

Kent Connections

A Newsletter Published by Kent County Levy Court for its Employees

May 2009



Employee of the Month *Dennis Clark*

The Kent County department heads have selected DENNIS W. CLARK from the Department of Community Services as the May 2009 Employee of the Month.

Dennis, a Parks Worker III in the Parks Division, has worked for Kent County since September 1977. His primary duty is to serve as team leader for other Parks Workers in the completion of various park maintenance and enhancement projects. Dennis started his career as a Dispatcher with the Emergency Dispatch Center and later moved to the wastewater treatment facility then to the Parks & Recreation Department in 1998 as a Park Maintenance Worker.

After almost 32 years of service, Dennis can always be counted upon by supervisors to get things done. He has primary responsibility for maintaining all the park equipment in tip top working condition, which reduces the need for expensive repairs or replacement.

Dennis is consistently praised for being hard working, dependable, thorough, and always willing to step up whenever needed.

Congratulations Dennis on a job well done!

COMING NEXT MONTH:

- > What's happening at the annual Employee Picnic?
- > What's the retirement incentive transition plan?
- > What's likely to happen this hurricane season?

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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

Levy Court approves FY2010 budget

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

It's final. The Kent County Fiscal Year 2010 budget was formally adopted by Levy Court on April 28 after months of preparation and much discussion about the economic downturn and its impact on revenues. The final plan reflects a \$1.6 million decrease in spending from FY09.

The approved \$43.2 million all funds combined budget provides for a six cent property tax increase and no pay increases for employees. Retirees also receive no pension increase next fiscal year. The budget reduces the number of funded positions from 325 to 305, with a number of other positions to remain unfilled for at least a year as a result of the recent retirement incentive offered to employees currently eligible to retire.

The General Fund's balanced budget totals \$21.8 million. It anticipates a 25% increase in property tax revenues due to the tax increase and growth in total assessed value, a 45% decrease in realty transfer taxes, and a 15% decrease in various fees collected, especially building permit and deed recordation fees. It also incorporated a cost reduction of \$522,700 reflecting salary line savings due to the retirement incentive implementation.

The Sewer Fund operating budget totals \$13.7 million plus another \$3.1 million in capital expenditures to be used for an elevated water storage tank (\$250,000), ultra-violet disinfection upgrade (\$600,000), bio-solids processing upgrades (\$150,000) and the Meadowbrook Acres Sewer District (\$300,000), Hideaway/Brookdale Sanitary Sewer District (\$1,006,000), vacuum truck (\$175,000) and other smaller projects.

The General Fund Capital Projects Budget totals \$129,300, and allocates \$100,400 toward infor-
(Continued on Page 8)

Go Green Kent Co!

Conserve At Home—Yard Care

🌱 Plant trees in your yard; Use a push mower to trim the lawn; Clear off the sidewalk and driveway with a broom instead of a blower; ... **1341**



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. DOROTHY DOYLE in the Information Technology Office and DIANA GOLT in the Engineering Division spotted their numbers in April.



Kent Co. Employee Obsessions

Take a minute to visit the display cases on the first and second floors of the Kent County Administrative Complex which feature a unique collection of handmade character dolls collected by Technology Administrator DOROTHY DOYLE. The second floor display case features a collection of NASCAR memorabilia amassed by Custodian ROLAND CARTER over the years.



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

HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL

SELF-MANAGEMENT—d. Be adept at using humor to illustrate, inspire and relieve tension; e. Leave others feeling good about who they are, and be particularly adept at incorporating the strengths of a diverse workforce to produce exceptional work products; g. Always arrive ahead of schedule and completely prepared; h. Take active measures to ensure that meetings are not interrupted.

COMMUNICATION—a. Be persuasive and compelling in the presentation of all ideas in every setting;...

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

EOM INSIGHT



Name: DENNIS W. CLARK

Job: Parks Worker III

Time with the County: 31 years, 7 months

Education: High school diploma; Park and Recreation Maintenance Management School at North Carolina State

My role as a County employee: Building and maintaining parks, supervising staff

What keeps my job interesting: New and different things to do every day

What gives me a sense of accomplishment on the job: Watching Kent County kids and residents enjoying our parks

Professional advice I would like to offer to other County employees: Be dependable!

Family: Wife (Gail) of 26 years, son (Robby), age 19

After work I enjoy: Hunting, playing softball, swimming in our pool

Favorite TV show: Sports Center

Favorite sport: Baseball

Favorite music: Country & Western, and a little Nellie

Favorite Kent County restaurant: Cool Springs

Favorite Kent County event: Safe Summer Day

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Derek Jeter, A-Rod, and Grandfather Ray

I'm most proud of: Coaching the 13-year-old Camden All-Stars to a state championship

Pet peeve: Aggressive drivers

If I've learned one thing in life, it's: Treat people the way you would like to be treated

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

Personal goals I have accomplished or would like to accomplish: Be debt free

If I could have been in any profession of my choosing, I would have been a: Professional hunting guide

If I could have two wishes, they would be: Hit the lottery, go deer hunting in Texas

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Am going to San Jose, California to play softball in the Senior Olympics in August

Retirement incentive nets 27 applicants

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

The word "success" can hardly describe how well the County's retirement incentive plan fared last month as the final eligible employees turned in the required paperwork on April 30 to qualify for five additional years of service or \$15,000 cash.



The incentive was proposed as one of a number of suggestions to re-

duce staff and help balance the FY2010 budget. The idea won approval in April from Levy Court, but most people believed that only about 12 would take advantage of the offering.

Of the 34 employees eligible for retirement, 27 took the incentive with all but two opting for the five years of additional service rather than the \$15,000 in cash. All together, the group represents 588 combined years of service to Kent County.

The estimated salary and benefit savings for FY2010 exceed \$1 million, which is achieved by keeping 17 positions vacant and filling the remaining 10 essential positions at the entry level pay rate.

Most of the group is retiring effective May 31, which is expected to save the County about \$85,000 in salaries for the remainder of FY2009. Some will work until June 30, to assist with position transition.

