

# Courier

Look for the  
Onthank Award winners  
in the July 6 issue!

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## Celebrate Fairfax! 2007

In a blink of an eye, the Government Center's commuter parking lot was transformed into a magical wonderland of kiddie rides for Celebrate Fairfax! – it was officially summer in Fairfax County.

The June 8-10 event, which annually attracts an estimated 70-75,000 visitors and participants to the Government Center complex, includes rides, crafts, food vendors and several stages of entertainment.

Hundreds of county employees, undaunted by the high temperatures and muggy weather, enjoyed Sneak Peek on Friday, June 8. Clutching cups of cold lemonade and ice cream cones, employees checked out the crafts, took rides on the



*The Department of Systems Management for Human Services (DSMHS) booth was a popular destination at Celebrate Fairfax! The team that worked at the booth on Saturday included (left to right) volunteer David Bendana and DSMHS employees Shamimara Siddiquee, Roxana Flores and Paulette Whiteside.*

Ferris wheel and bumper cars, and spun wheels of chance for prizes.

County employees also spent countless hours planning and setting up the agency booths for the County Expo.

"The quality of presentations at this year's County Expo was a great reflection of our exceptional county services, allowing our residents

to see firsthand the many things we do for the community and to meet the dedicated county employees behind it all," said Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly**. Look for the complete list of award-winning agency booths and more photos on pages 4 and 5.

*Celebrate, see page 4*

## Q&A: The Two New Leave Benefits

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, last fall the county's leave programs were compared to other jurisdictions and organizations.

The county's programs were found to equal or surpass those of other jurisdictions for most types of leave. However, two new programs were recommended and approved by the board to provide bereavement and volunteer activity leave.

### Bereavement Leave

#### *When can bereavement leave be used?*

Bereavement leave can be used for the death of a member of an employee's immediate family or household following the guidelines that are already in place for sick leave in Chapter 10 of the Personnel Regulations ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/regs\\_pdf/chap10.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/regs_pdf/chap10.pdf)). Bereavement needs

*Leave, see page 2*

*Leave, from page 1*

beyond the 16 hours can be accommodated through the use of sick leave with supervisor approval.

***What is the effective date eligible employees will be able to utilize bereavement leave?***

The benefit becomes effective pay period 15, which begins July 7. Eligible employees will be able to utilize bereavement leave.

***Who is eligible for this type of leave and how much?***

Full-time merit employees are eligible to use up to 16 hours of bereavement leave per leave year (leave year is defined as starting pay period 2 through pay period 1 of the following year, i.e. 1/5/08-1/02/09). Merit employees not scheduled to work 80 hours per pay period will be eligible for bereavement leave on a pro-rated basis (refer to the chart on next page). Bereavement leave hours are not accrued and will not be carried over from year to year.

***Are exempt limited-term or exempt part-time employees eligible for bereavement leave?***

No, at this time limited-term and exempt part-time employees are not eligible for paid leave benefits.

***How is this leave recorded and tracked for time and attendance records?***

The following sub-object codes have been set up in Prism: 511 (regular merit), 711 (second merit), 811 (Fire and Rescue shift employees). Employees will be able to go into TIME under the time balances inquiry screen and see the amount that has been used year to date.

**Volunteer Activity Leave**

***When can volunteer activity leave be used?***

Volunteer activity leave can be used by employees who participate in activities and initiatives to support the neighborhoods in which they live and work. This includes educational and charitable institutions, religious/faith-based and community service entities (<http://infoweb/hr/promem/34.pdf>).

Examples: Parent/teacher organization activities (chaperones for organized student events to include field trips, classroom monitors/aides), mentoring programs, Meals on Wheels, Adopt a Street or Adopt a Solider

initiatives, American Red Cross or faith-based mission/relief programs (disaster/emergency assistance).

***What is the effective date eligible employees will be able to utilize volunteer activity leave?***

The benefit becomes effective pay period 15, which begins July 7. Eligible employees will be able to utilize volunteer activity leave.

