Focus to Honor Veterans

Veterans Day is coming up in a few weeks, and the Focus newsletter would like to honor the Cabinet's veterans. If you would like to be included in our Veterans Day listing, please send an e-mail listing:

- your name
- branch of the military you served in
- number of years of service
- your current job
- county where you work
- paragraph stating what Veterans Day means to you (optional)
- photo (optional)

Send this e-mail to Barbara Fox in the Office of Communications by Wednesday, Nov. 5, for inclusion in the Veterans Day Focus.

State Health Department Conducts Nationwide Videoconference

Distance learning collaboration shares national public health efforts

By Barbara Fox, Office of Communications

Lieutenant Governor Daniel Mongiardo joined public health officials Oct. 23 to conduct a nationwide videoconference, "50 States in 50 Minutes," in an effort to connect all 50 U.S. state public health departments and other participating organizations and institutions that conduct distance learning programs, using videoconferencing technology.

"I am proud to be a part of this special event today, which demonstrates how Kentucky is leading the way in the utilization of new technologies for public health," said Mongiardo. "Through this videoconference, we are not only making connections among health departments nationwide, but also opening up new lines of communication and sharing innovative ideas."

During the 50-minute event, approximately 31 U.S. states were connected by videoconference, and five states were connected by audio. Connections were also made with numerous local health departments and other in-state organizations.

"The Kentucky Department for Public Health conducted this groundbreaking event to reinforce multistate training collaborations in support of public health, in addition to enhancing our preparedness efforts," said William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner of the Department for Public Health. "In this new virtual nation we are already sharing content, planning and conducting daily activities either by videoconferencing, webcasting or other types of online collaborations."

Presentations were made by Mongiardo, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, Lake Cumberland District Health Department, the University of Kentucky College of Public Health, the Kansas Department of Emergency Management and the Texas Association of Local Health Officials.

The Kentucky Commonwealth Office of Technology provided bridging services to videoconference participants.

The event was held in the newly renovated auditorium located in the DPH wing of the CHR Complex.

Training Focuses on Substance Misuse, Intimate Violence

By Anya Armes Weber

A free training workshop in Ashland next month will focus on substance and violence issues.

"Substance Misuse and Intimate Violence" will be led by Professor Ted Godlaski of the University of Kentucky College of Social Work. Godlaski is a certified alcohol and other drugs of addiction counselor.

The workshop will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ashland Community and Technical College's Learning Resource Center. The center is at 1400 College Drive.

The workshop is free, except for people seeking continuing education credit. For $10, social workers can receive six social work CEUs.

To register, contact Tammy Brown at the Morehead Training Resource Center at (606) 783-2566, or by e-mail.

Living Well: A Tweak to Existing Exercise Guidelines

Do you find that you are overscheduled and lack time to do certain things? New physical activity guidelines take into account everyday-Americans' hectic lifestyles and recommend slightly more than two hours a week of physical activity to stay fit. This new recommendation tweaks the existing guidelines of engaging in some type of activity daily.

Historically, physical activity was a part of daily life. As society has changed and evolved, we are now in a bind as to how to fit exercise in. The introduction of new technology and more efficient ways of doing business has almost eliminated the incorporation of activity in our daily lives. A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said, "We were meant and made to move." We know this is true because we know physical activity plays an important role in reducing the risk of numerous diseases and hazards to health.

Take a minute and think about how you utilize your time during a single day. Focus on time that you can convert to physical activity. For example:

- Do you spend two and a half hours or more watching television? Try doing some physical activity while you catch up on your latest television program.

- Do you like to catch up with friends and family over the phone? Get a wireless headset and walk around your neighborhood while you catch up on phone calls.
- Do you enjoy meeting people out socially? Join a gym or try a new class with a friend. Many personal trainers will do group trainings at a discounted rate. The accountability sometimes helps people stay on track with their program and maintains motivation.

These are just a few suggestions for altering our days to fit in the 2 ½ hours of physical activity a week we need to stay healthy. Challenge yourself to carving out the 2 ½ hours each week for several weeks,and see if there is a noticeable difference. If you would like to share your success story with us, please e-mail Kris Hayslett at kris.hayslett@ky.gov.

Fiscal War
The Battle of the Mall Rats

By Beth Fisher

I think we should pretend the economic crisis doesn't exist and instead insist we're a bunch of penny pinchers for the mere sport of it. Sure, people might think we're a little quirky, but this is Kentucky and I believe a little quirk is our birthright.

So, on that note, let's forget A.G. Edwards and focus on something a lot more fun if not ever-so-slightly less world impacting: clothes. I've never understood those people who only wear things once. I'm certainly not immune to the love of clothes. Who is? But I also think there is something to be said for loving something so much you wear it until it falls apart. Ideally, you won't be at work when that happens.

But, if you're one of those people who have a less than intimate relationship with what's in your closet, you might consider taking a personal inventory and scaling back. You just might find that you enjoy your clothes and accessories more once you start valuing quality over quantity. After all, waste extends beyond the garbage bin, and shopaholics can pollute the universe just as much as those who refuse to recycle.

This might seem harsh, especially for you habitual shoppers, but no one is asking you to forgo the mall altogether. Instead, try making a few small changes like window shopping (I swear - I've had more fun doing this than I have when I've really splurged) or thinking twice about that next impulse buy. It's also a good idea to invest in a few items that are well-made and durable beyond a single wear. Keep in mind, you don't have to buy haute couture to have something that lasts beyond a single season, but it's never a bad idea to educate yourself about good fabrics along with stitching/construction of clothing and shoes to make sure you're purchasing items that are well-made and will stick around for a while. You just might find smart shopping to be the best sport of all!

Focus Money Saving Tip of the Week – Love to splurge on massages but your piggy bank is running low? Or, maybe you're a habitual exerciser plagued by frequent sore muscles and with no means for a regular athletic trainer to help you through the pain. No problem! The next time

you’re in need of a little relaxation, try this low-cost no-fail method: Soak in a hot bath with two cups of Epsom salts. You’ll feel better in no time!

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Stress and anger can make your work suffer and derail your progress. From lifestyle writer Krystyn Kusek Lewis, here are some tips for how you can get back on track and refocus on your work.

Avoid the things that trigger your stress. If you and a coworker just don’t get along, stay clear of that person. If juggling several tasks leaves you anxious, get organized and chart your progress. If you feel generally overloaded, work in a break every day.

Get moving. Aerobic exercise can relieve stress and improve your concentration. This happens because of the flood of oxygen to the brain, which activates stimulating chemicals like dopamine. Take a walk break once a day. If you can’t get away from your desk, at least stand up and stretch.

Be happy. Think about the things that make you feel good and you can reduce the hormones associated with fear, stress and anger. Keep family photos, favorite quotations or special artwork posted on your office walls for an easy pick-me-up.