

STATE PAPERS & PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF BOB WISE

Thirty-third
Governor of West Virginia
2001-2005



Bill Case
Editor

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Photo: West Virginia State Archives

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

I will be forever grateful to the people of West Virginia for the opportunity they gave me to serve as Governor from January 2001 through January 2005. During this period, our life as a nation changed forever. Our strength and our character as a nation and a people were tested time and again.

It fills me with pride to recall how West Virginians responded to these challenges. When we were attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, West Virginians responded as we have since the founding of our state – by rising up as one to defend and serve the United States.

Many brave West Virginians lost their lives in service to this country as we responded to that attack. Thousands of others served as well – missing months and years of their families' lives, delaying education and careers and suffering injuries that will have an impact on their lives forever.

Nearly a decade later, that sacrifice continues, and West Virginians continue to serve. To these men and women, we owe everything.

But they are not the only ones who served West Virginia. We faced a series of challenges at home as well. Floods and fires disrupted the lives of thousands of our citizens. Our children's education required new investment and new commitment. Our economy was in transition, and our environment suffered from decades of mistreatment.

During the four years I served as West Virginia's Governor, tens of thousands of citizens of this state dedicated themselves to addressing these issues. And, as recorded in these pages, we made substantial and lasting progress.

This success would not have been possible without the hard work of the people who served on my staff in the Governor's office. I thank them all for their dedication and truly appreciate the various skills they brought to their work.

I must also acknowledge our partners in the West Virginia Legislature. The members of the House of Delegates and the Senate provided much-needed guidance in solving some thorny issues. They also acted urgently and responsibly, time and time again, when we were faced with emergency situations that required their immediate attention.

At the end of the day, however, I must give thanks again to the people of this great state. You continue to inspire and to persevere.

Montani Semper Liberi,

Bob Wise

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Ellsworth Wise Jr., known as “Bob” throughout his life, was born on January 6, 1948, in Washington, D.C. His family relocated to Charleston, West Virginia, in the 1950s, and he attended public schools in Kanawha County.

Bob Wise earned a bachelor’s degree at Duke University in 1970. He attended Tulane University School of Law, New Orleans, Louisiana, graduating in 1975. He was admitted to the West Virginia bar that year and began a law practice in Charleston.

Wise’s law practice in Charleston, he acknowledged later, was less than fully rewarding from a financial perspective. He took a part-time job as a bartender to help make ends meet and spent much of his time on political issues that did not translate into paying work. But his activity won him public support, and in 1980 he stunned political observers by challenging and defeating State Senate President Bill Brotherton in the Democratic primary. He went on to win the seat in the general election.

In 1982, Wise again took on an incumbent, one-term Republican Congressman Mick Staton. Wise won that race, and eight succeeding Congressional races. He represented the Third District until the reapportionment that followed the 1990 census. Later, his district became the Second District – a sprawling area that crossed the state from East to West.

Shortly after his arrival in Washington, Wise met and married Sandy Casber, who was already a Capitol Hill veteran and served as counsel to the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee. They have two children, Robert and Alexandra.

During his 18 years of service in the House (January 3, 1983-January 3, 2001); Wise served in the Democratic Party leadership as an at-large whip, a regional whip, and parliamentarian. He was known in Congress for his support of education – particularly programs that directed aid toward students, rather than institutions; for strong support of Social Security, Medicare and other safety-net programs; for balanced budgets and fiscal reform; and for environmental protection.

Committee assignments during these 18 years included Transportation and Infrastructure, Government Reform and Organization, and Budget. Among his notable Congressional accomplishments are the Chemical Right to Know legislation, the Wise Amendment to the Clean Air Act, and the first-ever federal Mental Health Parity legislation.

In West Virginia, he was also known for his effective constituent services and his tireless campaigning. Running a primary and general election campaign every two years in the Second District, Wise criss-crossed the state nearly every weekend, year-round, for all nine terms, taking in small town parades in the days and meeting constituents in the evenings. While other elected officials waved to parade-goers from the back seats of convertibles, that was not Wise’s style. A fan of Appalachian clog-dancing, he could often be seen dancing along the entire parade route, stopping to greet voters and hand out flyers.

Congressman Wise announced in May, 2000, that he would not run for a tenth term in the House; instead, he launched his first statewide race. For the third time in his career, he took on an incumbent, Governor Cecil Underwood. Wise's major issues in the campaign were health care – particularly for the state's children; jobs; education, including funding the merit-based PROMISE Scholarship; and the regulation of illegal gambling enterprises.

On Election Day, 324,822 West Virginia voters cast ballots for Wise, slightly more than 50 percent of the 648,047 votes cast. He held a margin of about 19,000 over Governor Underwood, with some 17,000 votes cast for several minor-party candidates. He took office as Governor on January 15, 2001.

INTRODUCTION

As Bob Wise took office as Governor of West Virginia in early 2001, the United States was in the waning days of one of the most sustained periods of peace and prosperity in its history. As a leading member of the House of Representatives, Wise had participated in some of the most important legislation of the late 20th Century – advancing economic and educational opportunities for people across the country, investing in research and healthcare, restructuring the social safety net and advancing opportunities for all.

Yet, from his post in Washington, it was clear to Wise that West Virginians were not reaping the full benefits of the social and economic policies that were raising the living standards of other Americans.

He campaigned on a platform that grew partly out of his experience in Washington. Education would be the bedrock of economic development. The state would provide assistance to young people based on merit, so that the most promising students would remain close to home where their successes could enrich their communities and their state. Careful investment in economic development projects, and in research efforts tied to development, would give business and industry the confidence to come to the state and create employment. The state would act boldly to assure that health care is available to all and step in when governmental action could work to the benefit of patients and consumers.

