



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

Hoosier Helping Hoosiers effort a success statewide

The Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers Food Drive, held in February, was a great success and state employees all over Indiana are to thank. During the month, Employees donated their collections to area food banks, but it didn't stop there. Portions of statewide donations were delivered directly to tornado victims in Southern Indiana.

On March 2, a tornado struck in the small Ripley County town of Holton causing severe damage. In response, Ripley County Department of Child Services (DCS) employees came in the following weekend and delivered most of their donations to Holton to help the relief effort.

"[Our employees] went door to door to deliver food directly to those in need and also dropped some off at the emergency shelter in Holton," said Ripley County DCS food drive coordinator Colbi Lehman. Her office collected a whopping 198 items per person, thanks to an in-house collecting contest, as well as donations from local businesses and churches.

"We had success with a silent auction of food and other items and that doubled our donation from other areas," Lehman added.

Ripley County was in direct competition with their next door

neighbors in Dearborn County, which finished third in the county and district offices category. Dearborn's office collected an outstanding 163 items per person. Lehman noted that the

affected by the recent tornadoes that hit the southern portion of our state." Success stories are plentiful when it comes to this year's drive.



In Jennings County, DCS employees gather before loading their donations on a truck.

In Jennings County, DCS office coordinator Lil Shepherd reported awesome participation and great community involvement that helped her office collect more than 1,000 items for the first time. In fact, they collected 6,183 items, an astounding 257 items per person for the office of 24 employees. Overall, DCS ran away with the agency competition collecting 52,382 items and \$5,117 statewide.

Dearborn office now owes the Ripley office lunch.

This year, more than 60 agencies and 261 divisions collected more than 118,100 non-perishable food items and \$19,000 in cash for the annual food drive sponsored by the Office of First Lady Cheri Daniels.

"The 2012 food drive was a success due to the generous spirit of state employees," First Lady Cheri Daniels said. "This year, state employees contributed more non-perishable food items and financial donations to the drive than ever before. These contributions will help countless Hoosiers in need, including those

In Indianapolis, Utility Regulatory Commission coordinator Stacy Hunter put herself on the line

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Submit your story ideas in an email to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov



WGU Indiana recognized for quality program

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education just released its 26-page plan called “Reaching Higher, Achieving More.” The plan calls for a higher education system in our

25 percent for two-year campuses by 2018

- Double the number of college degrees and certificates to 120,000 by 2025



WGU Indiana Chancellor Allison Barber (right) poses with Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers at Friday’s press conference announcing the Commission’s Reaching Higher, Achieving More agenda.

- Increase the percentage of Hoosier adults with post-secondary degrees to 45 percent by 2018 and 60 percent by 2025.

Out of every state university and online option, the report highlighted WGU Indiana as the university where flexibility meets academic quality. WGU Indiana is showcased in the plan, indicating that helping adult Hoosiers with some college experience finish their

state that is mission driven, student centered and workforce aligned. It also challenges the state’s colleges and universities to focus on increasing college completion, productivity and quality.

“Indiana ranks 42nd in individuals with post-secondary credentials,” said Teresa Lubbers, Indiana’s Commissioner for Higher Education. “We know we can do better.”

Currently, only about one-third of Indiana’s adult population has post-secondary degrees, Lubbers said. That leaves many people, she continued, unprepared to fill good-paying jobs in the fastest-growing sectors of the economy.

The plan sets a few specific goals, such as:

- Increase on-time college graduation rates to at least 50 percent at four-year campuses and

degree is achievable and critical. The Commission’s report cites that WGU Indiana is a high-quality, flexible option for working adults who desire to finish their degrees:

“WGU Indiana’s flexibility helps students juggle the demands of work, family and school. Its competency-based model allows students to progress more quickly and graduate when they demonstrate a mastery of competencies required for a particular degree.”

“We applaud the Commission for its insightful agenda brought forth through the Reaching Higher, Achieving More plan,” WGU Indiana Chancellor Allison Barber said. “All Hoosiers, no matter their age, background or geographical location, deserve access to quality higher education on a schedule they can manage and at a cost they can afford. We embrace the challenge set forth in this report.”

Connie Lawson appointed new Secretary of State

On March 16, Gov. Mitch Daniels appointed Indiana State Senator Connie Lawson, of Danville, as the new Indiana Secretary of State, effective immediately.

“Connie was an obvious choice. Indiana has probably never been served by a Secretary of State better prepared on day one,” said Daniels. “I want to reiterate our thanks to the staff of the office, and in particular, Jerry Bonnet, for their superb professionalism during some difficult months. Thanks to them, the public has been well served every day.”



Bonnet was appointed interim Secretary of State on February 4. He has resigned from the interim role and will return to his previous duties.

