

Booming business



DEP blasting inspector Gary Peterson, right, speaks with a blaster prior to shooting at the Black Castle surface mine in Boone County.

Inspectors enforce blasting guidelines

By Tom Aluise

Gary Peterson has heard his share of tall tales. He's also encountered some heart-breaking stories along the way and dealt with the good, the bad and the ugly side of people.

When you are an inspector

See **BOOMING**, Page 2

Combined Campaign will stretch fundraising

By Colleen O'Neill

With the close of 2009, the Combined Campaign has officially ended.

For 2010, the Department of Environmental Protection has made plans to stretch out the fundraising portion of the campaign. Employees can expect food sales and other fundraising efforts throughout the year.



Campbell

"As the coordinator, I found that compressing all the fundraising into such a short span of time (from September through Dec. 31) was difficult for me," said Melinda Campbell, coordinator for DEP's Combined Campaign effort. "And it burned out our employees as contributors as well. It seemed like they were always getting hit up for money."

The Combined Campaign is a state employee-fueled charitable drive to raise money for fellow West Virginians in need. It is an effort organized by the United Way of Kanawha Valley. The charitable organizations range from West Virginia Habitat for Hu-

See **CAMPAIGN**, Page 7

Dogs are DEP Santa's best friends

By Colleen O'Neill

Mike Mertz's regular job is with the Division of Mining and Reclamation's Oak Hill field office as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit writer.

Now, he can add



Mertz

to play Santa Claus in a unique role — posing for

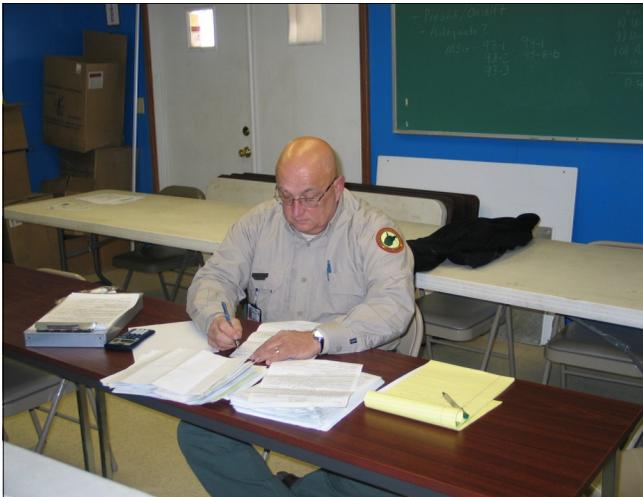
"PetSmart Santa" to his resume. This past holiday season, Mertz volunteered

pictures with dogs and cats at the PetSmart store in the Trace Fork shopping center in

See **SANTA**, Page 8

The DEP's Mike Mertz said most of the dogs and cats he posed with at PetSmart behaved well. Not one bit him.





DEP blasting inspector Gary Peterson pours through blast logs at the Black Castle mine in Boone County. Part of Peterson's job is making sure the logs are filled out correctly.

BOOMING

Continued from Page 1

with the DEP's Office of Explosives and Blasting, you hear and see it all in your day-to-day duties of administering and enforcing laws put in place to protect the public and its property from the potential harmful effects of surface mine blasting.

The OEB's six field inspectors spend the majority of their time responding to complaints and investigating damage claims from oft-angry coalfield residents who believe their property has been adversely affected by nearby blasting.

Complaints range from cracked walls, driveways and windows thought to be brought on by blasting vibrations, to damaged water lines and fly rock, fragments of rock thrown or scattered during blasting. Residents often call the OEB to complain about their house vibrating.

"A coal company can shake your house," Peterson said, "they just can't damage your house."

OEB Chief Dave Vande Linde said his inspectors understand how passionately people value their homes and try to remain respectful, often under trying situations.

"Everybody you deal with is upset," Vande Linde said. "You've got to be careful when you talk to them. It's their home or their job you're talking

What the OEB does

- Administers pre-blast survey process; trains pre-blast surveyors.
- Trains, certifies, examines all surface mining blasters.
- Administers claims and arbitration process for persons seeking relief from blasting damage.
- Conducts research to develop scientific data on the effects of blasting.
- Reviews all coal mine blast plans.
- Inspects surface coal mine blasting operations; investigates blast complaints and damage claims.

about."