***Who is eligible for this type of leave and how much?***

Full-time merit employees are eligible to use up to 16 hours of voluntary leave per leave year (leave year is defined as starting pay period 2 through pay period 1 of the following year, i.e. 1/5/08-1/02/09). Merit employees not scheduled to work 80 hours per pay period will be eligible for bereavement leave on a pro-rated basis (refer to the chart on next page). Volunteer activity leave hours are not accrued and will not be carried over from year to year.

***Are exempt limited term or exempt part-time employees eligible for voluntary activity leave?***

No, at this time limited-term and exempt part-time employees are not eligible for paid leave benefits.

***How do I coordinate time off using this type of leave?***

An employee who wishes to use volunteer leave must submit a request in advance to his/her supervisor using established departmental procedures that includes the date, time, general purpose and estimated length of absence. Departments have the option to use the form included in Procedural Memorandum 34 Non-Job-Related Employee Activities Allowable During Work Hours (<http://infoweb/hr/promem/34.pdf>). Every effort will be made to minimize disruption of the work schedule. Departments may establish minimum time increments away from work (e.g. one, two or four hours) based on operational needs.

***How is this leave recorded and tracked for time and attendance records?***

The following sub-object codes have been set up in Prism: 516 (regular merit), 716 (second merit), 816 (Fire and Rescue shift employees). Employees will be able to go into TIME under

the time balances inquiry screen and see the amount that has been used year to date.

***I currently participate in Fairfax County's volunteer poll worker and blood donation program, is that considered volunteer activity leave?***

No, activities such as the county's volunteer poll worker and blood donation events are established programs covered under existing policies and will continue to be covered by administrative leave as outlined in those procedures.

***Since we are halfway through the leave year, for the remainder of the 2007 how do I coordinate my volunteer activity hours?***

County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** has approved the use of up to 16 hours of volunteer activity leave through the end of this calendar year where the department head or supervisor can accommodate the employee's absence without disruption to the agency's services.

For more information on bereavement and volunteer activity leave contact the Department of Human Resources Employee Relations Division at 703-324-3495, TTY 711. ■

**Pro-rated leave hours for merit employees:**

Scheduled Hours Per Week	Maximum Bereavement Leave Hours Per Year	Maximum Volunteer Activity Leave Hours Per Year
10.0	4.0	4.0
20.0	8.0	8.0
23.0	9.2	9.2
24.0	9.6	9.6
25.0	10.0	10.0
26.5	10.6	10.6
32.0	12.8	12.8
35.0	14.0	14.0
36.0	14.4	14.4
40.0	16.0	16.0
42.0	16.0	16.0
56.0	24.0	24.0

## Fire Prevention Relocates Offices

The Fire and Rescue Department's Fire Prevention Division has relocated to the Burkeholder Building (near the Massey Building) at 10700 Page Avenue, Fairfax.

The sections and branches within the Fire Prevention Division are as follows; please note all numbers are TTY 711.

Office of the Fire Marshal:  
703-246-4753

### **Fire Prevention Services Section**

Inspections Branch:  
703-246-4849

Fire Protection Systems Testing Branch:  
703-246-4821

Engineering Plans Review Branch:  
703-246-4806

Revenue and Records Branch:  
703-246-4800 (recording with information)  
703-246-4803

### **Hazardous Materials and Investigative Services Section**

Investigations Branch:  
703-246-4741

Hazmat Branch:  
703-246-4386

Normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Holiday and after-hour emergencies should be directed to the Department of Public Safety Communications for the on-call inspector. ■