Throughout his Congressional career, Wise had always championed the interests of veterans and a strong national defense. These interests were also the concerns of many West Virginians, and they took on added importance as the events of 2001 unfolded.

But the Wise campaign was not a Washington campaign. It was based primarily on the candidate's lifelong knowledge of West Virginia and its people. Unlike many in his party, Wise shared his constituents' enthusiasm for outdoor recreation, including hunting and motorsports. He was also enthusiastic about the prospect of bringing people of faith, and their institutions, into the work of bettering the lives of West Virginia's citizens. He tapped into the deep well of pride of West Virginia's people, their love of community, loyalty to family and country, and the hopeful attitude and community spirit that had seen them through many past crises.

The term of Bob Wise as Governor of West Virginia, from January 2001 through January 2005, coincided with one of the most difficult periods in American history. The shocking attack on New York and Washington in September 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the nationwide economic slowdown that marked the first years of the new millennium posed serious challenges to state governments across the country.

These challenges were particularly felt in West Virginia. And while they changed many things about the operations of state government during this period, Wise and his administrative team never lost sight of their responsibilities to advance toward the goals they set out for the state in the campaign and the first days of his term.

This volume will include many of the documents that laid out Wise's goals from the beginnings of his term through its final days. Of course, no one book can contain all the important papers generated in the course of four years of activist government. The complete record of this Administration also includes thousands of items, including executive orders, proclamations, letters and other materials. All of this public information is on file with the West Virginia State Archives, and is available for citizens and historians who wish to add to this record.

Bill Case

Editor

Chapter 1

SETTING THE AGENDA FOR WEST VIRGINIA

By law and tradition, West Virginia Governors have six formal opportunities in each four-year term to place before the people and the Legislature the plans, their suggestions for legislation, and their assessment of the status of their work and the results of their efforts.

A careful reader will be able to follow the evolution of the Wise Administration through these public messages.

The first such opportunity is the inaugural address, usually delivered outdoors before a large gathering that, by custom, includes the outgoing Governor, the leaders of all the branches of State government, and an enthusiastic gathering of the supporters who placed the Governor in office.

Governor Wise's Inaugural Address is set forth in its entirety below.

The second through fifth opportunities for the Governor to address the people and the Legislature are the State of the State Addresses.

At the beginning of each year's Legislative session, the Governor is required by the State Constitution to present the Legislature with a proposed budget and a report on the condition of the state government.

The requirement is quite simple, as set out in Article 7, Section 6 of the Constitution:

The governor shall at the commencement of each session, give to the Legislature information by message, of the condition of the state, and shall recommend such measures as he shall deem expedient. He shall accompany his message with a statement of all money received and paid out by him from any funds, subject to his order, with vouchers therefor; and at the commencement of each regular session, present estimates of the amount of money required by taxation for all purposes.

The requirement could legally be met with a written message. But traditionally, the message is delivered in person, and the Governor takes the opportunity to set out in detail a package of key legislation; to recognize key people and events that have had an impact on the lives of West Virginians; and, after the first year, to draw attention to the accomplishments of the Administration.

Governor Wise took the occasion of the presentation of the message a step further. On the evenings of each of the four State of the State messages, he included with his budget documents the entire package of proposed legislation required to enact his legislative program for the year. In a state with a limited 60-day legislative session each year, this gave lawmakers the opportunity to use the entire period allowed by law to consider and debate the Governor's proposals.

Governor Wise's four State of the State messages are also included in this section.

The Governor's sixth address to the Legislature and people, his Final Address, is presented in Chapter Ten.

Inaugural Address

January 15, 2001

My fellow West Virginians. Sacred to every West Virginian is the concept of home and the homeplace. No matter how far we travel, whether we live far away or right here, West Virginia is always home. And so it is that an inaugural ceremony is a coming home. Coming home to honor our democracy, renew our purpose, celebrate who we are and embrace our future.

Our homecoming brings us together with common values and shared hopes; it invites us today to build a stronger state with more opportunity and more promise for our families and our future.

This truly is a great homecoming. Today we are honored to have participating in this homecoming our congressional delegation – United States Senator Robert C. Byrd, truly one of the legislative giants of our time; United States Senator Jay Rockefeller, so nationally renowned in his efforts for health care abroad and in the United States and in economic development here; and our very able congressional delegation, Representative Alan

Mollohan, Representative Shelley Moore Capito and Representative Nick Joe Rahall, who tried desperately to get here today but has been fogged in by Washington. That's why I came home. I knew there was too much fog there sometimes. I am grateful for the help given me in past months by our Legislature, represented here today by State Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin and House Speaker Bob Kiss. Our Supreme Court of Appeals also is gathered here and our Board of Public Works.

I am humbled that two former governors who have contributed so much to West Virginia's progress are here – Governor Gaston Caperton and Governor Hulett C. Smith. And in our homecoming, we also are joined by others. We are joined by Ohio Congressman Ted Strickland and Pennsylvania Congressman Frank Mascara. And also we have distinguished state sons and daughters who have accomplished much in different walks of life, and they've come home.

I am pleased to have with us today Ralph Baxter, a son from the northern panhandle who has done well on the West Coast and wants to help West Virginia. I am pleased to have Air Force General Charles Holland of Elkins home with us. And I'm pleased to have with us Retired Admiral Joseph Lopez, who grew up in Fayette County. He went in as an enlisted man and rose to one of the highest ranking admirals in the United States Navy and is now doing the same in business in Washington, D.C. All coming home, and many others as well.

And while I am going to talk about where we go from today, we also recognize that many have worked hard to get us to this point. Governor Cecil Underwood has dedicated his life in many capacities – in government, education and business – to serving our people and our state. He led us as the state's youngest governor, then returned 40 years later to lead our state again. Governor, on behalf of the people of West Virginia, thank you for your dedication, your service and your constant commitment.