Peterson, in his seventh year as an inspector specialist, learned that lesson quickly.

"I'm very, very careful about making comments that can be considered offensive. Their home is their castle," said Peterson, who covers Kanawha, Boone and Nicholas counties out of the DEP's Kanawha City headquarters.

"I like dealing with people, good, bad or indifferent," Peterson added. "I

See **BOOMING**, Page 7

As faces change, so does culture

By Randy Huffman

It doesn't seem that long ago when there were only two or three computers around the office. You had to shoulder your way into a work station to use one, or wait your turn. Eventually, computers became essential for us to do our jobs.



Message from the cabinet secretary

Today, if you don't equip the best and brightest young people with top-of-the-line technology, they're not going to work for you.

That's certainly true in our agency. But we need to go much further than just recruiting and hiring the

most talented of the new workforce. We need to keep them here and work diligently to provide them with, not just the technology to succeed, but with the guidance and wisdom to one day become our agency's leaders.

I've been talking about it for years, but now it's very real. This past year, for the first time, I started feeling the effects of the turnover from retirements. And it will become more intense in the coming years as our most experienced employees leave. They are the people who've been here since the agency began and who possess valuable historical knowledge. They are the people who can chart the path of the

See **CULTURE**, Page 3

indepth

Joe Manchin III
Governor

Randy Huffman
Cabinet Secretary

Kathy Cosco
Communications Director

Tom Aluise
Editor

Public Information Office
601 57th St. S.E.
Charleston, WV 25304

Email: Kathy.Cosco@wv.gov;
or Thomas.J.Aluise@wv.gov

InDEPth is published monthly by the
Department of Environmental Protection,
an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.



REAP's Chris Cartwright, front, and Greg Rote, help collect trees during the fifth annual Christmas Tree recycling drive at the Capitol Market in downtown Charleston.

Over 400 trees turned in at recycling event

Close to 450 trees were collected during the fifth annual Christmas Tree recycling drive in early January.

The event is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) and the Department of Natural Resources.

Despite frigid temperatures, a steady stream of Kanawha Valley residents dropped their trees off at the Capitol Market.

The recycled trees are used to create fish habitats at the bottom



REAP's Sandy Rogers, who coordinated the recycling event, speaks with a local television news crew.

of lakes and streams throughout West Virginia.

Extra trees not needed for lake and stream habitats are ground to make mulch.

People who dropped off trees received a gift made from recycled materials and also had their name entered into a drawing for ski trips and ski lessons.

CULTURE

Continued from Page 2

DEP and tell you why we're where we are today.

As those workers retire, we lose not just their institutional knowledge, we lose part of our culture. And as we replace them with a new generation of workers who have a different mindset on how they view the world, the door swings open for a new culture to emerge within the agency.

What exactly that new culture will be depends greatly on how it's shaped by many of us. The person at the top can only do so much. There is tremendous opportunity

for people within the agency to make a difference in however they choose. If you're sitting around waiting for me to tell you what to do, you're in for a long wait. I'm rarely going to do that.

Instead, become a mentor. Identify our future leaders. Help them attain the knowledge and skills to advance into middle and upper management positions in five to 10 years, rather than 15 to 20 years.

Many of us have an opportunity to answer that challenge and to decide what the new culture is going to be ... what the new agency is going to look like.

Run with it.



Sorting mail, saving money

By Colleen O'Neill

Steve Monroe continues to save money and improve services for the state.

Monroe is mailroom supervisor for the Department of Environmental Protection and works out of the DEP's Kanawha City headquarters.

He joined the agency in 2008 after managing the mailroom for the Division of Natural Resources.

"I began managing the mailroom for DNR in 2004 and soon discovered many savings that were available to state agencies," Monroe said.

"I researched every opportunity to save money for DNR and the state by attending many seminars and training sessions. It didn't take long to implement those changes within DNR, which resulted in significant savings and a long-lasting mindset of taking advantage of opportunities to save money."

Monroe said when the position with DEP was posted, he was quick to apply.

"I wanted to expand on what I was able to accomplish within DNR and expand the savings for the state," he said.