Employees taking advantage of the retirement incentive include: DAVID BAKER, RICHARD BAKER, REINHOLD BETSCHEL, CONNIE BUTLER, KAY BROWN, DENNIS CLARK, JODY COULBOURNE, LOU COX, SOFIA CULVER, SOPHIE DEAR, RICHARD DEMPSEY, PENNY GIBBS, JUNE GLADDEN, SHARON IVORY, JANET LLOYD, RICHARD KRUEGER, JOYCE MELVIN, ALLEN METHENY, JAN MORRIS, LINDA PFEIFFER, MERRITT SAVAGE, BARBARA SCHROEDER, KEITH SCHWAMBERGER, CARL SOLBERG, HARRY VANSANT, ROBERT WAYMAN, and JAMES WELSH.

The primary purpose for the incentive was to reduce current personnel costs, which exceeds \$1.6
(Continued on Page 6)

Kent County Levy Court Administrative staff honored on special day

By Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Administrative Professionals Day, April 22, was an extra-special day for all members of Kent County's secretarial and clerical staff as each received a carnation and were honored by their coworkers and supervisors.

After the ballots were counted in the annual Favorite Administrative Professional poll, ANGEL SHORT, Administrative Secretary for the Department of Community Services, was named "Kent County's Favorite Administrative Professional." She received a special gift basket.



Angel Short

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

Pension/Retiree Benefits changes proposed for new hires

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Several ordinances have been introduced for public hearing on May 12 that will change benefit levels for Kent County employees hired after the adoption date.

Levy Court Commissioners will hear public testimony on LC09-19, which will require new hires to contribute 3 percent toward their County pension plan. LC09-20 would reduce the pension multiplier
(Continued on Page 10)



ON THE MOVE. . .

Compiled by Yvonne Messina, Personnel Technician I

Retirements

03/31/2009 ROBERT WAYMAN, Security Guard, Grade 3, Public Works/Facilities Management

04/30/2009 SOFIA CULVER, Account Specialist III, Grade 9, Finance

04/30/2009 RICHARD KRUEGER, Asst. Director of Community Services/Libraries Division, Grade 15

Milestones

04/05/1999 SUSAN HITCHENS, Account Analyst—10 years

04/28/1999 RICHARD SCHLAUCH, Paramedic II —10 years

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



May 1, 2009 - Youth in Government Day. High School students will learn about County government in day-long events.

May 3-9, 2009 - National County Government Week. Raise awareness about the role and responsibilities of county government.

May 6, 2009 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Wastewater Facility from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

May 13, 2009 - Blood Pressure Checks at the Library at 9:00 am. Kent County Administrative Complex Room 257, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

May 13, 2009 - L&W Insurance rep. available to answer health insurance questions from 1:00-2:00 p.m., Kent County Administrative Complex Room 213.

May 15, 2009 - Bank at Work information offered by Citizens Bank from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the Kent County Administrative Complex rotunda. Stop by for information and free gifts.

May 20, 2009 - AFLAC Insurance rep. available to answer questions from 9:00—1:00 p.m. Kent County Administrative Complex, Room 221.

May 20, 2009 - Staff Development Session on Enhancing your Career as a Strategic Employee will be held at 9:00 a.m. in Room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

May 25, 2009 - Memorial Day holiday. County offices closed.

COUNTY BIRTHDAYS



MAY

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

JUNE

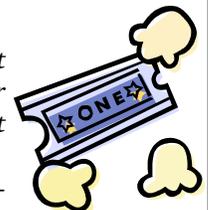
- 03 Barbara Schroeder, Finance
- 03 Danielle Lamborn, Planning Services/GIS
- 10 David Nesbit II, Public Safety/EMS
- 11 Kimberly Dixon, Tax Office
- 15 P. Brooks Banta, Levy Court President
- 18 Kathryn Gooden, Assessment Office
- 21 Barbara Stough, Finance
- 22 Mike Rigby, Community Services/Parks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

Discount Movie Tickets

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

The discount tickets now cost \$7.00 each, but they can be used for any movie on any day or time except 3-D and special engagement films.

Discount movie tickets is another great benefit for Kent County employees!



Employee health ins. premiums jump 9.3%

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Blue Cross Blue Shield added onto the 9.9% rate hike delivered last year by proposing employee health insurance renewal rates 9.3% higher beginning July 1, with major prescription co-payment changes.

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

After a 6.6% decrease two years ago and a just shy of 10% premium increase for the current year, Blue Cross Blue Shield won Levy Court approval with a 9.3% average rate increase.

While the final contract is not yet executed, there is no substantive change to the current coverages provided by the Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO and HMO options except that prescription copayments will increase from \$10/\$15/\$35 to \$10 for generics, \$25 for brand name, and \$50 for non-formulary drugs. The mail order prescription copayment will also double from \$10/\$15/\$35 to \$20/\$50/\$100 for a 90-day supply.

For eligible retirees on Medicare, the Blue Cross Special Medicfill prescription coverage charges will also increase from the current \$10/\$20/\$40 to \$10 for generic, \$25 for brand name, and \$50 for non-formulary, but has no maximum.

Last year Blue Cross noted that medical trends indicated a 10.26% rate increase for July 2009 if trends continued.

The County will continue to fully fund indi-

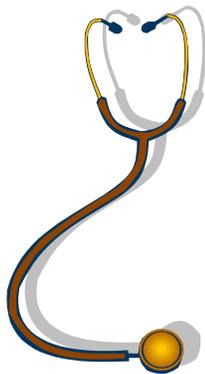
vidual employee and eligible retiree health insurance and pay 60% of the dependent cost. In addition, single employees with the lower cost HMO High coverage or Basic PPO will receive \$35 cash back each month, and employees with HMO Low coverage will receive \$50 cash back each month. Those employees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

New this year, is the Basic PPO-90%/70% option which mimics the basic plan offered to State of Delaware employees. The option includes an in-network \$500 deductible and \$1,500 coinsurance for individual employees and a \$1,000 deductible with maximum out of pocket coinsurance up to \$3,000 for dependent coverage. The deductible and coinsurance are doubled for out of network care.

