



Courier

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2009 New Year's Resolutions For County Employees: Live Better, Work Smarter, Be Safer

Losing weight is a traditional (and noble) New Year's resolution, but for 2009, employees also may want to consider these resolutions provided by several county agencies to live better, work smarter and be safer.

From the Consumer Affairs Branch of the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection:

▶ Review credit card charge slips before signing; add up the charges; draw lines through blank areas. Never sign a

blank charge slip.

▶ Save receipts. Receipts are proof of purchases and transactions. They are invaluable in the event of a dispute. Don't throw away your debit or credit card receipts.

▶ Check your credit card and debit accounts frequently. With credit card fraud on the rise, don't wait to review your statement at the end of the month. Call your bank or check your account online regularly.

▶ Review your monthly statement.

Check your monthly billing statement carefully to see if it includes transactions or purchases that you did not authorize. Compare your receipts to the billing statement. Be on guard for dishonest merchants who might change your receipt after you sign it. You are especially susceptible to this if you leave a line blank on a restaurant credit receipt.

▶ Shred, shred, shred! When you've reconciled your monthly billing statement,

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Employees Continue Long Tradition of Generosity

Despite the grim economic news as 2008 came to an end, Fairfax County employees continued a long tradition of giving to those in need in the community.

The 2008 Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign, the 21st Santa's Ride for Children and the 16th annual Holiday Food Drive were just a few of the programs that employees participated in and met or exceeded their 2007 giving.



Santa and his elves arrived on motorcycles (much cooler than reindeer) at the Government Center on Dec. 9 as part of the Santa's Ride for Children. More on page 2.

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Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign

More than 1,200 county employees donated \$255,607 to the Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign (FCCCC). This was a significant increase – more than \$50,000 – over what was raised in 2007. Seventy-eight percent of the donations were made online.

“We had a lot of enthusiastic creativity among our agency liaisons. That, along with engaged participation by senior county management, helped promote this year’s campaign,” said **Kevin Greenlief**, director of the Department of Tax Administration and 2008 FCCCC chair.

FCCCC participants should note that payroll deductions begin with pay period 26, pay date Jan. 2. Check your payroll advice forms to ensure the accuracy of your deductions and be sure to report any problems to your payroll contact.



Several Department of Tax Administration staff with a sample of their donations to the Holiday Food Drive. Photo provided by DTA.

16th Annual Holiday Food Drive

Contributions to the 16th Holiday Food Drive sponsored by the Department of Human Resources were up 20 percent over 2007 donations. Six large vehicle loads of donations including non-perishable food and personal hygiene

items were delivered to FACETS in December. FACETS was most appreciative that their low food supply was replenished, according to food drive coordinators **Traci Vaughan** and **Hope Hohmann**.

FACETS is a nonprofit organization that responds to the diverse and multiple needs of homeless and low-income people living in Fairfax County.

Santa’s Ride for Children

Tom Knoernschild and his colleagues in the Print Shop coordinated the toy collection by employees for the Santa’s Ride for Children. Conducted by the Police Department Motor Squad with the cooperation of the Sheriff’s Office, Virginia State Police and other local police departments, the drive was held at county police stations and the Print Shop. More than 2,000 toys and 50 bicycles were collected this year, according to Master Police Officer **Kevin Palizzi**. ■

County Efforts to Help Residents in Need

Fairfax County has several efforts underway to help residents impacted by the recession. Two programs that took place last month were:

▶ A free training session for 100 attorneys and paralegals to provide pro bono (free) legal assistance to help residents facing foreclosure was held at the Government Center on Dec. 10. The program was a joint partnership between the county’s Department of Housing and Community Development; the Office of Public Private Partnerships; Legal Services of Northern Virginia; and the Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center of the Fairfax Bar Association.

▶ On Dec. 12, the county hosted a roundtable discussion to examine the demand for basic needs and how to strategically address the economic crisis. In addition to the county, participants included representatives from local nonprofits, faith communities, Fairfax County Public Schools and the media. ■



Partners of “The Housing Crisis: Legal Training to Help Clients Facing Foreclosure” were (left to right) Patti Stevens, Office of Public Private Partnerships (OPPP); Barbara Silberzahn, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); Arlene Beckerman, Northern Virginia Pro Bono Center; James Scruggs, Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV); Kathy Jones, DHCD; Kristi Cahoon, LSNV; Paula Sherman, PhoneHome Inc.; Ron Jauregui, OPPP. Photo by Maichi Halley.