"Working with DEP management, we were able to identify some key areas of savings that needed to be addressed.

"Since addressing these issues, we have been able to document savings of over \$22,000 in 2009,

See MAIL, Page 10



This gasifier at the Frye Poultry Farm in Hardy County converts chicken litter into fuel for heating poultry houses. It supplants costly propane, which produces wet heat and high levels of ammonia.

State pilot project producing energy from chicken litter

By Gene Corrari

Perched at the edge of the state in Hardy County, Wardensville is a small community of 246 people and, since the spring of 2007, home to a state-of-the-art, energy-producing pilot project.

Located on the Frye Poultry Farm, a gasifier produces clean heat from chicken litter — dry, heated air that supplants costly propane as a fuel.

It eliminates a troublesome water pollutant, chicken litter, and has an added side benefit. The resultant ash can be beneficial as a soil amendment and/or fertilizer.

Relatively new, gasifier technology has been used in other applications with such diverse fuels as nonrecyclable plastic, bark, wood pellets and cow manure. Gasifiers fulfill a number of uses, as the clean heat produced can be run through a heat exchanger or even a turbine.

Propane heats poultry houses throughout the winter. The down side is propane produces a wet heat, which results in high levels of ammonia.

Many air exchanges are needed each day, introducing cold air into the system as large flaps on the side of the poultry houses are opened and closed. This air

Resultant ash can be used as fertilizer or soil amendment

must be reheated, using more propane and resulting in higher gas bills.

At Wardensville, a propane burner fires up the gasifier. The system breaks down carbon chains in the fuel, in this case chicken litter, in the absence of oxygen. This produces a gas, which is captured in a separate chamber, where ambient temperature air is introduced and the gas is combusted.

The litter is slowly consumed, leaving only an ash high in phosphorous, potassium and calcium. A computer system coordinates the process and monitors all temperatures, fuel feed rates and air mixture fans.

Funding for this pilot project was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's

See LITTER, Page 5

Fairmont office still has giving on its mind

By Tom Aluise

For close to 10 years, the Department of Environmental Protection's Fairmont office has collected items from its employees for the Marion County Soup Opera, a local homeless shelter.

This year, the folks in Fairmont plan to continue the tradition, albeit with a slight twist.

“Unfortunately, people are in need all through the year, not just during the Christmas season.”

Janice Palmer
DEP Fairmont office

Instead of using the holiday season to collect blankets, gloves, hats, coats and non-perishable food items for the Soup

Opera, the Fairmont office will accept donations through January and part of February.

Also, the office will collect items for the Marion County Humane Society and present those, along with the Soup Opera contributions, to the two organizations on Feb. 11 as a celebration of Valentine's Day.

“Unfortunately, people are in need all through the year, not just during the Christmas season,” said Janice Palmer, who works out of the Fairmont office in Environmental Enforcement. “This year, to welcome in a new decade, we are going to begin a new annual event.”

See GIVING, Page 6



Boxes in the DEP's Fairmont office are expected to fill up by Feb. 11 with donations to a local homeless shelter and the Marion County Humane Society.

DEP staffers recognized

Reward and Recognition

■ Bill Hatfield and Barry Stollings, environmental oil and gas inspectors, received Reward and Recognition honors during a Jan. 13 ceremony.

DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman presented the two individuals with their certificates in front of agency employees at DEP headquarters.

Hatfield and Stollings were honored for innovative uses of their hand-held Garmin GPS units which helped them organize their routines and also find new and abandoned wells.

Other oil and gas inspectors have since been issued similar GPS units and are pleased with the results.

“These units have proven very useful in simplifying duty demands and providing assistance the oil and gas inspectors need,” Huffman said.

November Employee of the Month

■ Pat Adkins, a microcomputer systems support specialist with the DAQ, was honored as the November Employee of the Month.

Adkins handles all of the DAQ Charleston office air monitoring and lab data and provides quality assurance oversight for the data prior to sending it to EPA’s national air quality database.

She has increased the air monitoring sections’ productivity and efficiency by developing complex database programs that reduce the data into accessible and understandable reports.