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

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

The AFLAC representative will be making an information presentations on Wednesday, May 20 and will schedule appointments afterwards. Stop by the Personnel Office if you would like to schedule one. Remember, open enrollment is the only time **(Continued on Page 14)**



FY2010 DEPENDENT RATES	SPOUSE COVERAGE	CHILD(REN) COVERAGE	FAMILY COVERAGE	
PREFERRED (PPO-100%/75%)	\$348.04/month	\$160.64/month	\$481.91/month	
IPA HIGH (HMO-100%)	\$297.44/month	\$125.43/month	\$420.30/month	
IPA LOW (HMO-80%)	\$254.95/month	\$95.88/month	\$368.58/month	
BASIC (PPO-90%/70%)	\$320.28/month	\$141.32/month	\$448.11/month	
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT	\$134.94/month			
INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE	PREFERRED (PPO)	IPA (HMO) HIGH	IPA (HMO) LOW	Basic (90/70 PPO)
County pays 100% of Cost	\$669.32/month	\$614.31/month	\$568.13/month	\$639.14/month

FROM THE STACKS



Reviewed by Sandra Martin, Library Technician

Cross Country

By James Patterson

HEADLINE..."A Murder of Astounding Cruelty!!".

Detective Alex Cross returns to investigate the worst murder scene he has encountered in all his years on the police force. When Alex and his girlfriend, also a detective, delve into the case, they become aware that this case involves the deadly African underworld of Washington DC.

What they discover is so shocking that they can hardly understand it. Someone, with the name of Tiger, is killing entire families with his crew of pre-teen and young teen thugs. They overkill and make sure whoever finds the scene is horrified.

The killer decides to return to Nigeria to escape the crimes and Alex decides to follow him there to catch him. Once in Africa, however, all the rules change as Alex Cross knows them.

Different country, different rules. Gone is sane judgment and justice of America. It is basically a free for all—where even in Nigeria, the people and police force seem terrified of "Tiger" and will not or cannot help Detective Cross. He is beaten, robbed, jailed, thrown in dungeons and seems to be gone forever with no one knowing what happened to him. The people he thought he could trust are not who they seem.

It is one of the best novels of Patterson's that I have read in awhile. He seems to be his old self in this writing—full of suspense. So much so, you really don't want to put the book down. **9387** **9871**

Easter Egg Hunt Contest

Congratulations to JASON BERRY, DEBBIE PALMER, and TONY TIPAROD, each of whom found the Easter egg hidden in their office area with a free movie ticket inside. Amazingly two eggs with tickets have not been found, or at least reported. If you found it, let the Personnel Office know. **2661**



Recipe of the Month

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

MEXICAN GRILLED CORN

Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 25 minutes

2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons nonfat plain yogurt
½ teaspoon chili powder
4 ears corn (husked)
4 tablespoons finely shredded Cotija (see *Shopping Tip*) or Parmesan cheese
1 lime (quartered)



Preheat grill to medium-high.

Combine mayonnaise, yogurt and chili powder in a small bowl.

Grill corn, turning occasionally, until marked and tender, 8 to 12 minutes total. Spread each ear with 1 tablespoon of the sauce and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon Cotija (or Parmesan). Serve with lime wedges.

Shopping Tip: Cotija cheese, also called queso añejo or queso añejado, is an aged Mexican cheese similar in texture and flavor to parmesan. Find it near other specialty cheeses or in Mexican grocery stores.

Recipes courtesy www.delish.com/recipes

Retirement incentive nets 27

(Continued from Page 3)

million for those eligible, so where possible, vacancies will be filled by staff members reassigned from other departments/offices with less workload due to the slower housing market.

At the request of Levy Court, the County Administrator is formulating a plan detailing critical positions as well as potential transfers and reassignments required for the necessary savings to achieve a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2010.

Once finalized, information about which staff members may need to be reassigned and in what positions should disseminated during the month in anticipation of the May 31 exodus.

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

Become a mover & shaker in your workplace by changing

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

How can you become a real mover and shaker in your organization? How can you create a more meaningful, more rewarding, more critical role for yourself, and provide dramatic new value to the County?



The powerful secret is to change the way you envision and perform

your job, transforming yourself from a worker bee to a strategic player. Achieve that career-enhancing transformation by using the precise, real-world steps you must take to gain a new place at the table.

"Running with the Big Dogs" will be the topic of May's employee development session, which will be held **Wednesday, May 20**, at 9:00 a.m. in room 220 A/B in the Kent County Administrative Complex.

To sign up for this session, 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, simply show up and sign in. If you are interested in attending a session, please remember that there will not be an afternoon session to attend should you forget to attend the morning session.

Employees who attended the April session regarding facing change in the workplace were DEBBIE CLINE, MARY EISENBREY, JUNE GLADDEN, KATHY GOODEN, CYNTHIA JOHNSON, EVELYN
(Continued on Page 10)

Congratulations

Congratulations to RODNEY WYATT, Biosolids Technician I in Public Works/Wastewater Facilities and his wife Rhonda, on the birth of a daughter, Rakaiyah Alise Wyatt, on April 2, 2009. Rakaiyah weighed 8 lbs and 14 oz. and was 21" long. Best wishes to the whole family.

Delaware Hazmat conference has double interest

By Lt. David Mick, EMS Special Operations Supervisor

The 2nd Annual Delaware Hazmat Conference was held last month. Attendance was nearly doubled from last year and the entire function came off as a resounding success. Over 100 guests attended the Friday evening dinner which hosted keynote speaker Gregg Noll. The interaction of the crowd provided great networking opportunity.



The Saturday lectures and hands-on practical exercises kept the momentum going as about half of the Fire School facility was busy with conference sessions. The program had been expanded from last year so that concurrent presentations took place all day. The day was highlighted by the presentations from the Nevada and Delaware CSTs (Civil Support Team). The conference was such a success that for next year the committee may need to consider moving the date to a time when the conference can use the entire Fire School!