Deputy County Executive Verdia Haywood (center) makes a point during the roundtable discussion on Dec. 12. At the table are (left to right) Fairfax County School Board member Jane Strauss; Marcia Di Trapani, Herndon-Reston FISH; and Director of the Office of Public Affairs Merni Fitzgerald.



People Like Us...

Meet Pamela Rines, Health Department

Pamela Rines is a field nurse who works with clients that have or are suspected of having tuberculosis (TB). As a field nurse, she works in the office and goes into the community and treats people in their homes.

Rines began working for Fairfax County in February 2006 in the clinic at the Herndon/Reston District Office. She transferred to her current position in the Falls Church District Office last February.

Favorite part of my job...

... The best part of my job is meeting with clients and helping them complete medications to cure them from TB. It's so rewarding to see clients that are initially very sick become stronger, gain weight, regain their energy and their health.

Favorite spot in Fairfax County...

... I love Meadowlark Gardens. I like to walk the peaceful trails and enjoy the wide variety of flowers year around.

Favorite food...

... Salmon.

Work colleagues would be surprised to learn...

... I recently completed my first sprint triathlon and I'm now hooked on the sport.

If I could be a superhero or cartoon character, I would be...

... When I was a child, I thought I would grow up to be a nurse [which may be considered a superhero to many patients.] I've taken a roundabout path to get here. My first degree was in computer science, and although I enjoyed that too, I still had a desire to care for people as a nurse. So, I went back to school and this is my second career, which I love.

Who has had the biggest influence in your career with the county?

... That's very hard to say because there have been so many people that have been influential in my career. I've been very



Pamela Rines is a nurse in the Health Department. Photo provided by Rines.

fortunate to work with many wonderful nurses. Each has been a positive role model.

Words of wisdom you would pass on to someone thinking of pursuing your career path...

... It's never too late to pursue a new career. Nursing is a wonderful field. The great thing about nursing is the career diversity. ■

Budget Rumor Busters – Fact Versus Fiction

Everyone is worried about “What next?” Turn on the radio or open the newspaper and the economic news is bad – in the U.S., Virginia and here in Fairfax County. With fear of the unknown comes rumors, which often cause more fear and uncertainty. To help dispel the most prominent rumors, Courier is beginning this regular column. The best way to figure out fact from fiction is to be an informed employee. Check out the links in the resource box and talk to your supervisor.

Were the county's top management furloughed last week, like most other staff?

Yes, the chairman and members of the Board of Supervisors and their staff; senior county management including the county executive, deputy county executives, assistant county executive, and agency and department directors

were furloughed on Jan. 2. Only employees who work in 24/7 mission-essential public safety and nonpublic

safety positions to maintain public health and safety were exempted due to the nature of the work. ■

Budget and Lines of Business Resources

FY 2009 Budget:

<http://infoweb/opa/budget/fy09.htm>

FY 2010 Budget and Lines of Business:

<http://infoweb/opa/budget>

County Executive E-Mails

<http://infoweb/CEX/messages>

Furlough:

Call HR Central at 703-324-4900, TTY 703-222-7314

<http://infoweb/hr/furloughfaqs.pdf>

Reduction in Force (For informational purposes):

Reference Guide available beginning this week: <http://infoweb/RIF>

Call HR Central at 703-324-4900, TTY 703-222-7314

Or go to <http://infoweb/hr/rifsummary.pdf> or <http://infoweb/hr/chapter9.pdf>

shred your receipts to prevent thieves from getting your account information by rifling through your trash.

▶ If you suspect fraud, act immediately. Notify the issuer of your debit or credit card by phone as soon as you discover an error. If you suspect fraud, notify the card issuer by letter in order to preserve your rights under the Fair Credit Billing Act.

▶ For more information on consumer protection, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer.

From the Department of Information Technology:

▶ Take a course on the E-Learning site at <http://ffxelearning>. Use your county username and password to access and learn more about Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, as well as career coaching, among many other topics.

▶ To save time when you have an IT problem or request, try entering it online using the IT Service desk portal at <http://ITSD>.

▶ Clean out unneeded files on your computer on a regular basis.

▶ Clean your Outlook e-mail mailbox regularly. Look for information on how to store e-mails efficiently in Outlook in the Tech Tip on page 8 in the July 18, 2008, issue of Courier. It can be found online at <http://infoweb/courier>.

▶ Learn features on the new Avaya telephone system. For example, to forward a message with comment, press 3-3-6-2. To cancel or go back, press *.