“Pat has written time-saving database routines that assist the lab analysts in electronically processing the data generated from their operations,” Huffman said.

December Employee of the Month

■ Jennifer DuPree, Southern Basin coordinator for the DWWM, was named the December Employee of the Month.

DuPree has formed excellent relationships with watershed associations in her region, while helping them get organized and funded for watershed improvement projects.

Her mentoring and assistance resulted in the first community-based onsite wastewater cluster to be installed in West Virginia in the McDowell County community of Ashland.

“Jennifer has spent countless hours doing outreach and education, spending evenings and weekends with volunteers and the public on top of her other duties,” Huffman said.



Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman helped recognize the Department of Environmental Protection’s Reward and Recognition and November and December employee of the month honorees at DEP headquarters on Jan. 13. Pictured with Huffman (from top) are Bill Hatfield and Barry Stollings, Pat Adkins and Jennifer DuPree.

LITTER

Continued from Page 4

National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Many times, far-fetched schemes are proposed to the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection by outside entities.

These schemes often include a process where a waste is introduced on one end and results in beneficial products, with little or no resulting pollution, on the other end.

The chicken litter gasifier, however, is the real deal.

It could be one of the answers to our future energy needs that will result in reduced air

pollution and a reduction in the agricultural waste that has plagued the Potomac River Watershed.

Coaltec Energy USA and Westwood Energy have come up with a viable solution to solve multiple problems for poultry producers, not the least of which is the sky-rocketing price of energy, in this case, propane.

Using chicken litter beneficially to create a cleaner environment is a plan whose time has come in West Virginia. For more information, please visit www.coaltecenergy.com or www.maxwestenergy.com.

This story first appeared in the Clean Air Forum, published by the DEP’s Division of Air Quality.

GIVING

Continued from Page 4

Palmer said adding the Marion County Humane Society, which is a no-kill shelter, was a natural move for the Fairmont staff.

“Just about everybody in this office is an animal lover,” Palmer said.

The Humane So-

ciety needs items such as dog and cat food, collars, leashes, garbage bags, bleach, paper towels, cleaning materials and litter. Money raised during a Feb. 1 soup and sandwich lunch for Fairmont office employees will go toward purchasing goods for the Soup Opera

and Humane Society.

Palmer hopes by moving the collection events away from the expensive holiday season, her co-workers will have an easier time filling up boxes for two worthy causes.

There are 27 DEP employees working out of the Fairmont office.

Sustainability Fair scheduled for May 22

The second annual Kanawha Valley Sustainability Fair is scheduled for May 22 at the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store on Piedmont Road in Charleston.

The event, sponsored by Kanawha Valley Connections, will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will introduce participants to and educate them about economic, environmental and social sustainability. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is among the promoters of the fair, which is funded in part through a \$10,000 grant from the Sustainable Kanawha Valley Initiative.

Last year, over 2,800 people attended the fair and associated events. There were products and services offered by

See FAIR, Page 9

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Recent DEP hires:

- Eric Gladwell, DMR, Jan. 4
- Bryan Postalwait, DMR, Jan. 4
- Jacqueline Sheppard, Administration/Executive, Jan. 16
- Connie Anderson, DWWM, Jan. 18
- David Cole, DWWM, Jan. 25

Recent DEP retirees:

- Allen Vest, AML, Aug. 16, 1982-Jan. 29, 2010

Bat workshop draws large crowd

By Tom Aluise

Close to 100 people took part in an endangered species workshop sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Mining and Reclamation.

The Jan. 14 workshop was held at the South Charleston Ramada Inn and focused on several topics, including endangered species consultation for general coal permitting; the new federal Range-wide Indiana Bat Protection and Enhancement Plan Guidelines, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2010; the conversion to full electronic processing (by Feb. 1, 2010) for endangered species consultation; and how to access information on the DEP Web page.

Bob Fala, a wildlife analyst with the DMR, conducted the workshop.

“Our main goal was to inform everyone and



The DEP’s Bob Fala talks about new federal guidelines for coal mines in dealing with the endangered Indiana bat.

update them on the new region-wide bat guidelines and the conversion to full electronic processing,” Fala said.

Fala was instrumental in developing West Virginia’s comprehensive plan for protecting the endangered Indiana bat in mining areas.