Today we celebrate not only a transition and inauguration, but also the commemoration of the birth of one of our nation's greatest leaders. The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. taught us that unity, determination and force of will can overcome the mightiest of obstacles, whether it be racial inequality or economic hardship.

Let us seize this moment to honor his legacy by recommitting ourselves to his ideals of justice, progress and opportunity for every person and every family in West Virginia. Because he was a doer. He made things happen.

And there is much that we must do, and we must do now.

For West Virginia, education is the passport to prosperity. And today we commit ourselves to one simple goal crucial for public education and preparing our children for high-paying jobs. Ladies and gentlemen, friends and neighbors, we will become the Education State. We recognize for West Virginia what President John F. Kennedy saw for our country when he stated, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education."

And as we teach our children the 'three Rs,' reading, writing and arithmetic, let us also commit ourselves to teaching two more – responsibility and respect – with character education that teaches right from wrong. We commit today to the PROMISE Scholarship

that increases educational opportunity and keeps our young people, our lifeblood, home in West Virginia.

The word `home is more than just a place. It also means caring about and caring for each other. West Virginia is home to the children we love, and we will care for them. We will provide quality health care to every child in West Virginia by full implementation of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

West Virginia is home to the parents and grandparents we love, those who have given so much to this state, and we will commit to ensuring for them a system of health care that honors them by fighting for lower prescription drug prices. Already, I have begun negotiating with the pharmaceutical industry to make this happen.

And all of us know that one of the most important things for a strong home requires a good job, and there is much we commit to today.

We commit to fighting to keep and expand the high-paying jobs so important to West Virginia. Working with many West Virginians, I have developed an aggressive economic development plan. Working with the Legislature, we will implement it.

We commit to preserving our traditional base: our coal, our steel, our chemicals, our hardwoods. At the same time, we constantly seek to bring the new economy's jobs.

I commit today to ending the divisive battles. I am absolutely committed to the proposition that good jobs and a good environment can exist in harmony, and the new jobs we seek to create will require a good environment.

We commit today to developing an energy policy that recognizes West Virginia's key role in meeting the nation's energy needs while developing technology to meet additional challenges.

And we commit today to bringing the benefits of technology to every business, job, school and home. Thanks to Senator Byrd and the congressional delegation, every West Virginian can easily drive the interstate. Now, every West Virginian must be equally connected to the Internet.

Now I know there are those who say this cannot be done. They say we have to meet too many challenges, that we have too much to overcome. They say our state is too poor to invest in such a cause and too poorly prepared for the changing economy. And certainly there are challenges. Our already slow economy is at further risk from a declining national growth. Our people already are highly taxed. Our budget is in danger of shortfall. And our young people, our very soul, are leaving the state in search of better opportunities.

Yes, the challenges are great and the challenges are clear. But we cannot let obstacles become excuses for inaction. Because, in fact, our difficulties are precisely why we must act.

To those who say we can't do it, or to those who ask 'how,' I say look no further than the Bible in the Book of Nehemiah. Once mighty and prosperous Jerusalem had fallen; its residents

scattered or carried off into bondage. Determined to rebuild his beloved home, Nehemiah went to the conquering king with three requests: permission to return home, safe passage to Jerusalem and the resources necessary to rebuild the city. Nehemiah's commitment won the king's consent, and he returned to his homeland where the people joined together to accomplish his dream.

Against all odds, they raised the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days, and, as the Bible tells us in Nehemiah 2:18, "Then let us start building. So they committed themselves to the common good." And just as the residents of Jerusalem committed themselves, so must we.

It will take us much more than 52 days, and, like Nehemiah, it will take the strong hand of our leaders, our people and our faith. But we can raise West Virginia to the heights it must attain.

For remember, despite our vast challenges, we also have vast resources. Our geographical location is central to much of our nation's industrial and population heartland. We have made great strides in education; our infrastructure and four-lane highways bring great opportunities.

And go into any part of West Virginia, our cities, our hills, our hollows, to find our single, greatest asset: it's us, it's our people, proud and independent, hardworking, born in faith, raised in traditional values and blessed with determination. When we unleash this spirit and believe in ourselves and our future, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

Our road will not always be easy, and it won't be done overnight. And while we seek to accomplish much, we also will make mistakes. And I will ask your understanding for that. But you know as well as I that that is how progress is made. But if we commit ourselves to investing in our people and our infrastructure, there is no limit to what West Virginia can do because each of us has a Nehemiah, a builder, inside of us. To realize that greatest potential, and so that future generations look back on this as one of the turning points for our state, we must take and make certain pledges: I pledge to put progress ahead of partisanship.

I pledge to seek cooperation over confrontation. I value the assistance already provided me by the Legislature, and I look forward to working closely to developing mutual agendas with cooperation.

I pledge to put practical ideas ahead of ideology.

And we all pledge to put the next generation ahead of the next general election. So with confidence and commitment, let us work together to start building the West Virginia we hope to be the home for our children and our grandchildren.

I assume this responsibility deeply humbled by the trust you have given me. I recognize, as Senator Robert C. Byrd recently stated in an address to newly elected members of the Senate, and this actually could be an oath of office, and I quote: "The duty beyond our official duties may be the hardest duty of all. It is to lead by example, to endeavor to inspire others and to demonstrate through action, speech and personal example that our country

and its people always come first, and that those things matter to you more than personal popularity or acclaim.” Senator Byrd, thank you for those words.

My friends, I take this oath today with faith in God, our people and our way of life. I pledge not only to do my best, but to bring out the best our state has to offer. And I pledge to work as hard as I know how for the working men and women of West Virginia, our parents, our children and our shared future.

And so let us go forth and begin to build that foundation for our progress and prosperity, always looking ahead, moving forward and embracing our shared future.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the state of West Virginia.

