors and correcting them if found is a good thing. This protects you the employee, the use of revenue dollars within the County and most especially the tax payers. **8495**

First responders must beware

(Continued from Page 7)

cars on the road? Spring operated lift systems were bad enough when they came apart...springs release and parts fly around. Advances in pressure cylinder systems have created more powerful hazards for responders. Pressure cylinders are used for some doors and they are also used to deploy some side impact cushion systems. The pressures contained in these cylinders can exceed 3,000 psi. If the cylinder is cut or exposed to heat from a fire this energy will be released in a rather uncontrolled manner. Cylinders with lift rods can act more like a small cannon or fire-arm by shooting the rod through a door or window.

The hazards created by advancements in vehicle technology have lead to new training in the "Anatomy of Vehicle Rescue" and "Advanced Vehicle Rescue Techniques". Responders must keep current on new systems and construction of vehicles. Medics are periodically updated on these issues and have had some awareness level training at Delaware State Fire School.

All responders need to be vigilant and "safety smart".

Employee performance appraisal process starts in March

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

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

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

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

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

The system also rates each employee on "Performance Essential Competencies", such as communication; development of self; initiative; interpersonal skills; quality of work; and teamwork. Each employee is further rated for performance in a specific skill group, such as Clerical, Maintenance/Trades, Technical, Professional, Supervisory and Management.

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

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

An employee's performance appraisal score determines if the employee receives an annual step increase and, more importantly, determines whether an employees should keep his/her job. The Person-

nel Chapter of the County Code provides for the termination of employees failing to achieve two consecutive satisfactory or "effective" scores of 3.0 or better.

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

A training session on the employee performance appraisal system will be conducted by the Personnel Office on **Thursday, March 23 at 9:00 a.m.** in Complex Room 220.

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

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

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



Valentines Day Candy Guess

Congratulations to AUDREY STANFORD, Property Specialist II in the Assessment Office for winning the Valentine's Day Candy basket with her guess of 275. She was closest without going over the actual count of 326. Thanks for participating!



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.

SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Q. *I was shocked silly to learn recently that County employees would not be converting to a 40-hour week as reported in this newsletter on numerous occasions. How could you get it so wrong?*

A. As Bill Cosby would say, the ingredients don't make Jello, refrigeration does. In this case, the "ingredients" originated last year at budget time when the Levy Court Commissioners agreed that the County's operating hours should be expanded to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning in FY07. With about 70% of County staff already working a 40-hour schedule, the plan was to convert the remaining 30% to accommodate the expanded hours of operation. The "refrigeration" in this case would be the cost of such a transition. The pay study consultant was asked to look at the 35/40 hours work schedule issue and formally make a recommendation to the Levy Court. As with all things, the final decision rests with the Commissioners and they will be interested in the cost. They may decide to convert the remaining staff or take an incremental approach to the issue. Stay tuned.

Q. *Are hearing aids covered by the County's health plan?*

A. The County health plan—Mid-Atlantic, does not cover the cost of hearing aids. However, the County operates a medical reimbursement program through the Employee Insurance Appeals Committee that has approved reimbursement for employees that need them to perform their job satisfactorily. If your doctor has advised you to get a hearing aid(s), you must pay first and submit a request to the Committee for reimbursement. The forms are available in the Personnel Office and must be accompanied with a copy of the purchase receipt. Stop by the Personnel Office for details of the program and applicable reimbursement limits.

Q. *What about vision coverage?*

A. Mid-Atlantic does cover eye exams, but only once per 24 months. If you visit an eye care professional in the Mid-Atlantic network, your cost is a \$20 copay. Mid-Atlantic also offers a discount for eye glasses at some providers. Since the County will be leaving Mid-Atlantic on June 30, employees should take advantage of this benefit just in case it is unavailable at the new insurer—whomever that will be.

Q. *So, what's happening on the health insurance front?*

A. As you should know by now, Mid-Atlantic Health Plan was purchased by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware about a year ago and will go out of existence on June 30, 2006—when our contract ends. Therefore, the County will be switching to a new health insurer after seven years with MAHP. Despite the long tenure with MAHP, we always had a one-year contract, so every year the County's health plan has been bid out. It was just that MAHP was always the lowest bidder and/or met the bid specifications. Now, we will be switching to a new insurer, which will mean that a full enrollment process will take place in May. Bids are due on March 15, and we can only hope that they are reasonable. Remember that the current year rates are 26% higher than the prior year. Indications are that the County's claims have stabilized and double digit increases may be coming to an end. Like you, I certainly hope so.

Q. *My best friend says that I do not have to report any paycheck errors in my favor and I am not obligated to pay the overpayment back. So, why are you deducting the extra hours paid to me due to a keying error last month?*

A. Your best friend is wrong. Kent County Policy 2-8 clearly requires any overpayment to be reimbursed. Besides the policy, it is just common sense. If you take something that is not yours, it is theft. That extra cash in your paycheck is not yours—you did not earn it. All employees should carefully review their direct deposit statements for errors. Nobody is perfect and you might even be owed money.

Q. *My supervisor is demeaning and negative. I am so upset with the way I'm treated, I am thinking about contacting a lawyer or quitting. What can I do?*

A. From what I know about your complaint, your supervisor treats everyone this way. So while unfortunate, it does not meet the threshold for being illegal. However, her supervisory methods make her a poor supervisor and that is not something the County should tolerate. I recommend you inform your department head as you have me, then document the comments and the circumstances in which it was made and then present all the information to me.