The 2007 award-winning document was used as a model for the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Range-wide

harbor bats.

Fala also discussed how important endangered species consultation is in the coal program’s permitting process.

“If you run into something, we’re here to help,” Fala told the workshop participants, which included representatives from the coal industry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Office of Surface Mining and environmental groups.

Fala said there are few differences between West Virginia’s 2007 bat guidelines and the new federal standards.

“The new guidelines will be painless for most of you because you’re already doing 95 percent of it,” Fala said.

In August, the DEP is scheduled to host a weeklong regional bat forum in Charleston that is expected to attract close to 200 people from several states and agencies.

BOOMING

Continued from Page 2

enjoy people. I've always been a people person. And I've found the best way to treat people is to be upfront, honest and don't make any promises you can't keep."

Of course, Peterson doesn't always benefit from those ideals in return when he's speaking with an enraged resident who's convinced a coal company has damaged his or her property.

Peterson has dealt with property owners who claimed blasts had bent fan blades in their homes and killed mulberry bushes in their front yards.

Once, a homeowner was certain a nearby blast moved furniture around in her house.

"One lady told me she laid down for a nap on her couch," Peterson said, "and when she woke up, her living room had been rearranged and she was on the other side of the room."

"I've run into sad



As Gary Peterson looks on, blasters at the Black Castle surface mine pour the explosive ANFO (ammonium nitrate/fuel oil) into blast holes for an upcoming shot.

cases, too. A homeowner said her ceiling had fallen in because of a blast. The coal company, though, hadn't blasted in the area in six months.

"You have to remain very neutral, and sometimes that's tough to do when they're on fixed incomes and have no money to repair the problems," Peterson said.

Vande Linde said his inspectors find that damage to coalfield homes and other prop-

erty is rarely caused by surface mine blasting.

For example, from Jan. 1, 2004 through Dec. 31, 2008, 525 damage claims were filed, yet only one was found to have resulted from nearby blasting.

"With the rules and laws we have in place," Vande Linde said, "as long as the company is complying with those laws, then damages should not occur."

Peterson said he handled close to 50 complaints in 2009.

"Of those, 12 had damage claims," he said. "And of those 12, I determined that 11 had no merit and one had undetermined causes."

"They can still request each claim to be further evaluated by our independent damage claims contractor."

"Generally what happens is people feel their home vibrate, they look around and see a crack that's probably been there a long time."

Peterson said everyday environmental influences such as doors slamming, kids running in the house, temperature changes, wind, humidity and soil moisture can produce greater strains on a structure than blasting that meets legal limits. The difference is they're expected, everyday occurrences, while blasting is not.

Air blast, an air pressure pulse caused by blasting, also leads people to believe their homes are being shaken

See BOOMING, Page 10

CAMPAIGN

Continued from Page 1

manity, which builds houses, to Mountaineer Food Bank.

"It's nice and very convenient that the United Way has offered this to state employees," Campbell said. "With payroll deduction, the money comes directly out of the paycheck so the employee doesn't have to do anything. And with all of the charitable organizations you have to choose from, it's like one-time, one-stop shopping. Those who need help can get it and you feel good that you helped."

Most organizations set a fundraising goal.

"I've kept the goal (for DEP) at \$10,000 each year since I've been the coordinator, beginning in 2006," Campbell said. "We've raised \$9,848 in 2006; \$7,693 in 2007; \$6,475 in 2008; and

\$5,772 in 2009.

The total includes jean Fridays, food sales, the Christmas auction, and all payroll deduction pledges.

"You can see it's dropped off each year. I think some of that has to do with my enthusiasm the first year, and then also with the drop off in the divisions holding events to raise money."

"We've got lots of folks in the divisions who have just been too busy to do what they used to do to help me."

Campbell said she welcomes new fundraising ideas and would like to get more people involved in the program.

"I've run low on ideas after four years of coordinating the campaign, so I would like to get volunteers to be on the team," Campbell said. "Anyone who is interested should make sure their supervisor will al-

low them work time to help with at least one event, plus a planning meeting to come up with the events we'll hold, then let me know."

Beginning in mid-March, employees will begin to see one fundraiser per month.