First State of the State Address

February 14, 2001

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Board of Public Works, Justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Members of the Legislature, Senator Rockefeller, Congressman Mollohan, Distinguished Guests, and My Fellow West Virginians:

One month ago, the people of West Virginia gave you and me both a privilege and a challenge. The privilege is to serve them; the challenge is to get West Virginia moving again.

The people demand that we no longer accept the idea that West Virginia should take last place at the nation’s table.

They demand that we educate our children so they can have better lives and take advantage of the job opportunities we will create, and, at the same time, they demand that we teach, by example and by word, the values that have made this a great state and a great nation.

They demand that we improve our health care and that we provide the means for each citizen to have access to health care.

They demand that we make our economy stronger and that we participate fully in the new economy based on information and technology.

They demand that we protect the special places that make West Virginia what it is and preserve our water, our air and our land for future generations to enjoy.

They demand that we conduct the business of government in a way that reflects the trust they have given us, that we are good stewards of the taxes they pay, that we conduct the people’s business with their best interests in mind at all times and that we treat citizens as

the customers of government, not as its subjects.

Our job is to apply the resources of this wonderful state to one mission: to secure a better future for our people. This will require investment. It will require hard decisions. And it will require that we apply the values that make West Virginia great – hard work, fairness, honesty and humility.

West Virginia must keep its best and brightest here at home and bring home the productive people who have left in recent years in search of economic opportunities they could not find here.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to be home. I am happy that our family is together in West Virginia, and it is with great happiness that I recognize my wife, Sandy, sitting in the front row tonight with our children, Robert and Alexandra.

It gives us great pleasure as a family to know that our children's future in West Virginia is bright. But it is our responsibility to make it better.

Getting West Virginia moving again will not be easy, my friends.

Since taking office, I have instructed my department heads and staff to help me study the financial status of our state government. Ladies and gentlemen, the cupboard is bare. Despite the three percent budget cut, which I was forced to impose on the first day of my term, we are looking at a state budget with minimal growth for the next year.

We're paying the price for some reckless decisions by state government. We have about \$9 million in unpaid phone bills, some of them three years old. There have been massive over-commitments on highway projects which we must now fund. The contingency fund that we need to keep in reserve for emergencies has been depleted along with several other funds.

We now are at what appears to be the waning days of the longest period of economic growth in our nation's recent history, and West Virginia has precious little to show for it.

I am presenting you tonight with a budget that is in balance and that begins to make the investments we must make. It is a budget with no fat, no frills, and no nonsense. It is a budget that makes tough decisions. It is a budget that says the irresponsible practices that got us in this situation will not be tolerated again.

I will not ask you to increase the tax burden on business. With the exception of eliminating the tax loophole that exists for smokeless tobacco, I will not ask for any change in existing consumer taxes. Our people's tax burden is high enough.

It's also important to remember the health care we owe our veterans. That's why I support not only building a veterans nursing home, but speeding up the schedule for funding this home so that we can serve our aging veterans, as they served us.

Our passport to prosperity is education, and education is the centerpiece of my program.

Education is crucial to the future of our children and our state. Despite the state's financial condition, we must make some new investments in education. We cannot have economic development, we cannot fulfill our other responsibilities, without first making West Virginia truly THE education state.

My first priority is funding for the PROMISE Scholarship Program. This will provide each qualified student who works hard and plays by the rules with a scholarship at one of our state colleges or universities, or an equivalent scholarship to be used at a West Virginia private college, technical training center or other accredited program.

This Legislature has already passed the basic legislation that created the PROMISE.

But there hasn't been any money provided to keep the PROMISE.

It has to happen. I'll tell you why.

Very simply: West Virginia needs to build the kind of educated populace that is the key to participation in the new, information-based economy. Talk, as I have, to the executives at the High Tech Consortium in Fairmont. They will tell you that finding the qualified and educated work force is their greatest challenge.

In order to do that, we must make our colleges, universities, technical training programs and other post-secondary education programs more accessible to our students. We need to change the expectation level of students and parents so that each child knows that by working hard, he or she can, and will, get the education and training needed for a good job.

Some argue that needs-based scholarships should get top priority. Guess what? I agree. That's why this budget, for the first time in the history of the state, includes an additional \$6 million to provide a West Virginia Higher Education Grant to every student who qualifies.

But that's not enough. There are many West Virginia families just above the income limits who aren't eligible for assistance, yet have trouble paying for their children's higher education.

The sons and daughters of the Boone County coal miner, the Martinsburg school teacher, the steelworker in Weirton, the Putnam County truck driver, the Clarksburg police officer need these dollars. If you work hard, you should be able to get some help.

We've looked at every other state program that grants aid based on achievement. We've seen some tremendous successes, and we have noted that there were some problems and some growing pains. West Virginia can, and will, learn from the experience of other states that have established such programs in their higher education systems.

The voters of West Virginia last November elected a governor whose number one commitment was to make good on this promise. Every time I visit a school or meet with parents, they ask me if we're going to follow through.

West Virginia students need this opportunity and incentive. It's time to quit talking and take action. The states we compete with are leaving us behind.

I am delivering to you, today, as my first legislative priority, a budget which funds the PROMISE Scholarship for students in the fall of 2002. No student will be left behind. If you are qualified – you will get help from the state of West Virginia.

Ladies and gentlemen, you made a promise. Working together, we are going to KEEP THE PROMISE!

But that is not all.

If students are going to make it in college, they will need to be prepared for college. Our top goal in this area is to reduce the number of students who are unprepared when they enter college. I have created, by Executive Order, a statewide council on college preparation that will look at the entire system, from preschool through graduate school, and recommend changes that will help all levels of education work together to benefit the students.

A top quality educational system depends on all the education community – the school service personnel, the teachers, the principals, the administrators.