▶ Discover resources available on the Infoweb. Hungry? Find out the menus for the Government Center, Herrity Building and Jennings Judicial Center at <http://infoweb/FMD>.

▶ Look for ways to use technology to make the county more cost efficient.

From the Department of Human Resources:

▶ Stay informed on the latest news and information from the Department of Human Resources. Go to <http://infoweb/hr>.

▶ Check your Flexible Spending Account balances and make sure you use the balance of your 2008 funds by the March 15, 2009 deadline.

▶ Consider participating in the county's deferred compensation plans, or increase the amount you are saving for retirement. For more information, go to <http://infoweb/hr/benefits/DCOMP2008.htm>.



From the Police Department:

▶ Help save lives by driving safer. Buckle up, observe posted speed limits and pay full attention when you are behind the wheel.

▶ Protect valuables in your car. You work hard for your money and it only takes a moment for a thief to take it away. Lock your GPS systems, laptops and other property out of sight at all times.

From the Fire and Rescue Department:

▶ Install and properly maintain fire alarms in your home. Choose a smoke alarm that bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and outside all sleeping areas.

▶ Take steps to avoid accidents in the kitchen. Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or

carried. Always keep an oven mitt and lid nearby when you are cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Do not remove the lid until it is completely cool.

From the Office of Emergency Management:

▶ Create an emergency/disaster plan for your family. Determine where to meet if and when an emergency occurs. Have an out-of-town contact that everyone can reach by phone and/or e-mail.

▶ Sign up for the Emergency Alert Network (EAN) to get real-time notifications of an emergency or major incident. Go to <http://infoweb/ean>. Ask family and friends who live in Fairfax County to sign up for the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN). Go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean.

From the Live Well Program:

▶ Explore at least one new health issue topic at a free lunchtime Live Well workshop. For dates, times and locations, go to <http://infoweb/LiveWell>.

▶ Choose carrots instead of chips!

▶ Schedule the preventative check-up or health screening you keep putting off.

▶ Encourage one co-worker to receive a free flu shot next fall.

▶ Find a fitness buddy.

▶ Take a flight of stairs instead of the elevator.

▶ Commit to getting an extra 30 minutes of sleep each night.

▶ Volunteer as a Live Well liaison or event host (and get a free T-shirt).

▶ Purchase a Live Well RECenter pass at the special employee price. For more information, go to <http://infoweb/LiveWell>.

And, A Few More:

▶ Increase your recycling at home and work. For more information on recycling and being green, go to <http://infoweb/green>.

▶ Be an informed employee. Read NewsLink and Courier. ■

Employee Learning Center Debuts Next Month

Next month, county government employees will be able to find development and training classes easier and faster; view or print a copy of their training history with the touch of a button; and take an online class when teleworking.

The county is debuting the Employee Learning Center (ELC) in mid-February, an enhanced system that is replacing the current eight-year-old Learning Management System application that has limited functionality and is no longer supported by the vendor.

From the county Infoweb, you will access the Employee Learning Center from EmployeeU at <http://infoweb/employeeu>. The “Ready to Register?” link will automatically launch the login screen. You also will be able to access the ELC by using the Employee Learning Center link at the gray, left navigation bar, after the



site is launched.

There are two options available to help you learn how to use ELC:

- ▶ Download self-study training materials, job aids and quick reference guides from EmployeeU in February.
- ▶ Attend a two-hour, hands-on learning session (for employees and

supervisors) from mid-February through spring. Registration information will be announced in NewsLink and EmployeeU.

The new ELC will make it easier and more efficient to find, enroll and participate in classes and learning development opportunities offered by the county.

Look for more information next month in Courier, NewsLink and the EmployeeU page. Questions may be directed to **Tana Suter** at tana.suter@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-3643.

The ELC is a joint effort between the Department of Information Technology Business Application Resource Services and the Department of Human Resources Organizational Development and Training Division. ■

New County Public Web Site Launched in December

Fairfax County launched a redesigned Web site in mid-December. After many months of surveys, public outreach and designing, the new site reflects the next step in the evolution of the county’s Web presence.

What’s new:

- ▶ A new red-white-blue design on a white background.
- ▶ A new Google search engine to power your way to results.
- ▶ There are new options to view pages in various text sizes or text-only versions, as well as a printer-friendly version.
- ▶ An enhanced “Contact Us” directory, which allows you to find contact information more easily. Also, each department will have a “Contacts/Directions” link on the top of each page

to help residents contact staff more easily.

- ▶ A satisfaction survey is included on the bottom of almost every Web page, giving an opportunity to provide feedback.