Lawson, Majority Floor Leader and a senator since 1996, brings local and state elections experience to the office. Before stepping down from the Indiana Senate, she was chair of the local government and joint rules committees. She has been a champion of local government reform efforts, authoring a bill this year to reduce nepotism and eliminate conflicts of interest. Lawson also spent six years as the chair of the Senate Elections Committee and has continued to serve as a ranking member.

Lawson was clerk of the Hendricks County Circuit Court from 1989 to 1996. During her tenure, she was named election administrator of the year by the Indiana State Election

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Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers effort a success statewide

with a “Pound for Pound Challenge.” Hunter challenged her other 72 employees to pledge a donation of one dollar or a pound of food for each pound of weight she lost. Hunter started the challenge last June 1 and donations started coming in. And the pounds kept coming off for Hunter, who lost 40 pounds by the end of the food drive.

“I had some co-workers starting to get nervous as I reported the weight loss,” Hunter recalled laughing. “They were asking me how long they had to get the money.”

In addition, Hunter organized a competition between divisions, with the winner getting a pizza party. They also raised money with a dessert cart day, chili day, a pancake breakfast and blue jean day vouchers in exchange for donations.

Hunter said she already has a new “Pound for Pound Challenge” planned for next year.

In LaPorte, it was all about the money! The Department of Transportation

(INDOT) district office was the top money collector with \$2,253, thanks to Cindee Mckie and Pat Toth coordinating the efforts of 535 employees.

McKie said they pushed for money this year because food banks can take one dollar and have eight dollars of food purchasing power.

“We were really proud of that,” McKie said. “We still had four barrels of actual food donations, too.”

“This year, state employees contributed more non-perishable food items and financial donations to the drive than ever before. These contributions will help countless Hoosiers in need, including those affected by the recent tornadoes that hit the southern portion of our state.”

First Lady Cheri Daniels



Employees gather for a chili cook-off at the INDOT district office in LaPorte.

McKie added. “All you have to do is have fun activities and people will participate.”

At the **Adjutant General’s Office**, they were having some fun too. The agency collected 17,895 items to lead the category of offices with one level of participation. April Bentley served as the coordinator at Stout Field, where soldiers earned Friday jeans passes for donations of four canned items or two boxed items.

The big event was the “pie in the face” celebration. The top collecting teams were allowed to put pies in the faces of Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Martin Umbarger, Col. Hines, Col. Kruz, Col. Copes, Col. Westfall and Bentley.

Bentley also secured a donation of 6,500 items from the local Kroger. All of the food donations went to families of Stout Field.

The signature event for the food drive was IndiCANA, a structure building competition with cans. The team of Pete Miller, Adam Horst, Jay Collins and Brenda Mathews from the State Budget Agency took top honors recreating the Super Bowl zip line with a can structure.



The “pie in the face” contest at Stout Field was a mess. From left are Col. Hines, Col. Kruz, Col. Copes, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, April Bentley and Col. Westfall.

McKie and Roth organized a waffle breakfast, BBQ lunch, bake sale, chili cook-off and bunny bingo. The office kept loose change buckets around the office as well.

“It was all a way to bring us together and it was such a nice time this year,”

Rescinding your Tobacco Agreement could save your job, if you smoke

If you signed up during open enrollment promising not to use tobacco products during 2012 and you are still using tobacco products, your failure to keep that promise is placing your job at risk. The name of each employee who signed the agreement has been placed in a pool for random selection to be tested for tobacco throughout this calendar year.

Testing dates and locations are not identified in advance, and anyone testing positive is subject to dismissal from employment. Employees are also subject to testing under reasonable suspicion if the State receives a report that an employee who has signed the agreement is, in fact, using tobacco products.

By quitting smoking, you not only reduce your risk of lung cancer and heart disease, but also improve your overall health and even add years to your life. However, anyone who has tried to quit would agree it is very difficult. If you have tried to quit, but

are unsuccessful at this point, you need to immediately rescind your agreement by logging into PeopleSoft. To get to the Rescission Request page, go to: Self Service ⇨ Benefits ⇨ Rescind Non-Tobacco Use Agreement.

Follow the prompts to submit your request to rescind the agreement. If you need assistance, contact the State Personnel Department Benefits Division at 232-1167 or toll-free at 877-248-0007.

Once you have submitted your request and your rescission is approved, your health care insurance premium will increase by \$25 biweekly and any premiums from pay periods in which you received the incentive will be collected. However, your job will be secure. For assistance in becoming tobacco free, you may call the Indiana Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-Quit-Now. This free service is available to all Hoosiers seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. until midnight.

Indiana State Parks & Reservoirs
Go!
Get Outside!

State Parks Value Packages Available Online

If you like to camp, swim, ride your horses or visit Indiana's state park inns, there are great value packages now available online through the SPR Go! (Get Outside) program. Packages include annual passes, gift certificates for the inns or for camping, a subscription to Outdoor Indiana and much more. Check them at our www.innsgifts.com and plan to "Get Outside!" today.