Teachers are the heart of the educational system. All of us know a teacher who has made a difference in our lives. Tonight, I'd like you all to welcome a special guest – someone recognized for clearly making a difference in her students' lives. Donna Ream of Lewisburg Elementary School, the West Virginia Teacher of the Year.

We must honor the work of our teachers. I have asked some of our business leaders to join me in that. And so, tonight, I am pleased to be joined by Greg Smith, of Mountain State Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and David Copenhaver, Tammy Hamby and Eric Sylvester of Toyota Motors. These two companies value education. They're creating good jobs that will employ well-educated people.

Because they know how important teaching is, Mountain State Blue Cross and Blue Shield is awarding this West Virginia Teacher of the Year a check for \$5,000.

There's a brand new Toyota Avalon sedan parked next to the Governor's Mansion. For the next year, Ms. Ream will have the use of that car, courtesy of Toyota, as a token of its appreciation for the work of all West Virginia teachers. And, by the way, the three Toyota team members here tonight helped build that car's high quality engine at Toyota's plant in Buffalo, West Virginia.

I wish we could do the same for every hardworking teacher, school service worker and principal. Unfortunately, when we began preparing this year's budget the declining economic conditions forced us to consider granting no salary increases. But when we are asking for even more effort, I simply can't do that. Therefore, I propose to increase the salary of every West Virginia elementary and secondary teacher by \$1,000, and increase every school service worker's salary by \$756, effective January 1, 2002.

We will continue to help teachers who want to do better in the classroom. The education bill I will bring before you tomorrow also adds an incentive for teachers to improve their teaching skills and achieve national certification. Each teacher who obtains this certificate,

and it is not easy, ladies and gentlemen, will get a salary increase of \$2,500.

Let me speak directly to our educators. This pay increase is not adequate for what we ask you to do. Several years ago, your salaries were raised to 30th in the nation. But we have been losing the momentum that brought you there. In just the past four years, you have fallen to below 40th place.

I commit to you tonight a multi-year effort to begin moving you back up the national ladder. I can't guarantee an exact amount for future years, because nobody knows what the economy will do.

We need to do more to keep the best and the brightest educators in our schools. I will commit to working with you on a strategy to develop incentives to keep experienced teachers in class longer.

I feel so strongly about this because of my personal experience as a parent. Recently, both our children have been involved in weekend academic competitions. It may be a Saturday, but their teachers are there. Several teachers even came into school early three days a week, or stayed late to coach their team. There is no extra pay, no financial reward. They are committed, and this commitment is in every school in our state. I would like to say to our principals, our teachers and our school service personnel, from Sandy and me, and on behalf of all West Virginia parents, "Thank you for what you do."

Our schools must also reflect and reinforce our deeply held values. We can do a good job of teaching the 'three Rs'... reading, writing and arithmetic. But it's time to add two more ... responsibility and respect. Character education begins with parents. We're adding three quarters of a million dollars in this budget to help teachers reinforce the lessons in character that children learn at home.

We also must do more to ensure safety for everyone in our schools. I will guarantee that the toll-free School Safety Hotline operates statewide 24 hours a day, and we will fully fund it at the state level for the first time.

One thing we should do as we move toward becoming the education state, is to create a State Science Camp, modeled on West Virginia's successful National Youth Science Camp. I intend to work with the Legislature to make this happen.

We also must ensure that school personnel and students work in modern schools. We need to get education out of trailers and into real classrooms. I will propose a bond package for capital improvements in public education.

I served with pride in this Legislature 20 years ago, and we balanced our budget. I served in the United States House of Representatives for 18 years, during which we changed the philosophy of the Congress toward the discipline of a balanced budget. So I will not make proposals for new scholarship funds or pay raises without tying them directly to a source of revenue or to savings in other areas.

We can fund these investments in our future, and, at the same time, address an issue that

troubles many West Virginia families, by imposing restrictions and regulations on video gambling.

West Virginia is drowning in a sea of video poker machines, better known as gray machines. Some estimates I have seen tell us there are, today, 20,000 to 30,000 of these machines in operation in our state.

Our convenience stores and gas stations are becoming unlicensed casinos. Children wander past gambling on their way to the candy counter. And, for years, the government of West Virginia has sat idly by and let this happen.

Every attempt to regulate this industry has been stopped, sometimes by people who claim that regulating it would “expand gambling.” It would be difficult to devise any way to expand gambling any more than has happened in the past four years. It can’t get worse. This illegal industry grosses as much as a half-billion dollars a year.

The current situation, more than anything else, breeds disrespect for the law. When the state gives a wink and a nod to an industry that is clearly in violation of the laws, it sends a message that we are not serious about the rule of law. If we expect to raise up a generation of West Virginians with the character to build a better society, we must set a better example.

Whatever our personal views on gambling might be, it is crystal clear that the time has come to remove thousands of machines from businesses frequented by children, to stop the development of unlicensed gambling parlors and to limit the number and location of new gambling machines.

Together we can do this.

The bill I will introduce tomorrow will reduce, restrict and regulate video gambling in West Virginia, and will do so by taking the following steps:

The number of video gambling machines will be limited to 9,000 statewide.

These machines will be prohibited in any part of a business open to young people, and there will be a limit of five machines at any one location.

Operators will have to pass a strict criminal background check and have been state residents for at least two years.

Anyone who operates an illegal gambling machine after January 1, 2002, will forfeit not only that machine, but any and all legal and illegal machines under his or her control.

My proposal will do something no one has done before – reduce, restrict and regulate the gray machines – and provide a steady new stream of income to finance the PROMISE Scholarship, other education efforts and the infrastructure necessary to build West Virginia.

I appreciate those who say they oppose any expansion of gambling. So do I. But every year they stopped any regulation, they only made it possible for even more gambling. I look

forward to working with you. But this must be the legislative session that finally acts to control these machines.

Let's talk about economic development.