- ▶ MyNeighborhood, a tool that provides details about county services near an address, is now featured on the home page for easy access.

These are some of the highlights of the county’s new Web site, many of which are based on public feedback. More changes and improvements are scheduled for the future to serve the growing demand for Web site services. ■



Focus on Benefits

Tax Year 2009 Income Tax Withholding Changes

Pay period 26, pay date Jan. 2 is the first pay disbursement (direct deposit or check) for tax year 2009 income tax purposes. The Social Security (OASDI) tax rate remains at 6.2 percent and the Medicare (HI) tax rate remains at 1.45 percent (total FICA tax rate 7.65 percent). The 2009 taxable wage base for Social Security has increased to \$106,800.

Federal taxes withheld will decrease slightly for all employees due to increases in the annual personal exemption and standard deduction. Income taxes withheld for employees claiming the District of Columbia as their state of taxation also will decrease slightly due to increases in the personal exemption and standard deduction amounts. Income

taxes withheld for employees claiming Maryland as their state of taxation will increase as soon as income tax withholding tables can be modified in the payroll system to implement changes enacted by the Maryland General Assembly. There are no changes in state income tax withholding for employees claiming Virginia or West Virginia as their state of taxation.

The beginning of the tax year is a good time to review your filing status (married or single) and exemptions or allowances claimed (zero or more). Your current filing status and number of exemptions/allowances is printed at the top right corner of your pay advice.

▶ You can change your federal and/or

HR Central

HR Central has benefit information.

▶ Call 703-324-3311

TTY 703-222-7314

▶ Visit <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>

state income tax withholding information in Online TIME (transaction 005) or by submitting a new tax withholding form to the Payroll Division in the Department of Human Resources, Suite 270, Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035.

Current federal and state income tax withholding forms are available through your department payroll contact, HR Central in the Department of Human Resources (address above) or at <http://infoweb/hr/payroll/forms.htm>. ■

Live Well Program RECenter Passes – Price Reduction

The Live Well program county government employee RECenter passes have been reduced in price effective Jan. 1 through March 31. All pass types will be reduced. The updated application form may be found at <http://infoweb/LiveWell>.

▶ Send questions about the Live Well program to LiveWell@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Pass types available – all are good for 12 months from purchase date.

Live Well RECenter Pass Description	2008 Employee Price 7/1/08-12/31/08	New Employee Price 1/1/09-3/31/09
1 Eligible Fairfax County Government Employee/Retiree		
• 1 employee adult	\$ 260.15	\$251.00
• 1 employee adult and 1 non-employee adult	\$ 557.70	\$538.00
• Family pass - 1 employee adult, with up to 6 dependents and 1 non-employee adult	\$ 710.35	\$686.00
• 1 employee senior*	\$ 222.95	\$215.00
• 1 employee senior* & 1 non-employee senior*	\$ 478.15	\$462.00
• 1 employee adult & 1 non-employee senior*	\$ 499.45	\$482.00
• 1 employee senior* & 1 non-employee adult	\$ 536.65	\$518.00
2 Eligible Fairfax County Government Employee/Retiree		
• 2 employee adults	\$ 297.55	\$287.00
• Family pass - 2 employee adults, with up to 6 dependents	\$ 450.20	\$435.00
• 2 employee seniors*	\$ 255.20	\$247.00
• 1 employee adult & 1 employee senior*	\$ 276.50	\$267.00
Dependent Pass		
• 1 dependent (not sold separately from passes above) **	\$129.65	\$125.00

* To qualify for the senior rate, the senior must have reached age 62 on or before 12/31/2007.

** The age for dependents is 5 – 18 years of age. Students age 19 – 24 may also qualify, if a full-time student.

Briefs

Mileage Rate Adjustment

Effective Jan. 1, the mileage rate changed from 58.5 to 55 cents per mile. Revised travel forms reflecting this change are available on the Department of Finance (DOF) Infoweb page at <http://infoweb/finance/forms.htm>.

Call the DOF hot line at 703-324-4DOF (4363), with questions.

Stress Management Resources

Employees may be anxious and feeling stress given the current economic news and financial uncertainty. There



are several resources available to employees to receive free help and information.

The Inova

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers free and confidential employee assistance and information to all part-time and full-time merit employees and their immediate household members. Call 800-346-0110, TTY 877-845-6465, or go to www.inovaeap.com. A user ID (Fairfax) and password (County1) is required to access the online service. Click on Mental Health under the Emotional Well Being heading on the left side of the screen. County health plans also offer free self-help stress management tools:

► CareFirst: <http://carefirst.staywellsolutionsonline.com/Wellness/Stress>.