**To learn more about the Fire and Rescue Department go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/)**

Celebrate, from page 1

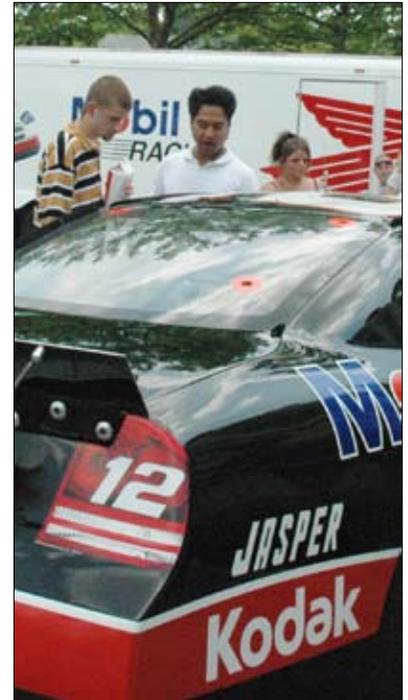
# A Sneak Peek of



Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerald E. Connolly (center) enjoys Sneak Peek with several members of his staff, including (left to right) Lindsey Mehan, Dominic Bonaiuto, Brian Clifford, Rhonda Gillis, Matt Graham, Catherine Lunsford and Charles Wilson-deGrazia.



LaSondra Moore, Department of Family Services, School Age Child Care (SACC), lends a helping foot to the building of the Godspeed replica that was on display at the front of the Government Center.



Health Department employees (left to right) Allyn Worden and Alex Mounkhaty check out the race car that was featured at the Mobil booth. Photo by Zayna Fayyad.

## Agency Booth Award Winners

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Solid Waste Division, was the winner of the 2007 Best in Show award among county booths participating in Celebrate Fairfax!

Several representatives from area organizations and companies were judges.

“Each year, I am so impressed by the dedication, creativity and enthusiasm of county employees,” noted County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin**. “From set up on Friday through dismantling on Sunday, so

many of you contribute your time and talent. The exhibits are always first-rate.”

The following agencies also received awards for their creative and educational booths:

**Content:**

- ◆ 1st Place: DPWES – Wastewater Management
- ◆ 2nd Place: Health Department
- ◆ 3rd Place: DPWES – Land Development Services

**Communications:**

- ◆ 1st Place: Auxiliary Police
- ◆ 2nd Place: Office of Elections

- ◆ 3rd Place: Crimesolvers

**Design:**

- ◆ 1st Place: Fairfax Water
- ◆ 2nd Place: Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
- ◆ 3rd Place: General District Court

**Judges Choice:**

- ◆ 1st Place: DPWES – Stormwater Management
- ◆ 2nd Place: Department of Public Safety Communications
- ◆ 3rd Place: Park Authority ■

# Celebrate Fairfax!

*Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff were happy to share their mapping technology on display at their booth. Pictured (left to right) are Mike Liddle, Jared Dunbar and Tom Conry.*



*Wes Blackwell, Department of Vehicle Services (DVS), spins the prize wheel in the DVS booth for Maritza De La Vega, Library.*



*Susan Jones, Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection, takes a whirl in a bumper car during Sneak Peek.*



*The county employee band DC Transit provided Motown music during Sneak Peek. Photo by Zayna Fayyad.*

## Focus on Benefits



HR Central  
has benefit  
information.  
703-324-4900,  
TTY 703-222-7314

# Your Opinion Counts!

As part of the Department of Human Resources' efforts for continuous service improvement, the Employee Benefits Division will be conducting an employee survey that measures satisfaction with benefit programs and services.

The findings from the employee survey will be considered as benefit program changes are made in the upcoming years.

The survey is scheduled to be issued this month, and all benefit-eligible employees are encouraged to participate. Instructions on how to access the survey will be communicated to employees through NewsLink.

Employees who do not have access to the Infoweb may obtain a paper copy of the survey through their payroll contact. ■

# Pay for Performance Training Update

The Department of Human Resources has completed the Pay for Performance (P4P) update training.

More than 1,500 managers, supervisors and directors and more than 1,000 employees attended training on the P4P revisions that become effective in FY 2008, which begins next month. The revisions are a result of the recent compensation study. For more information, go to <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>.