The Kent County Technical Rescue Team (a fire service based team; not a Levy Court entity) continues to make the transmission from being housed and hosted by the Dover Fire Department to the Cheswold Fire Company. An aggressive training schedule has been put in place and an equally aggressive recruitment effort is planned. Kent County Department of Public Safety is involved with this volunteer fire service program as a good number of medics are training with the team.

The National EMS Memorial Bike Ride will be coming to Delaware this month. The ride, which supports the memorial to EMS providers who have been injured or killed in the line of duty, will travel through the State on Monday, May 18, with ceremonies in Wilmington Manor, Legislative Mall, and Georgetown to honor Stephanie Calloway and Michelle Smith, both Delaware EMS providers who were lost last year. You can learn more about this organi-
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EMPLOYEE COUNCIL NEWS



By Michele Lapinski, Employee Council Secretary

The bi-weekly 50/50 raffles continue to roll on, with jackpots reaching up to, and occasionally beyond, the \$100 mark. Your next chances to win will be on May 1, May 15 and May 29. E-mail reminders will go out a day or two before. Good luck!

The Levy Court has set aside funding for the annual Employee Appreciation picnic which has been scheduled for June 10 on the grounds of the main administration building. Always popular, the picnic will feature all the standard "cook out" staples such as hamburgers, hotdogs, cold salads, baked beans, fresh fruit and iced tea. Be on the lookout for more information via email and *Kent Connections* as the date draws closer.

Your Employee Council members: BRENT MOLLOHAN, President; LORI SHORT, Vice-President; YVONNE MESSINA; Treasurer, MICHELE LAPINSKI, Secretary; members KIMM DIXON, PAT ORONA, and AUDREY STANFORD. **3720**

FY2010 budget approved

(Continued from Page 1)

mation technology upgrades and \$28,900 for cardiac monitors. The capital budget is a planning document and does not mean a project will be completed next year or ever.

Various other budgeted funds include \$2.5 million for contracted trash collection at more than 11,000 lots, \$735,000 from street lights serving 10,800 lots, and \$1.4 million for the community development block grant program, among others.

The document also incorporates a \$2.1 million pension fund contribution, a \$630,000 post-retirement benefits fund contribution, as well as operating cost increases for fuel and utilities.

"Cost savings measures implemented this past year have saved over \$2 million," said County Administrator MICHAEL PETIT de MANGE. "The newly adopted budget reflects a continuation of our conservative, lowest and best cost approach to spending. As we manage our way through this most challenging economy that most of us have ever seen, it is very gratifying and appreciated to see the high level of cooperation and understanding exhibited by our County employees."

Tech Talk



How do I Prevent Adware and Spyware?

By Mary Ratliff, Network Specialist

Has your computer been running slow lately? Do excessive Pop-Up Ads appear when Internet Explorer is open? Then, your computer might have Adware or Spyware installed on it.

Adware is software that displays advertisements, sometimes even when you are not on the Internet. At times, there can be so many pop-up ads that it prevents you from browsing the Internet at all. Spyware is software that sends personal information to a third-party without your knowledge or permission. This information can be about Web sites that you visit or even your user name and password. Spyware can also change your browser settings, such as your home page or your search page.

Adware and spyware are usually installed without your knowledge. One method of installation is when you click on a link to install it. It might be a window that looks like a Windows dialog box, but when you click the cancel button to close the box, it installs the software. Sometimes, spyware will install by inserting a fake title bar in an empty window. When you try to close the window, it installs its spyware. Another method of installation is by installing freeware, such as screensavers, weather applications, and toolbars that include the spyware. When you install a free file-sharing program, you may also be installing spyware or adware.

To prevent installing adware and spyware, do not install any freeware programs. Many of these programs contain adware and spyware with the software download. That is how the publishers make their money. Also, be careful about dialog boxes that pop up while you are on various websites and ask if you want to install and run the software in order to view the website. Some of them may even look similar to the Microsoft Security Warning windows. Make sure you read who the software publisher is and what the software is that you are installing. No software should be installed on Kent County computers that is not Kent County approved.

If you find that you have spyware or adware installed on your computer, please call the helpdesk. We will install programs, such as Malwarebytes and Spybot, that find and remove the adware and spy-

(Continued on Page 14)

Take precautions to avoid Swine flu infection

By Colin Faulkner, Director of Public Safety

Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Although human infections can and do happen, most cases are reported in pigs. The viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transition was limited and not sustained beyond three people. Between December 2005 and February 2009 only 12 cases of Swine Flu were reported from 10 states in the U.S., with no deaths occurring. Since March 2009, the CDC has investigated several hundred confirmed human cases of a new strain of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus in the United States.

Physicians diagnose Swine Flu based on symptoms and then confirm with laboratory tests. People with Swine Flu have symptoms similar to regular human flu: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people experience diarrhea and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, Swine Flu may worsen a pre-existing medical condition or cause a more severe illness such as pneumonia, respiratory failure, and even death. Children need urgent emergency medical care when they have trouble breathing, or breathe faster, when their skin turns a bluish color; and when they do not drink enough liquids. Other warning signs are not waking up or interacting; not wanting to be held; flu-like symptoms that improve but return with a fever and worse cough; and a fever with a rash. Adults need urgent emergency medical care when they have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, and when they have pain or pressure in their chest or abdomen. Other warning signs are sudden dizziness, confusion, and severe or persistent vomiting.

The CDC recommends oseltamivir or zanamivir for treating and preventing swine influenza infection. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicine (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that make illnesses milder,

prevent serious complications, and hasten recovery. Antiviral drugs work best to treat sick people if they begin within two days after symptoms appear. There is currently no vaccine available to protect humans from swine flu.



Swine Flu is spread when humans contact infected pigs or an environment contaminated with Swine Flu viruses. The virus can also be spread person-to-person through coughing or sneezing. You cannot get Swine Flu from eating pork or pork products. Swine flu viruses are not spread by food. It is safe to eat properly han-

dled and cooked pork products.