► Cigna: www.cigna.com/healthinfo/rxsk.html.

► Kaiser: <https://members.kaiserpermanente.org/kpweb/entryPage.do?cfe=286>.

► Employees can find additional resources at <http://infoweb/LiveWell>.

Jean Skinner Is Honored

Jean Skinner, supervisor for the Park Authority's adapted programs, recently received the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia's (ECNV) annual award for her leadership and advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities.

ECNV is a community-based resource and advocacy center managed by and for people with disabilities that promotes the independent living philosophy and equal access for all people with disabilities.

Women's Shelter Has New Name

"Artemis House" is the new name for the Fairfax County Women's Shelter, which serves women, men and children fleeing abuse in their homes. More than 100 employees from the Department of Family Services (DFS) and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's mental health services participated in a contest to name the shelter. The winning choice came from **Carol Esteki**, DFS. "Artemis," from the Greek pantheon, means "bearer of light and protector of the vulnerable."

Artemis House, run by the DFS Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, offers confidential, safe shelter and supportive services for those no longer safe in their homes because of violence. Artemis House can be reached 24 hours a day at 703-435-4940. For more information about Artemis House and other services for those affected by domestic and sexual violence, contact **Kathleen Kelmelis**, Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, 703-968-4033.

2008 Holidays Around the World



Emma Marshall, Department of Family Services, with the display on Kwanzaa.

The Department of Family Services held the fifth annual "Holidays Around the World" diversity training last month at the Pennino Building in the Government Center Complex.

The purpose of the training is to highlight how countries around the globe commemorate their respective festive seasonal events. Many countries were repeat entries from previous years but several countries and events were among the newcomers. Germany, Holland and an American Soul Christmas debuted during this year's celebration.

Highlights of the event included singing by the Employee Child Care Center children; a fashion show modeling clothing from India; food tasting; and beautiful displays from employees' homelands.

The 2008 planning committee included **Aleida Garit, Everludis Lopez, Magda Alarcon, Maria Elena Martinez, Chander Saigal** and **Maimoona Bah**.

Admin Corner

This new column Admin Corner will now rotate with the Page 8 columns Tech Tip, Security & Safety Matters and the new Employee Recycling Committee Green Tips column.

Provided by the Administrative Resource Team (ART), the purpose of the column will provide resources, tips and information to support administrative assistants throughout the count – which also may be helpful to other employees.

ART represents administrative assistants in dozens of county agencies dedicated to advancing the professional development of the county's support staff. Administrative assistants are a group of professionals that provide the operating infrastructure within every

agency.

In order to make this column a valuable resource, Courier is looking for input from the county's administrative assistants. Send us your ideas for what you think should be included in future columns that will be useful for you and your administrative assistant colleagues.

► Send your ideas to *Courier@fairfaxcounty.gov*. Put Admin Corner in the subject line.

Also coming soon is an updated ART Infoweb page. Look for more information on this resource in an upcoming Admin Corner.

Administrative assistants should mark their calendars for the 2009 ART Conference "Changing and Challenging



Times" on April 24 at the Government Center. The day will be packed with exciting informative workshops and interesting speakers. ■

Victor Garcia Appointed Director for Department of Finance

The Board of Supervisors has appointed **Victor L. Garcia** as director of the Department of Finance (DOF), effective Dec. 8.

Garcia had been the acting director for DOF. From 2001 to 2008, Garcia was deputy director of the DOF. He also served as a coordinator with Fairfax County Public Schools Financial Services from 1990 to 2001 and as division chief with the county's DOF from 1987 to 1990.

Garcia previously worked in the Department of Labor for the state of Illinois. He has a solid financial management background with more than 30 years of experience managing financial operations involving sizeable staffs in the areas of accounting, financial reporting, purchasing and accounts payable, payroll and grants.

Garcia is a certified public accountant and holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the



Victor Garcia

University of the East, Manila, Philippines.

The Department of Finance is responsible for maintaining a sound financial system, ensuring the integrity of the county's financial records and protecting the county's assets. ■

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Lisa Connors, editor
703-324-3197
E-mail:
lisa.connors@fairfaxcounty.gov
or *courier@fairfaxcounty.gov*

See Courier online at
<http://infoweb/courier>.

Office of Public Affairs
12000 Government Center Pkwy.,
Suite 551, Fairfax, VA 22035-0065
Phone: 703-324-3187
Fax: 703-324-2010



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