Some ideas Campbell has in the hopper are a cart that serves breakfast muffins; an ice cream social in Cooper's Rock where people can bring their lunch, buy a sundae and visit; a yard sale where people can bring old stuff from home and sell it; a soup sale; and a bake sale.

"Every time DEP has had a yard sale, it's done well," Campbell said.

"One man's junk is another man's treasure."

"In the past, the sale was usually put on by one office. That limited it."

"I want an agency-wide sale, with every

division and office participating. If we put it on when the weather is nice, maybe it could be outside in the parking lot. And, I wouldn't be against PEIA participating."

Campbell said jean Fridays will continue.

"They will be during the Combined Campaign Fridays in November and December. And we will have more mystery auctions, like the one at the Office of Administration's Christmas luncheon."

If employees have ideas for fundraisers or are interested in helping and have cleared it with their supervisor, what should they do?

"If you have an idea, just e-mail me, or call me," Campbell said. "If

you want to do some things at home like bake cookies, or if you want to donate items for one of the events, that'd be great."

DAQ keeping tabs on cleaners

Dry cleaning owners must be diligent in handling of solvent

By Tom Aluise

A dry cleaning operation isn't where most people would expect to find an inspector from the DEP's Division of Air Quality sniffing around.

But the DAQ periodically inspects West Virginia's dry cleaners for potential problems with perchloroethylene, or perc, a toxic solvent used in the cleaning process.

Perc is classified as a hazardous air contaminant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and must be handled as a hazardous waste. The EPA regulates close to 200 pollutants as air toxics, known or suspected to cause cancer and other serious



Top, Fred Teel, an inspector with the Division of Air Quality, looks over dry cleaning equipment at Mound Cleaners in South Charleston. Teel's focus is on potential leaks of perc, the toxic solvent used in the cleaning process. Right, Teel and owner Steve Krebs discuss information in the cleaner's log books.



health problems.

Released into the air, perc can also contribute to smog when it reacts with other substances.

Used by commercial dry cleaners since the 1940s, perc is pumped through cleaning machines, most of which today include both the washing and drying functions. The hybrid dry-to-dry machines are better for the

environment because they allow for the recovery of nearly all the perc, which is recycled through a distillation process in the same machine and used again. Any waste products from the process

See CLEANERS, Page 9

SANTA

Continued from Page 1

South Charleston.

Mertz said he took on the one-day gig at the urging of his wife, who's an unabashed animal lover.

"My wife, Patty, has been involved with the Raleigh County Animal Rescue — a no-kill, 501-c(3) (non-profit), all-volunteer organization, which started in 2003," Mertz said. "Volunteers take in abused, abandoned, injured or homeless cats and dogs and temporarily foster them in the volunteers' homes until they can find permanent and loving homes.

"Since its inception, RCAR has adopted over approximately 5,000

kitties and 1,000 dogs and spayed/neutered over 5,000 pets.

"I have to be an animal lover — it's a requirement of my wife. We have five cats and one dog at our house — all are rescues. I have my good days and bad days with them, but still I wouldn't want to give them away. Our dog, Annie, is probably my favorite because she doesn't use the litter box and does her business outside."

Still, how does one go from being an animal lover to a PetSmart Santa?

"Since all the volunteers are women, I volunteered to play Santa on Dec. 12," Mertz said. "On that snowy day, I got dressed up in a

Santa suit (provided by PetSmart) and posed for 25 photos between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"Most of the pets were dogs, along with a few cats. Some pet owners also posed with their pet and Santa. There were no snakes or lizards this time — it was probably too cold for them."

Mertz explained that the Santa photo was a service PetSmart provided to area animal rescue groups. PetSmart provided the Santa suit, backdrop, camera and printer. Rescue volunteers took the photos.

The animal rescue groups provided the person playing Santa and assisted the store patrons and their pets with the setup for their photo with Santa.

"Each group receives 50 percent of the \$9.95 photo fee," Mertz said. "The pet owner gets a nice photo and frame provided by PetSmart."

Most of the pets were well-behaved, Mertz said.

"Most of the pets were very cooperative, except for one Yorkie who didn't want to be held and kept getting tangled in my beard," Mertz said.