Take these steps to protect yourself from contracting Swine Flu. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are effective. Avoid close contact with sick people. People infected with Swine flu can be contagious for seven days or more. Stay home from work or school if you become sick, and limit contact with others. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

For more information contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov or U. S. Department of Health & Human Services: www.pandemicflu.gov.

Congratulations

Congratulations to BRANDON OLENIK, Dispatcher II in Public Safety/Emergency Communications and Amanda Marie Cox, an RN in the NICU unit at Kent General Hospital, on their marriage on April 18, 2009 at Lake Jacqueline in Las Vegas, Nevada. Their private reception was held at the fabulous Flamingo Hotel on the Strip where they honeymooned for a week. They also saw the Blue Man Group, and Penn and Teller, as well as toured the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam and Lake Meade. Best wishes!

BENEFIT BLURBS

By Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

According to OSHA, every year almost five million American workers are injured on the job or suffer an illness that is caused by some form of workplace hazard. More than half of these injuries and illnesses cause employees to miss time at work. It makes sense that whether employees function in a laboratory, in an office, a wastewater treatment facility, or out among the public, their safety is a crucial part of maintaining the viability of the County government as a business. Kent County Levy Court has teamed with Bayhealth Medical Center and Christiana Care Health System to promote a healthy and safe work environment,

Reminder – **Open Enrollment** is now taking place and will end on May 29, 2009. During Open Enrollment, you may add qualified dependents to your health, dental, and/or life insurance plans. You may also change your tier of coverage with the health plan – from PPO to IPA, or from IPA to PPO. If you wish to make such a change, please contact anyone in the Personnel Office.

In the past, an absence that was considered FMLA-qualifying did not count against an employee for Perfect Attendance. When the federal government enacted the changes with regard to military personnel, it changed that aspect of FMLA-qualifying leave – **it will now count against your consideration for eligibility for Perfect Attendance.**

If you have any questions about County benefits, please feel free to call the Personnel Office at 744-2312.

Become a mover & shaker

(Continued from Page 7)

JOPP, GALE MAAS, HOLLY MALONE, WAYNE McCARTY, YVONNE MESSINA, SHEILA ROSS, ANGEL SHORT, ALAN TYSON, and JAMES WELSH.

Last month KATHY GOODEN's name was inadvertently omitted from the list of attendees at the March training session. My apologies to Kathy!

High Praise

Kudos to GINA GLANDEN, Inspections & Enforcement, for recently passing the International Code Council Property Maintenance & Housing Inspector certification exam. *Way to go!!*

Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom discount tickets available to employees

The Kent County Personnel Office has received a cache of Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom discount coupons for the 2009 season. They were distributed with the payroll, but extras are available in the Personnel Office. Employees/retirees can save \$7 on each ticket purchased Monday thru Friday or \$4 Saturdays and Sunday.

Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom is the Northeast's premier family amusement park. They offer two great parks for the price of one featuring world-class coasters, 22 drenching water slides, breathtaking thrill rides, two huge wavepools and two tubing rivers. The one-of-a-kind Camp Snoopy, dozens of kids rides, high energy live shows and three water playlands just for kids, make Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom a complete family entertainment destination. New for 2009 is the amazing Snoopy Rocks! On Ice Show in the 600 seat Good Time theatre.

Don't forget the Halloween HAUNT on Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays from September 25 thru November 1.

For more information and directions, call 610-391-7690 or visit their website at www.dorneypark.com.

Pension/Retiree Benefits changes

(Continued from Page 3)

for new hires to 1.8%.

Another proposed ordinance to be heard the same night is LC09-17, which establishes a sliding scale for retiree benefits. Employees hired after the adoption date would have to work 20 or more years in order for the County to cover the full cost of retiree health benefits. Those working 15 to 19 years would be required to pay 25% of the cost, those new employees working 10 to 14 years will have to pay 50% and new hires working 5 to 9 years before retiring would have to pay 75% of the retiree benefit cost.

A final benefit related ordinance (LC09-16) to be heard May 12 would remove the Rule of 70 section from the Retiree Benefits Ordinance. This provision allows employees terminating County employment with age and years of service totaling 70 or more to remain on the County health/dental benefit program.

Anxiety disorders more than just “stress”

Compiled by Sophie F. Dear, Personnel Technician II

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It helps you deal with a tense situation at work, study harder for an exam, and keep focused on an important speech. It helps one cope. When anxiety becomes an extreme, unfounded dread of daily situations, it becomes a disabling disorder. The five major types of anxiety disorders are generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and social phobia (or social anxiety disorder).

Generalized anxiety disorder occurs when you feel worried and stressed about many daily events and activities. Often the things you are worried about are actually unimportant. This type of worry disrupts your life most days. Everyone gets worried and or anxious sometimes, but people with generalized anxiety disorder have more than normal everyday worries. It can manifest at any age, but usually starts when you are a child or teenager. Most people with generalized anxiety disorder have felt nervous or anxious as long as they can recall. About five percent of people have generalized anxiety disorder at some time, and women are twice as likely as men to have it. Many people with it also have other problems such as depression, other anxiety illnesses, alcohol abuse, or personality disorder.

The cause of generalized anxiety disorder is not known; some studies show that it might be genetic, and passed through the family. Problems such as hyperthyroidism can cause its symptoms. Some medicines can cause worry and stress or make your stress worse, such as medicines with amphetamines (Ritalin) or too much caffeine. Illegal drugs such as cocaine can also cause these symptoms. Be sure to talk with your doctor about any medicines you are taking.

People who have generalized anxiety disorder get worried and stressed about many things almost daily, and have a tough time controlling their worry. Adults with this problem often worry about money, family, health, or work. Children often worry about how well they can do an activity, such as school or sports. There may also be physical symptoms, such as feeling tired or irritable; having a hard time concentrating; having headaches or muscle

aches; having a hard time swallowing; feeling shaky; sweating or having hot flashes; feeling light headed, sick to your stomach; out of breath; having to go to the bathroom often; feeling like you can't relax; being startled easily; and having problems falling or staying asleep.