If you want to take the temperature of our economy, I suggest you look at the license plates of the cars in your neighbors' driveways at Christmastime. You'll see their grown childrens' cars, their brothers' and sisters' cars, with Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland license tags.

All these people think of West Virginia as home, because it is. They come back whenever they can. They're here for the holidays; they're here for college football games. Many plan to retire here. But they're making their living, and contributing to the economy, in our neighbor states.

It doesn't have to be this way. Like we read in the Bible, in the Book of Jeremiah: "There is hope, saith the Lord, that your children shall return to their own borders."

At the end of my time of office, I want West Virginia to be a destination for ambitious people. I want our state to be a magnet for investment. I will be West Virginia's number one salesman. I'm going to be on the road – around the state, around the country and around the world if needed – spreading the word about our abundant power: our electricity, our coal and gas, our timber and our water. I'll spread the word about our open spaces and our clean air.

But most of all, I will tell investors we have the one thing that cannot be mined, manufactured or purchased anywhere: Us. It's who we are, our people. We West Virginians, with our work ethic, our traditional values and our willingness to help each other out, are the best source of our own future prosperity.

The state must be an active partner in economic progress. As a candidate, I presented the people of West Virginia with a detailed economic plan. They endorsed it. Now we must put it into action.

We must remove the barriers that stand in the way of businesses large and small. We must move quickly when we have opportunities – or when disaster looms – to see that West Virginia is at the table when deals are being struck.

Economic uncertainty abounds in the steel industry, in the chemical industry, in coal and gas, and many West Virginians are worried about their future. We can do better at anticipating change and in making West Virginia an attractive location for industry.

I will create and chair the West Virginia Jobs SWAT Team. It is not enough to respond when a shut down notice is issued; by then, it is usually too late. State development officials must be monitoring and anticipating these situations well in advance. Our Jobs SWAT Team will include the director of the Development Office, the secretary of Tax and Revenue, the commissioners of Employment Programs and Environmental Protection – and others.

We also will call on local and regional leaders and regional development groups like Advantage Valley to protect the jobs we have and attract new, high-quality jobs all over West Virginia.

We don't have all the resources some other states may have – but we can work harder and smarter if we work as a team.

We need to work as a team to take advantage of a historic opportunity that is before us in the energy market. This is the traditional backbone of West Virginia's economy. But it's a different world now. We have the energy resources the country needs, but we must work intelligently to harvest those resources and develop them in an environmentally appropriate way.

I have established the Governor's Energy Advisory Task Force, with the help of the National Energy Technology Laboratory and others, to develop new strategies to make our coal, gas, electricity and other power sources work for us in the long term.

We're also going to continue to build roads in West Virginia. Our Congressional delegation has worked overtime to secure funding for Corridor H and Corridor D, and we will complete these roads, and others crucial to our future. As a person who spent nearly 20 years on the Transportation Committee of the House Representatives, I will continue to work to bring good roads to West Virginia communities.

The Legislature already has authorized the issuance of \$440 million in road bonds. Unfortunately, the previous administration overspent this authorization by \$33 million. In order to meet these obligations, I am asking you today for authorization to issue the final \$110 million in road bonds already approved by the voters. After meeting our existing obligations, the balance of this road fund will be used to match the greatest number of federal dollars.

Obviously, to keep our road-building plans moving, I will ask you to renew the 5-cent gas tax. This is not a new tax, but simply continues an existing tax, and that \$55 million is necessary to keep our road program going.

I ask you for some important economic development legislation this year: the long-awaited reform of the West Virginia Capital Company Act. The Legislature created this act to stimulate new businesses. But many well-established companies, that could have obtained funding in the traditional marketplace, have tapped this fund, and tapped West Virginia taxpayers. This has gone on too long. The bill before you will restrict this money to creating new jobs and new opportunities.

I also am asking you to pass legislation to create a Sunny Day Fund, so that when a company is at the point of making an investment decision to create jobs in West Virginia, the state immediately can come in and put some financial muscle into the negotiating process.

I will conduct, before the next regular session of this Legislature, a complete top-to-bottom review of the various tax incentives that have been developed for business over the past several decades. We need to see which ones work and strengthen them; we need to see

if any are ineffective, and direct those resources elsewhere. And we need to study the tax incentives available in other states and countries and see where we can be more competitive.

We will remove obstacles in state government to business start-ups. Through cooperation among state agencies, we will provide one-stop shopping – available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the Internet – to entrepreneurs who want to do business in West Virginia. Most new businesses are started by people who already have a day job and can't afford to take time off to stand in lines at state offices.

I also am ordering a review of the state's regulatory rules and practices. Regulation is important, and can be a shield against unfair practices, if it is effective, and if it is not burdensome. West Virginia cannot allow outdated regulatory practices to slow down our economic growth.

I have established by Executive Order the West Virginia Motorsports Council, to begin to capture much more of the motorsports revenue that originates in this state. I also have created a Film Development Council to dramatically step up the effort to bring more motion picture industry jobs to West Virginia. I'm sick and tired of watching movies about West Virginia that are filmed in other states. We're going to be in the driver's seat AND in the movies, folks.

We also must recognize that tourism has become an irreplaceable part of our economy. I love to bring business leaders to West Virginia for raft trips, or to a ski resort, or to one of our state parks. They fall in love with West Virginia, and then they want to move here. For thousands of people up and down the East Coast, and, increasingly, around the world, West Virginia is becoming a top tourist destination.

I have included in the budget an improvement package to make crucially needed investments in our state parks. And we will find the funds to continue development of the Hatfield McCoy Trail.

West Virginia's Congressional delegation has pledged to continue to work with us to get our economy moving again. Senator Robert C. Byrd and Senator Jay Rockefeller, and Congressman Nick Joe Rahall, Congressman Alan Mollohan, and Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito have made it clear to me that they make this their first priority.