"Other than that, no pets peed, pooped or bit me."

Animals available for adoption may be found at PetFinder.com and there are links to the Raleigh County Animal Rescue. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to RCAR, P.O. Box 794, Coal City, W.Va., 25823.



Volunteers removed over 150 tons of litter and 5,300 tires in 2009.

Make It Shine approaching

Applications are now available for the 2010 West Virginia Make It Shine State-wide Cleanup.

This annual event is jointly sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Highways.

During the first two weeks of April, the Make It Shine program will provide resources such as cleanup materials, waste hauling and landfill fees to community groups volunteering to conduct litter cleanups on state

streams or public lands.

Over 2,500 West Virginia citizens participated in last year's statewide cleanup. These volunteers removed more than 150 tons of litter and over 5,300 tires from our state's landscape.

The application deadline for those wishing to participate this year is Feb. 15, 2010. Applications are available through contacting Travis Cooper of the Make It Shine Program at 1-800-322-5530, or by email at: Travis.L.Cooper@wv.gov.

U.S. Census forms coming in March

U.S. census questionnaires are scheduled to be sent to homes in March of this year.

The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every 10 years to count the population and determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. All U.S. residents must be counted — both citizens and non-citizens.

Households that do not complete and mail back their census questionnaire upon receipt may receive a replacement questionnaire in early April. Census takers will visit homes that do not return questionnaires to take a count in person.

Part-time jobs are available for the 2010 census, including census takers, census crew leaders, recruiting assistants and census clerks. For information call 1-866-861-2010 or go to: www.2010censusjobs.gov.

Today, census data is used to allocate more than \$400 billion in federal money to states and communities; to determine locations for retail stores, schools, hospitals, housing developments and other community facilities; and to determine boundaries for state and local legislative and congressional districts.

CLEANERS

Continued from Page 8

must be stored in sealed containers.

West Virginia has 49 commercial dry cleaners and all but two use dry-to-dry machines. A ban on transfer machines in West Virginia will take effect this summer. By 2020, dry cleaners located in residential buildings must have phased out the use of perc.

Fred Teel, a 16-year veteran with the DAQ, is among the inspectors who visit state dry cleaning establishments.

Teel, who works out of

the DEP's Kanawha City headquarters, spends most of his time handling complaints and dealing with particle pollution issues at concrete batch plants, asphalt and coal facilities, and gas compressor stations.

Those inspections are quite different and require a different set of skills than when he visits a dry cleaning facility.

"If the dry cleaning machine is operating when I'm there, I'll check it, make sure it's working properly and there are no leaks or odors," Teel said. "I'll make sure they're handling and storing the perc prop-

erly."

Teel also will check on -site logs that the dry cleaning operator is required to maintain. The logs include information such as how much perc is being used, temperature readings on the dry-to-dry machine's condenser and whether the operator is keeping up with required leak checks.

In the past, leak checks meant a simple sniff around the equipment by the owner.

"The times I've smelled it (perc), it's been pretty obvious," Teel said.

Now, dry cleaning operators use hand-held

devices to detect levels of perc in the air.

"If it's above a certain amount, you'll get a noise," Teel said.

"You can go around your machine, to different elbows and joints, and make sure there are no leaks."

Although dry cleaners have drastically reduced perc emissions since the EPA implemented its air toxics standards in 1993, some environmental groups are fighting to have the solvent banned from dry cleaning.

California regulators have ordered the phase-out of perc from dry cleaning by 2023.

FAIR

Continued from Page 6

more than 100 exhibitors and off-site sponsors.

"Sustainability is about strengthening our community ties and skills, making us better

able to maintain our resources in good times and bad," said Barbara Frierson, project manager for Kanawha Valley Connections. "Last year, people were thrilled to learn how many businesses, agencies and groups are working to-

ward sustainability in this area."

All businesses, organizations and individuals with green or sustainable products, services or practices are invited to participate. Call 304-941-3281 to request exhibitor appli-

cation packets. Applications must be received by April 22. There is no cost for exhibitors.

Organizers are also seeking planning committee members, volunteers and partners. Call 304-722-4731 for more information.

BOOMING

Continued from Page 7

by ground movement, when actually it is the air pressure pulse hitting the house.