Two kinds of therapy used to treat generalized anxiety disorder are applied relaxation therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy. In applied relaxation therapy, your therapist might ask you to imagine a calming situation to help you relax. In cognitive-behavioral therapy, you will learn how to think positive thoughts instead of worrisome thoughts.

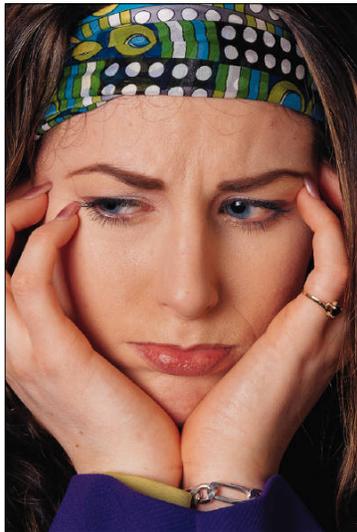
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by repeated, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and/or repetitive behaviors (compulsions). Repetitive behaviors such as hand washing, counting, checking, or cleaning are often performed with the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or making them go away. Performing these “rituals” provides only temporary relief; not performing them markedly increases anxiety. People with OCD may be fixated on germs or dirt, and repeatedly wash their hands. They may be filled with doubt and feel the need to check things over and over.

Panic disorder is characterized by unpredicted and repeated episodes of extreme fear accompanied by physical symptoms that may include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, or abdominal distress.

People with panic disorder have feelings of terror that strike swiftly and repeatedly with no warning. In a panic attack, odds-on your heart will pound and you may feel sweaty, weak, faint, or dizzy. Your hands may tingle or feel numb, and you might feel flushed or chilled. You may have nausea, chest pain or smothering sensations, a sense of unreality, or fear of impending doom or loss of control.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop after exposure to a petrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Events that may cause PTSD include brutal personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat. People with PTSD have constant terrifying thoughts and memories of their

(Continued on Page 12)



Anxiety disorders not stress

(Continued from Page 11)

ordeal and feel emotionally numb, particularly with those they were once close to, and may have sleep problems, feel detached or numb, or be easily startled.

Social phobia is characterized by crushing anxiety and extreme self-consciousness in daily social situations. Social phobia can be limited to only one type of situation – such as fear of speaking in formal or informal situations, or eating or drinking in front of others – or, at its worst, may be so big that a person experiences symptoms almost anytime they are around other people. People with social phobia have a constant and powerful fear of being watched and judged by others and being embarrassed by their own actions. Their fear may be so acute that it interferes with work, school, and other regular activities. Physical symptoms (blushing, profuse sweating, trembling, nausea, and difficulty talking) often go with the intense anxiety.

If you think you have an anxiety disorder, the first person you should see is your family doctor. A physician can determine whether the symptoms that alarm you are due to an anxiety disorder, a medical situation, or both. If an anxiety disorder is diagnosed, the next step is usually seeing a mental health professional. The practitioners who are most helpful with anxiety disorders are those with training in cognitive-behavioral therapy and/or behavioral therapy, and are open to using medication if needed. Effective treatments for anxiety disorders exist, and research is yielding new, enhanced therapies that can help most people with anxiety disorders lead dynamic, rewarding lives. You should be at ease talking with the mental health professional you choose. If not, you should seek help elsewhere. When you find a professional with whom you are relaxed, you should work as a team and make a plan to treat your anxiety disorder together.

Remember that once you start on medication, it is vital not to stop taking it abruptly. Certain drugs must be tapered off under the care of a doctor or bad reactions can occur. Make sure you talk to the doctor who prescribed the medication before you stop taking it. If you are troubled by side effects, it's possible that they can be eliminated by adjusting how much medication you take and when you take it.

Most insurance plans, including HMOs, will cover treatment for anxiety disorders (the County's Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware plan does).

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CAT BOX



By Cathleen McLean, Payroll Administrator

When Are Accruals Really Added to my Balances?

Like clockwork, every month after the first payroll of the month, the Personnel Office receives numerous calls about the addition of accruals for the previous month. Most employees seem to know how many hours are accrued each month. They are also aware of when the next change/increase will accrue. What the employees are not sure about is the exact date the accrual actually gets added to their balances.

First, everyone should know that the time earned or to be earned is available for the employee to use on the first day of each month. If the employee needs to use that time before it is updated through the payroll system the Payroll Coordinator can call me and an adjustment can be made so that the time can be used. But the time will actually accrue from the computer/payroll system perspective during the pay period or on the pay date that includes the last day of the previous month and the first day of the next month. Here is an example:

The payroll date is 05/01/09, the payroll that is being paid on that pay date includes the dates 04/12/09 thru 04/25/09. No accruals will be added on that pay date. The next pay date is 05/17/09, that payroll includes 04/26/09 thru 05/09/09. The dates of that payroll include the date that accruals are added, so the accrual figures on the direct deposit statement will be increased.

Generally the pay date is six days after the end of the second payroll week. The accruals available that you see on the back of your Direct Deposit Statement are current to the last date of the payroll week that is being paid on any pay date. If anyone has further questions please call 744-2387.

Congratulations

Congratulations to SABRINA FITE, GIS Specialist in Planning Services/GIS Division and her husband Brett on the birth of their daughter Mei-Li Keira Fite. Mei-Li was born Wednesday, April 15, 2009 at 3:45 p.m. She weighed 7 lb. 7 oz. and is 20 1/4" long. Best wishes to the whole family.

Kent County offers verification cards to Amish faithful

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

The War on Terror has even reached the simple lives of the Amish community of Kent County, but Levy Court has found a way to help by issuing a non-photo verification card to persons holding religious beliefs prohibiting photographs.

Recently the State of Delaware informed the local Amish community that it would be unable to issue non-photo identification cards in order to comply with federal anti-terrorism regulations.

Interestingly, other states such as Ohio and Indiana have no intentions of stopping the issuance of non-photo IDs to their Amish communities.