Indiana again earns national recognition for government transparency



For the second year in a row, two national organizations have recognized Indiana's

efforts to bring transparency to state government. The Sunshine Review and the United States Public Interest Research Group (US PIRG) have both awarded Indiana "A-" grades for the accessibility of state websites.

"Making state government more transparent has been one of our priorities for more than seven years. We'll continue our push to be a national leader in operating an open and honest government," Governor

Mitch Daniels said.

The Sunshine Review, a national non-partisan government transparency agency, selected the state of Indiana as one of only 214 government entities for its 2012 Sunny Award, recognizing commitment to government transparency. The organization analyzed more than 6,000 government websites for the proactive disclosure of information regarding budgets, meetings, lobbying, financial audits, contracts, academic performance, public records and taxes. The ease of use and availability of information is also taken into consideration.

US PIRG rated Indiana's transparency

portal third best in the country with a grade of "A-." The transparency site, launched in August 2010, was recognized for offering a checkbook-level, user-friendly interface and providing information on payments to specific vendors. Additionally, users can customize their search to look for expenses incurred over a particular period of time, in a specific geographic area, by a particular government agency or of a certain dollar amount.

If you want more information about:

- Sunshine Review and a full list of the 2012 Sunny Award winners can be found [here](#).
- US PIRG and their yearly rankings can be found [here](#).

SECC recognizes record breaking contributions

State agencies were recently recognized for raising \$1.21 million in charitable donations, the most money in the State Employees' Community Campaign's (SECC) history at an awards ceremony at the Indiana State Library.

During the March 22 ceremony, the 2011-2012 SECC Chairman, The Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Martin

Umbarger, welcomed attendees and thanked the agency coordinators for their hard work during the campaign. He then introduced Sally Irvin, founder of Indiana Canine Assistant Network (ICAN), one of 1,500 charitable organizations that benefit from SECC donations.

Irvin spoke about how the organization works to both rehabilitate prisoners and train assistance dogs for people



Commissioner Lori Torres and SECC coordinator Camilla Wise accept the Department of Labor's SECC Per Capita award from SECC Chairman Major General Umbarger and Dan Hackler.

with disabilities. The program engages the abilities of adults incarcerated within Indiana correctional facilities to help train the dogs for service work. ICAN is one of the few prison-based programs where clients receiving a dog visit the prison facility and are trained on-site to work with their new dog by ICAN staff and offenders working within the ICAN program. This year ICAN received more than \$2,000 in pledges through SECC.

During the ceremony State Personnel Director Dan Hackler, who helped oversee the campaign, was awarded the Indiana Distinguished Service Medal for his service to his country in South East Asia and for his "tireless efforts to improve the quality of life for fellow Hoosiers."

The pledges of more than 5,500 employees helped SECC to have its most successful year yet. 61 agencies reached the per capita giving level, meaning they raised at least \$50 per person within their agency.

Champion-level givers, those who give at least one-half hour's pay per paycheck, represented only 18 percent of the givers, but accounted for more than 50 percent of the amount given.

Click [here](#) for more ceremony photos.



Sally Irvin demonstrates how one of their service dogs, Pete, can follow a variety of different commands.

Check on your FML Expiration & Recertification status

If you have a current Family Medical Leave (FML) approval for intermittent leave, you may be wondering what happens to that approval at the end of the fiscal year or if the need continues beyond June 30, 2012.

Indiana state government has designated the fiscal year as the twelve-month period to calculate FML. The fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. This means that all FML approval(s) for intermittent leave expire June 30, with the new fiscal year beginning July 1.

Employees who have an approval for intermittent FML in the current fiscal year (July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012), and expect the need for FML to continue after June 30th of this year, are required to submit a new Request and Certification of Health Care Provider (CHCP) form documenting that need.

The CHCP must be from a recent, in-person medical exam. Absences for continuing conditions are foreseeable; therefore, your request and CHCP should be submitted 30 days in advance of the new fiscal year. The CHCP form must be filled out completely by the health care provider and needs to include a description and/or details of the medical necessity for leave and the estimated frequency and duration of absences for which you are requesting leave. Timely submission of the documentation is your responsibility, not the health care provider's. Proper and timely completion of the required forms should reduce the number of requests for additional information and recertifications needed during the year.

Eligibility for FML will be calculated
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Connie Lawson appointed the new Secretary of State

Board and clerk of the year by the Association of Clerks of Circuit Courts of Indiana (ACCCI), both in 1993. The Association of Indiana Counties awarded her a similar award in 1996. She also served as president of the ACCCI and chair of the group's legislative committee. She and her husband, Jack own Lawson & Company, an auctioneer and real estate company.



is better suited than Connie Lawson, by virtue of skills and experience, to assume the duties of the Secretary of State's office. Her expertise as a county clerk and as the ranking member of the Senate Elections Committee has ideally prepared her to serve as the state's chief elections officer."