Employees who could not attend the employee sessions can review the P4P updates and compensation changes presentation

on DVD. Each agency has been provided a copy, and copies are also available for lending through the Library by calling ELLVIS at 703-324-8318, TTY 703-324-8365, or e-mailing [john.kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:john.kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Please note that a DVD presentation on the supervisor training is not available.

If you have any questions about the P4P changes, call HR Central at 703-324-4900, TTY 703-222-7314, or go to the Compensation Task Force Web page at <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>. ■

# Don't Forget to Add Baby or Spouse

Newborn children and newly eligible spouses are not automatically enrolled in health coverage. In order to enroll them in your health coverage, you must take the following steps within 60 days of the child's birth or the spouse's date of eligibility:

- ◆ Complete a Fairfax County Government Health, Dental and Flexible Spending Account Enrollment/Change Form, indicating that you are adding a new dependent.
- ◆ Send or bring the completed form, along with a birth certificate or a copy of the proof-of-birth letter from the hospital, or marriage certificate to the Employee Benefits Division, DHR, Suite 270 at the Government Center.

For newborns, coverage will be effective retroactive to the date of birth. For spouses, coverage will be effective the first day of the month following receipt of the properly completed form.



**You have 60 days to add your baby to your health coverage.**

If you do not enroll the child or spouse within 60 days, you cannot enroll them until the next open enrollment period, unless you experience a qualifying event that permits earlier enrollment.

For more information on enrolling new family members in health coverage, call HR Central at 703-324-4900, TTY 703-222-7314. ■

## Briefs

## Government Center Parking Lot Paving

The Facilities Management Department (FMD) is paving the Government Center parking lots. The paving is expected to take several weeks. Check NewsLink for updates on this project, including dates when lots will be closed.

Some of the work will be accomplished during nights and weekends to help minimize disruption to county business. For a map of the parking lot go to <http://infoweb/FMD> and click on Government Center Parking Lot Map. If you have questions or need reasonable ADA accommodations, call the FMD Work Control Center at 703-324-2055, option 1, TTY 711.

## Fairfax Connector Introduces New Buses



The Department of Transportation's Fairfax Connector is introducing state-of-the-art buses to its fleet starting this month. The new buses will be better for the environment, safer for riders and more accessible for older adults and passengers with disabilities.

Enhanced safety features include a fire suppression system that alerts operators and riders to smoke or flames and suppresses the fire. In addition, the floors in the buses use new materials that have a coarse texture when wet to prevent slippage on rainy or snowy days.

The buses will be more accessible to older adults and people with disabilities because of a design feature that eliminates the steps required to access a traditional bus. Steps have

long been a hindrance to anyone with limited mobility. These low-floors buses allow easier boarding and disembarking for passengers and include ramps, instead of lifts, for people using wheelchairs. The new buses also will be outfitted with bike racks and SmarTrip fare boxes; existing buses have recently been equipped with SmarTrip fare boxes and are currently being outfitted with bike racks.

Over the next year, 84 new buses will be added to the fleet. As the new buses enter the fleet, older buses will be retired.

Learn more about the Fairfax Connector bus system by visiting [www.fairfaxconnector.com](http://www.fairfaxconnector.com) or call the Connector Information Center at 703-339-7200, TTY 703-339-1608.

## Gardiner Removes Ivy (and Wins Contest!)

**Brenda Gardiner**, Department of Administration for Human Services, won the recent Park Authority contest that challenged employees to remove invasive plants from their yards and share how they did it. Gardiner, who eradicated a half-acre of invasive English ivy, won a landscape consultation, 10 free trees and shrubs, and gained a more eco-friendly yard.

The Park Authority's **Sarah Ridgely**, landscape architect for planning and development, and **Meghan Fellows**, naturalist and manager of the invasive management area project, visited Gardiner's yard last month to provide the landscape consultation.