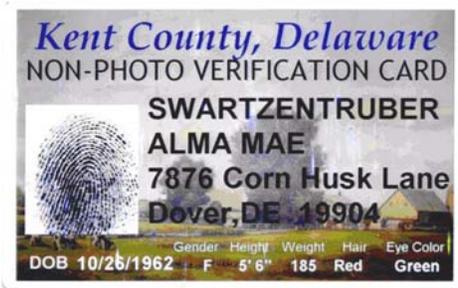
Nevertheless, Levy Court Commissioner P. BROOKS BANTA worked diligently to craft a solution to the problem. That effort resulted in the adoption on Kent County Levy Court Policy 25-4, which provides for the issuance of a non-photo verification card to persons holding certain religious convictions.

According to the policy a person desiring such a card must complete an application form and have it executed by a religious official verifying the information contained therein. The applicant must also submit a certified copy of their birth certificate and pay a \$40 fee. The cards are only available to Kent County residents.

As a result of the new policy, County employees may see an influx of Amish buggies in the parking lot and men wearing straw hats or women in bonnets lined up outside the Personnel Office where the cards are issued.

The verification card features an authentic pastoral farm scene from Kent County with a digital thumb print, signature and descriptive information.

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



lives of the Amish community of Kent County, but Levy Court has found a way to help by issuing a non-photo

Spend the Summer being Creative @ Your Library

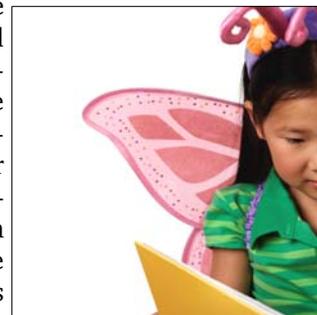
By Kristi Rinckenberg, Library Technician

It's that time a year again: the sun is shining, the birds are singing, we are all getting sunburn, and the library is full of children. Every summer the Kent County Public Library hosts a Summer Reading Program that promotes reading for children of all ages. This year, the theme of the program is Be Creative @ Your Library. Registration for the program will begin on Monday, June 2nd. All reading logs will need to be turned in by Friday, August 14th.

Throughout the summer, children are encouraged to read for a total of ten hours. It doesn't matter what they read – books, magazines, newspapers, even the back of cereal boxes – as long as they are reading, we are happy.

Parents need to bring their children in to the library or the bookmobile to register. At least one person will need a valid library card. Once the children are signed up, they will receive a reading log, a list of the variety of programs offered over the summer, and an activity sheet that will give them the opportunity to win more prizes. Once the children reach ten hours of reading time, they can redeem their reading logs for a certificate signed by the governor, a book, a ticket to our Summer Reading Celebration, and a chance to win a prize drawing sponsored by the Friends of the Kent County Library. If they continue to read, they can choose more prizes from the treasure chest. Children are encouraged to read and attend library programs as often as possible throughout their summer vacation.

We also received a donation of four tickets to any Blue Rocks game this season. They include one Blue Rocks t-shirt. If children sign up for the Summer Reading Program by June 30th, they will be entered in a drawing for the tickets. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to get your children to read over the summer!



Anxiety disorders not stress

(Continued from Page 12)

Many people with anxiety disorders gain from joining a self-help or support group and sharing their problems and achievements with others. Internet chat rooms can be useful, but any advice received this way should be used with caution, as Internet contacts have usually never seen each other and false identities are common. Talking with a trusted friend or member of the clergy can also provide support, but it is not a stand-in for care from a mental health professional.

Stress management techniques and meditation can help people with anxiety disorders calm themselves and may boost the effects of therapy. There is evidence that aerobic exercise may have a calming effect. Since caffeine, certain illicit drugs, and even some over-the-counter cold medications can worsen the symptoms of anxiety disorders, they should be avoided. Check with your physician or pharmacist before taking any added medications.

Family is vital in the healing of a person with an anxiety disorder. Ideally, the family should be caring but not help enable their loved one's symptoms. Family members should not belittle the disorder or demand progress without treatment. If your family is doing either of these things, you may want to share this information with them so they can become educated allies and help you succeed in therapy.

Information from www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics and www.health.msn.com/health-topics

Tech Talk

(Continued from Page 8)

ware. Even with these programs, it is difficult to remove the adware and spyware. It is much better to prevent the installation by not installing any programs that are freeware, including screensavers, toolbars, and weather applications. **4366**

Delaware Hazmat conference

(Continued from Page 6)

zation and event at www.muddyangels.com or www.nemsmbr.org and you can register for a "day ride" if you would like to participate.

Let us all take a few moments and keep the Peterman and Davies families in our thoughts. The reason for such innocent loss may always escape us. Heaven has three more angels. **8225**

SOFIA



As you retire.....
 We wish you days to sit and relax in
 the sun,
 Days to get out and have some fun.
 We wish you time to spend with
 those you hold dear,
 And time to watch Taylor and Sage lead a cheer.
 We wish you pleasant times watching Hunter play ball,
 And hope that you get plenty of photos of them all.
 We wish you sunny weather for your time in the Keys,
 And when you take Katie and Cameron in, don't go past
 your knees.
 We wish you the best and hate to see you go,
 But a new chapter in your life awaits and we can't tell
 you no.
 You will miss working and all of us - we're sure of it,
 But we also have little doubt that it will take much to
 get over it,
 For a bottle of wine and a poolside chair
 Will certainly take away all your cares.
 For you we wish the best times of your life,
 Enjoy them to the fullest and let no one add a bit of
 strife.
 You have given us all cherished memories and you are
 certainly one of a kind,
 Your caring, giving, loving, laughing, will always be on
 our mind.
 Your times ahead will be full and busy and when you
 think it doesn't get any better.....
 Donna and David, Lana and Donnie.....welcome to the
 ever available **babysitter!!!!!!**

Sofia Culver, Account Specialist III in the Department of Finance, retired on April 30, 2009 after almost 22 years of service to Kent County.