"The Secretary of State's office has other important regulatory responsibilities over corporations and securities. Her business background has prepared her to make those functions of the office consumer friendly. I can also say that Senator Lawson is highly regarded by her Senate colleagues in both the Republican and Democratic ranks," Simcox continued.

"Connie Lawson is the consummate professional: bright, hard-working, dedicated and of the highest integrity. She is also one of the finest people you will ever meet. She will be an outstanding Secretary of State for the people of Indiana, and will prove to be a very popular choice," said Senate Pro Tempore David Long. "We will miss her greatly in the Indiana Senate, where she has been both a valued leader and a respected and trusted colleague. However, our loss is the people's gain, and we look forward to working closely with her in the ongoing effort to improve the lives of Hoosier families throughout our great state."

"As a small business owner, state senator, and former county clerk, Connie Lawson brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the office of Secretary of State. I have witnessed her in action for more than 20 years," said Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman, who performed a ceremonial swearing in today. "When she assumes a responsibility, her level of performance is outstanding. She will continue to serve with distinction and make Hoosiers proud."

Ed Simcox, who served as Secretary of State from 1978 to 1986, said of Lawson, "I can't think of anyone who

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FML Expiration & Recertification

for the new fiscal year. Employees who have been employed less than 12 months and/or who have not worked at least 1,250 hours in the immediately-preceding twelve-month period will not be eligible for FML in FY2012/13 until they meet those threshold requirements. Additionally, second and third medical opinions may be required.



What if you need a continuous leave for something like a surgery scheduled in May or June and your recovery will continue beyond June 30? If you receive approval for a continuous family-medical leave that crosses the fiscal year mark, then you do not need to submit new documentation just to support the part of that approved leave that occurs after June. However, if additional leave is needed in the new fiscal year beyond the initial return-to-work date in the approval, then new requests and certifications must be submitted documenting the changed circumstances.

For more information, including eligibility requirements, forms to be submitted, policies and FAQs, please visit the SPD Family & Medical Leave page at www.in.gov/spd/2397.htm.

If you have additional questions, please call the FML helpline at 317-234-7955, or toll free at State Personnel's Call Center: 1-855-SPD-INHR (1-855-773-4647) and choose the FML option. Also, keep a look out for more Torch articles on FML related topics, in the coming months.

Employee handbook got a facelift

The State Personnel Department (SPD) employee handbook has been updated to reflect a few policy changes. The last update occurred in 2009, so please familiarize yourself with the updated policies and procedures.

The latest version of the handbook has been uploaded to the State Personnel website and you can click [here](#) to download a copy.

If you have any questions, you can contact SPD at spdwebmail@spd.in.gov or 1-855-SPD-INHR (1-855-773-4647)



March 3 - Governor Mitch Daniels surveys the tornado damage in Marysville, Indiana. On March 2, tornadoes struck southeastern Indiana. Federal assistance for Clark, Jefferson, Ripley, Scott and Washington counties was approved by President Barack Obama on March 22. For more updates on the disaster relief effort go to: www.in.gov/gov/disasterrecovery.htm

Come get boxes!

The records center has a supply of new, “black” boxes available for purchase for \$1 each. These are the same size and design as our standard records box, and the “black” refers to the ink color. These boxes may not be used for transferring records for storage to our records center, but are excellent to use for storage elsewhere. To make a purchase, contact Tim Dunwoody at 317-591-5244, or tdunwoody@icpr.in.gov.



IDOA

Spring seems to have sprung early

The Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) is again giving State employees the opportunity to help give the Indiana Government Center campus a boost of color by adopting a planter. You can plant greenery or flowers and the IDOA Grounds Maintenance personnel will water the plants.

There are 87 planters of various shapes and sizes available for adoption, on a first come first served basis. Several agencies have requested the same planter as last year. In requests, please identify the specific planters being requested.



Volunteers associated with your agency are responsible for weeding and maintaining plants throughout the growing season.

If you would like to adopt a planter please contact Betsy Beckett, 233-3954, bbeckett@idoa.in.gov, before April 30th.

Don't forget:

April 6 – Good Friday

April 17 – IRS Tax filing deadline

[View state holidays](#)





14th Annual
HOLOCAUST OBSERVANCE
Remembering the Holocaust: Lessons Learned

April 17, 2012 • 12:00 pm • Indiana Statehouse
200 W. Washington St. • Indianapolis, Ind. • 46204

No cost to attend. Registration is required. To register visit: www.in.gov/icrc/holocaust.htm or call (317) 232-2651.