My priority in working with our delegation in Washington will be to stop the destruction of the steel industry by illegal imports. West Virginia's steel industry has developed efficient processes and adapted to the new international marketplace. But it can't survive against an onslaught of subsidized and underpriced steel from abroad. This country must have a strong and vibrant steel industry to remain an industrial power, and West Virginia will be a part of it.

I already have met with the top executives and union leadership of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel and Weirton Steel. The state will work closely with them to keep them strong. As our congressional delegation fights unfair foreign steel, I will join that battle.

One step we can take, immediately, to preserve steel jobs, is to require the use of U.S. made

steel in state-funded projects. I have prepared a bill to do just that. I respectfully urge you to take up this legislation at the start of business tomorrow, and to move it through both houses of this Legislature in record time. I promise to sign it the minute it arrives on my desk.

We're in this fight, and we're in it to win ... for West Virginia.

Let's talk about health care, because we must improve the health of our people.

This Legislature has acted wisely in establishing a Children's Health Insurance Program to help the uninsured children of working families. But this program has yet to reach many eligible children. Immediately after my administration began, we signed a contract with the state's primary care clinics to promote CHIP in doctors' offices and other health care settings.

We will do even more to get the word out. Just this weekend, one of West Virginia's true native stars, Kathy Mattea, taped a public service announcement urging parents to call and sign their children up for health care. Let's thank Kathy Mattea and others like her, for helping us reach out to thousands of children and get them the care they deserve.

I have included \$1.5 million in the budget to cover additional children. And we will work aggressively and cut through red tape to make sure every child in West Virginia has access to coverage – whether under CHIP, Medicaid, or private insurance. Every child. That's my goal.

We have a patient bill of rights law, so they say, in West Virginia, but patients will tell you, it does not grant them very many rights. I want to fix that. I will present for your consideration a new Patient Bill of Rights, which includes a fast, impartial grievance procedure for disputes, independent reviews of coverage denials and the right to sue an HMO for negligence that results in harm to a patient.

Senior citizens, the chronically ill and our state health budget all are being battered by rising drug prices. Upon taking office I summoned to the Capitol the representatives of the nation's drug manufacturers to meet with our state agencies that deal with prescription drugs. We now have a strategy to contain these costs: we're going to create a pharmacy benefit program for our poorest senior citizens. We're going to expand the discount program for seniors above the poverty level. We're developing a drug benefit plan that could be an add-on for people on Medicare and employer-based insurance. And we're going to pool the buying power of all the state agencies that purchase medicine and use this to drive a harder bargain with the drug companies.

And, while we're talking about health, I ask you to close the tax loophole that exempts smokeless tobacco from the same excise tax we have on cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco is sold to young West Virginians at an alarming rate. We have the highest consumption levels of this product in the country. This is a dangerous situation, particularly for our children, and raising the price of smokeless tobacco is a sure way of reducing its use by young people.

I also have prepared for your consideration a bill to lower the blood alcohol standard for

impaired driving to .08 percent. This is not only a public health and safety issue, but also will bring us into compliance with the federal standard, and avoid the loss of highway funds that are contingent upon this action.

Public employees deserve a stable, dependable health system, too. I am determined to keep the Public Employees Insurance Agency solvent. I also am proposing a measure to contain costs for agencies and for employees in our Public Employees Insurance Agency. We will improve service to employees, and move to more efficient processes. The bill I will offer to you does not harm the benefit plans of any current employee, but will eliminate, for people hired on or after July 1 of this year, the option to trade unused sick leave for months or years of health coverage after retirement.

Let me take a moment to talk about another challenge our state faces – how to achieve balance between developing our economy and protecting our environment.

We will have a strong economy. We will continue to mine coal, to produce electricity, to manufacture quality goods and to create high-technology jobs.

It was the prevailing wisdom in the last century and in previous generations, that economic growth carried the price of environmental sacrifice. We in West Virginia often divided ourselves into two camps – energy on one side, environment on the other. In so doing, we lost sight of a basic truth: we will share the future of West Virginia together.

It is my goal to put behind us the era of divisiveness on the issue of West Virginia's environment. All of us who love West Virginia, whether we work at a desk or in a coal mine, in a school or a factory, love our hills, our rivers, our woods and our valleys. We must preserve them for our children, and their children.

We can have a clean environment, and we can have good-paying jobs. And there must be no higher economic development priority; therefore, I ask you to elevate the director of the Division of Environmental Protection to the post of secretary, and add this official to the Governor's Cabinet to emphasize the importance of environmental protection to this government and to our people.

Every action DEP takes affects our environment and our economy.

We can move beyond confrontation. We will. We strictly will enforce state and federal laws for the protection of the environment in the mining industry so that citizens will know that the excesses of the past will not return. And we will work with all sides to have a reliable, uniform and predictable permit process.

We will protect the places West Virginians hold dear. We cannot afford to have our natural treasures, like the Blackwater Canyon, slip out of our hands. I will, in the near future, announce a land conservation plan for West Virginia that respects both the private landowner and the public interest.

We do not do this simply out of nostalgia or emotion. It's an economic investment as well. One of the treasures we have in West Virginia, that is increasingly rare in this country and

the world, is the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors just a few miles from the centers of our cities.

Access to these lands is a prime drawing card for the high-paying jobs of the new economy, not tied to a single place by access to ports, railways or raw materials. With high speed access to the Internet, many information-based jobs can be located anywhere. We want them here.

One of the best selling points for West Virginia, the reason so many of our people wish they could come home, is our low crime rate. This always has been one of the safest places in America.

This, too, is a reflection of our values: respect for each other, respect for God, respect for the law and rejection of violence. But there are some who do not respect these values. Our state, county and local police and our correctional officers guard us against crime.