“What really hurts our job is people don’t understand blasting,” Peterson said. “And the blasting information they’ve been given is incorrect.”

The OEB, established in 1999 by the Legislature to lessen the inspection load on the Division of Mining and Reclamation, takes all complaints seriously and conducts thorough damage claim investigations that often stretch over several days.

“Blasting damage occurs in a very short amount of time after the blast is fired,” Vande Linde said.

OEB investigators will visit homes to gather information and take photos of alleged damage.

They’ll also visit the coal company to examine pre-blast surveys and blast logs.

They’ll interview blasters, review maps that indicate locations of shots and the protected structures, and examine seismograph readings if available.

The pre-blast survey is conducted by the coal company using surveyors approved by the OEB.

All homes within one-

OEB’s Environmental Inspector Specialists Supervisor — Darrell O’Brien

- Sandi Duncan, Oak Hill
- James Blankenship, Oak Hill
- Richard Caserta, Logan
- Phil Keffer, Charleston
- Gary Peterson, Charleston
- Mike Kromer, Philippi
- James Davis, Charleston (on military leave)



Vande Linde

half mile of the permit boundary must be surveyed prior to blasting. “They’ll walk through the house, look for cracks and document the condition of the house,” Vande Linde said. “It’s another tool we’ll use when we’re looking at damage claims.”

After the OEB completes its damage claim investigation, it will determine whether there is merit to the claim. It can also classify the claim as undetermined.

Under OEB policy, the

homeowner has the option of bringing in an independent contractor to conduct another investigation.

Vande Linde said independent adjusters rarely come to different conclusions than the OEB inspector.

The OEB writes violations and requires restitution from coal companies if it determines that damages resulted from blasting.

In addition to following up on complaints and dealing with damage claims, OEB inspectors spend a portion of their time reviewing coal company blast logs to make sure they’re filled out correctly, all explosives

are accounted for and guidelines in the permit are being followed.

“Blast logs must be accurate and complete, or I’ll write a violation,” Peterson said.

Areas on the coal company’s property where explosives are being stored also are periodically inspected, as are blasters’ certifications.

While on the bench, the OEB inspector will make sure blasters are following all guidelines as they wire shots and then load holes with explosives, usually ANFO (ammonium nitrate-fuel oil).

Occasionally, a video of the blast will be shot.

“If I’m on the bench and the blasters are wiring a shot, I try not to interrupt them,” said Peterson, a Dunbar native, who worked 25 years in the chemical industry prior to joining the DEP. “I don’t want them to lose their concentration on what they’re doing.”

“Most of the companies don’t want any problems and work with me to alleviate any potential problems from occurring.”

Safety also is always a concern.

Peterson said blasters are required to block surrounding access roads and sound warning sirens before firing a shot.

MAIL

Continued from Page 3

while providing more visibility and less paperwork for the customer. I continually search for ways to save money and improve services for the state.”

While Monroe supervises activities, Ed Toler and Don Rowe are the daily personnel in charge of the DEP’s first-floor mailroom.

Between them, they share more than three decades of service.

Typically, mail is sorted and put in separate mailboxes for each office. Depending on

“I deliver some things and get out around the building, which can be nice.”

— Ed Toler

what it is, it might be delivered.

“In the morning, I deliver whatever has come into the front desk late the day before or that morning,” Toler said. “We check in whatever comes into the back door that morning. The biggest load is al-

ways the U.S. Postal Service mail.”

In a building with more than 500 people, getting out among coworkers is a pleasant change of scenery for Toler and Rowe.

“I deliver some things and get out around the building, which can be nice,” Toler said.

Of course, as technology continues to improve, the need for mail delivery will decrease.

“The volume of mail has been greatly reduced by email,” Monroe said.

“Being able to scan and send a document instantly at no addi-

tional cost is amazing, compared to the days before the invention of the fax machine and when we relied heavily on the U.S. Postal Service for document processing.

“I’m not certain that the Postal Service will be completely phased out any time soon, because of parcel shipping. If you shop online you can eliminate several mail pieces, such as catalogs and check payments. But in the end, the Postal Service will most likely be the least expensive route to get the product to your door.”