Employee health rates jump

(Continued from Page 5)

health, dental or supplemental life insurance option changes can occur and the only time employees can add, delete or make changes to most AFLAC supplemental insurances such as cancer, accident, sickness, short-term disability, or intensive care plans, and tax-free flexible spending accounts for medical expenses (such as co-payments, prescriptions, etc.) and child care. Anyone currently with a flex spending account must reenroll annually.

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

Enroll in optional employee life ins. in May

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

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

In order to estimate your monthly rate—if eligible, multiply your FY2010 annual salary by 0.5, 1, 2, or 3 times, then round up to the nearest \$1,000, then divide by 1,000 and multiply by the rate in the table.

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

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

To sign up or for more information, stop by the Personnel Office during the month of May.

FY2010 Supplemental Term Life Insurance Rates

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

Term life insurance for dependents available through Cigna

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

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

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

Parents may also purchase term life for their children up to \$500 for newborns from 14 days to 6 months, and up to \$10,000 from 6 months to age 19 or age 25 if a full-time student. The rate for children (1 child or several children costs the same price) coverage is 20 cents per thousand or \$2.00 per month.

Retirees are not eligible for the dependent coverage.

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

LEVY COURT OKS 1% PENSION CONTRIBUTION

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

In an effort to balance the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, Levy Court had to raise property tax rates and require County employees to start contributing to their defined benefit pension plan.

The new pension contribution is effective July 1, 2009 and will be deducted from paychecks for the first time on July 10, 2009. The 1% is expected to raise about \$130,000 and will reduce the County's required \$2,133,498 annual contribution by that amount. The contribution was based on an actuarial valuation completed in March, which increased the pension contribution by almost \$1 million.

Very few defined benefit pension plan contain a no employee contribution provision like Kent County's. State of Delaware employees contribute 3% after the first \$6,000 of compensation. City of Dover employees contribute 3.50%, Wilmington employee pitch in 2.5% of pay. Sussex County employees cur-

rently contribute \$0, but Sussex County Council is considering a contribution as a way to address a budget shortfall there. In New Castle County, employees contribute 3% of gross pay after the first \$6,000.

As of December 31, 2008, the County's pension plan had assets valued at \$18,294,658, which was down from the prior calendar year. Ironically, the fund performed better than the State Pension plan which scored a -23.5% compared to -21.4% for the County fund for the calendar year.

Due to a Delaware Constitution provision prohibiting the reduction of pay for elected officials during their term of office, the 1% contribution cannot be deducted from Commissioner or Row Officer salaries until their current term expires, but all eligible Commissioners have indicated they intend to voluntarily make the contribution.

Employees terminating employment before vesting would be reimbursed the 1% contribution.

SOME ANSWERS TO THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

By Allan Kujala, Personnel Director

Q. *I think it so rude when employees continue to speak on their personal cell phones when a customer is waiting. I think employees should be forbidden to speak on their personal cell phone unless it is an emergency. What do you think?*

A. I have heard that personal cell phone calls are becoming a problem here at the County. While I haven't personally observed it, the very scenario you describe as been reported to the powers-that-be more than a few times. I agree that it is rude. Employees should not make or receive personal cell phone calls at work, just like you should not receive such calls on the County telephone system. If you need to make a cell phone call, do it during your break or during the lunch period. Obviously, emergency cell phone calls are always allowed, but talking on your personal cell phone instead of working or serving the public is a big no-no. A County policy to ban personal cell phone use during work hours has NOT yet been drafted, but it could be if this pattern continues. So, please stop.

Q. *I want to know why during these difficult economic times that a co-worker of mine is being allowed to earn overtime?*

A. Employees need to do all they can to avoid the accrual of overtime. This can be done by flexing hours worked earlier in the week, by working fewer hours the next day or later in the week. Employees should help their supervisor with this issue by recognizing when overtime might occur and suggest a flex schedule during the same week to cover the extra time worked. If an emergency occurs later in the work week which requires extra hours, often it is impossible to flex out the extra time worked. With respect to the specific case you cite here, the overtime was an oversight. Sometimes things like this fall through the cracks. I have been assured that hours worked will be more closely monitored in your office.

Q. *I have a budget saving suggestion—why not get rid of the paid day off for perfect attendance. Most employees earning this are salaried and abuse the “perfect” attendance rules anyway.*

A. Perhaps, this employee motivator has run its course. But, a day off with pay does not really “cost” the budget anything in dollars & cents. It would im-

pact productivity, but since the honoree came to work every day for a year they are probably very productive people—not to say the absent one's aren't productive when they come to work. I did a quick check, and of the 58 with perfect attendance in 2008—only 16 were salaried or about 28 percent.

Q. *I want to voice my concern about the retirement incentive. I feel that once someone retires they should not be allowed to come back to work, especially since they just got a big bonus to leave. If they need to work, then they should not retire. If we fill a position, it should be given to someone out of work and in need of money.*

A. I hear what you are saying, and it seems very logical. But then you look at the numbers. We recently had one retiree figure out that if she retired and then worked seasonally for the County, we would save over \$50,000 a year. That is a hard number to ignore. We also have some folks retiring that possess highly specialized skills or required certifications, that might be difficult to quickly replace. If we could save some funds by contracting with the retired employee for a short time while searching for a qualified replacement, wouldn't that make sense? One could argue that we should have other staff members prepared to step up when vacancies like these occur, but in a small organization it is near impossible to have two people similarly trained in all aspects of each other's job—especially in upper management. It is a nice idea, but citizens would then likely say the County is overstaffed.

Q. *I am so hoping you can explain something to me. Why oh why do the County paramedics leave the paramedic vehicle idling while attending a lengthy meeting? It seems to be a waste of gasoline to me.*

A. Clearly, what you have described is unacceptable. No County employee should needlessly waste fuel by idling a County vehicle. I am unsure what the situation was you encountered, but depending on the outside temperature it could be a problem for some medical supplies stored on the paramedic unit. Needless to say, no employee should keep the vehicle running to maintain the interior temperature for personal comfort reasons. Employees should treat the County vehicle like they are paying for the gasoline out of their own pocket. Thanks for your query.