According to Fellows, Gardiner's yard is a balanced mix of native plants and non-invasive, non-native plants. It's an excellent example of what a suburban yard can look like with a little care in plant selec-

tion. There are some undesirable non-natives (Japanese barberry) recommended by a landscaper, some undesirable non-natives that came in on their own (garlic mustard) and some plants that are in between, not really causing ecological havoc (rose-of-Sharon and star-of-Bethlehem). The surprise plant was the purple loosestrife (a plant so terrible on the landscape, Virginia labeled it a noxious weed and has since banned its sale and transport) given to Gardiner 15 years ago. She also has a lot of native plants. The 40-80 year-old oaks stand out and violets cover the beds.

"Most of us don't realize the full impact of our actions when we plant something," said Ridgely. "We trust that the plants available for sale are helping the environment, and that's true for most cases. Once in a while, though, a plant is introduced that wreaks havoc on the landscape."

For more information from the Park Authority on invasive plants and recommended native plants for your backyard, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/backyardplants.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/backyardplants.htm).

— *Mary Craddock Hoffman*  
Park News Editor

*Three Days Left!*

### Take the Intranet Redesign and Content Survey by June 25

Help with the redesign of the Infoweb by giving your feedback on how you use the current Infoweb and potential future uses for the new intranet.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey by June 25 at <http://infoweb/intranetredesign>.

## Recovering Deleted Items

Have you ever deleted e-mail from your Deleted Items folder and then wanted to retrieve it? In most cases, you can by using the Recover Deleted Items tool in Microsoft Outlook.

To recover deleted items:

1. Select the Deleted Items folder from the folder list.
2. From the Tools menu, click Recover Deleted Items. The "Recover Deleted Items From – Deleted Items" window will appear on the screen with a list of your deleted e-mails.
3. Click the item you want to

recover or click the Select All button to recover the entire folder. To select multiple items, click the first item, and then hold down CTRL and click additional items.

4. Click the Recover Selected Items button.

The items will be returned to your Deleted Items folder, and then you can move them to other folders.

However, there is a time limit on recovering your deleted items. Some items may no longer be recoverable because the system administrator has limited the amount of time that

## Tech Tip # 113

Department of Information Technology  
Technology Infrastructure Division  
Technical Support Center  
Fairfax County Government Center  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
Tel: 703-222-3535, option 1  
Fax: 703-222-3396  
TTY: 711

deleted items can be stored on the server. The limit is usually 3 to 5 days depending on the amount of e-mails in your mailbox. ■

## How to Write Effectively for the Web

Research shows that it's quicker for many people to read this printed copy of the Courier than to read this same content on the Web.

Research also shows most people scan Web pages – they do not read content word for word unless they are sure it's something they want to read. Research and eye-tracking studies show people usually scan Web pages in an F-shaped pattern, looking for key words, phrases or visual cues.

For a county with thousands of Web pages, how do we effectively provide information to the public on the Web site and to each other on the Infoweb?

If you write or design Web content of any kind, this impacts you. Writing long blocks of text with no visual cues is ineffective and your message won't be read by the 80 percent of people who scan Web pages.

Here are some tips for effective Web content creation (even if it is a Word document that someone else will post on a Web page):

- ♦ Write visually.
- ♦ Use bulleted lists.
- ♦ Use numbered lists for steps in

a procedure.

- ♦ Use tables.
  - ♦ Include pictures and other graphics (preferably not clip art – that's so 1990s).
  - ♦ Aim to use 50 percent less text on a Web page.
  - ♦ Use short pages, paragraphs, sentences and words.
  - ♦ Use headings to break up content.
  - ♦ Avoid fluff, marketing speak, boilerplate, etc. – it hinders your core message as people scan content.
  - ♦ Refrain from copying and pasting content onto one long page.
  - ♦ Review content as often as possible and delete content that is not needed.
  - ♦ Make your content interesting – would you read it if you were just a resident and not a county employee?
  - ♦ Use plain language that a general audience will understand – not acronyms or government speak.
  - ♦ Create individual Web pages instead of just posting PDFs to a Web page (long reports are an exception).
- For more information about effective Web writing, including links to

the research cited, visit <http://infoweb/opa/webtips.htm>. ■

– By Greg Licamele

Office of Public Affairs

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