I had the sad duty a few days ago of traveling to Berkeley County to meet with the family, friends and fellow officers of Deputy Sheriff John Lewis Burkett III, who was killed in the line of duty, transporting a prisoner from Pennsylvania back to West Virginia. He was the third brave officer to fall in the line of duty since this Legislature last met.

In June, Morgantown Police Officer Frank Fidazzo was killed in a training accident. In September, Nicholas County Sheriff's Deputy William Giacomo was shot and killed. Their deaths are a reminder of the price the men and women of our law enforcement agencies are willing to pay for our safety. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a moment of silence to honor these officers and all who have paid the ultimate price in our defense.

Although we value their work, those who guard us against crime are paid far less in West Virginia than in our surrounding states. This is particularly true in the correctional system. After completing the required training, the starting salary for a correctional officer is \$18,000. Severely understaffed and overworked, our correctional officers are spending long days in close quarters with dangerous and unpredictable criminals. I ask you to pass legislation that will provide a \$2,000 annual raise for correctional officers.

Our State Police, too, are not paid adequately in accordance with the burden they carry. And, we are unable, in this tight budget year, to give them all they deserve. But I have set aside \$1.5 million in the budget to offer an adjustment in the trooper longevity schedule that will reward our troopers for remaining on the job. It will be a down payment, I hope, on a salary plan that will encourage young officers to attend the State Police Training Academy and for senior officers to continue providing their much-needed experience.

We will remain a safe state for families and for business. And friends, this is one reason I'm very glad to be home and to have my family here in West Virginia.

There are many others who work hard for West Virginia. Our state government is made up of hard working, competent and dedicated people. I have visited many of the departments of state government since taking office, and I am impressed by the people who serve us in those departments.

I am proposing tonight a \$756 annual increase in salaries for all state employees, effective January 1, 2002. Once again, this is not adequate for what our public employees do. Unfortunately, it is all our state can afford.

Our government does not always look as good from the outside as it does from the inside. Our policies and processes of government are often confused and contradictory. We make it difficult to do simple things.

Business people have learned that the marketplace no longer tolerates poor service. The economic battlefield is littered with the corpses of once-proud companies that didn't make the transition from a product-based marketplace to a service-based marketplace.

Our state government must adopt a customer-service mentality, from top to bottom, to meet the needs of all citizens.

Our citizens need 24-hour, seven-day-a-week service from government. Companies like Amazon.com, which are creating new jobs in West Virginia, have shown that people can and will make transactions around-the-clock. If we can buy books and CDs at 10 p.m., why can't we buy hunting and fishing licenses, reserve a cabin in a state park, renew a license plate, apply for a business permit or check the status of a tax return?

I have directed my Office of Technology to launch an e-government initiative. We will identify, from the consumer's perspective, the government services that can most easily be carried out on line. If you're a customer of a state agency, write to me, or send me an email, and tell me how we can serve you better.

Because of what we have discovered in the last month about how West Virginia government has sometimes operated, I am presenting you with a bill to create, within the Governor's Office, an office of internal audit and risk assessment. For too long, problems that developed in the administration of state government were allowed to fester until they became unmanageable. We have lost millions of dollars in correcting old mistakes, paying bills that somehow were forgotten and otherwise cleaning up messes that easily could have been avoided.

West Virginians expect and need better service from government. They deserve it. And they will get it from this administration.

I am honored to serve West Virginia. I pledge to get us moving in the right direction. We must make some strategic investments. We must set aside our conflicts to shape our future together. We must create opportunities for our children.

Tonight, as is customary, I present my budget to this Legislature.

But these are extraordinary times.

So tonight I take the extraordinary step of submitting not just a budget, but also all of the bills that are required to take the actions I have proposed.

We have worked hard to get these ready in the 30 days I have been in office. We will work twice as hard with you to get them enacted in the next 60 days.

I ask your help and your prayers as we set about to make this great state a better place for all of its citizens.

Every West Virginian senses at some time an evident truth: God walks among these West Virginia hills. From the smoky mist rising from every hollow – to the deer raising her head from the mountain stream – to neighbors that gather ‘round in times of hardship and grief and in times of joy.

West Virginia is a special place.

There are times in special places we can rest and rejoice in what we have. And there are times we are called to rise to the challenges. My friends, you and I know that this legislative session summons us to great effort.

Our challenges are great, but our opportunities are boundless. Working together, we will answer that call.

Thank you, and good night. And God bless West Virginia.

Second State of the State Address

January 9, 2002

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Board of Public Works, Justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Members of the Legislature, Distinguished Guests, and my Fellow West Virginians:

Before I begin, I would like to recognize three special guests who are in the Chamber tonight. Senior Airman Jeremy Callen, representing the 130th airlift wing; Chief Master Sergeant Robert Chandler, representing the 167th airlift wing, the highest ranking enlisted member in the West Virginia Air National Guard; and Sergeant First Class Benjamin Gentry, representing three units – the 157th Military Police Company, the 2nd Battalion –19th Special Forces Group and the 229th Engineer Detachment. They are bearing the colors of the three West Virginia National Guard units that have been activated in support of the war against terrorism. Another unit of the 229th Engineer Detachment based in Kingwood will report this weekend for an assignment of unknown length.

After this evening’s address, these colors will be posted in the Governor’s Reception Room as a daily reminder to all of us that our work continues under the protection of these brave men and women.

Thank you! Our freedom – the freedom we enjoy as Americans – is paid for by your courage.

West Virginians and all Americans have been tested in the past year like never before. West Virginians have always risen to the challenge, and this year was no different. With the help of God and the commitment and determination of the people of this great state, we met the tests that were placed in our path.

- We were tested by flood waters;
- We were tested by terrorism;
- We were tested by fire;
- By the illegal dumping of steel;
- By out-of-control illegal gambling;
- By huge increases in prescription drug costs; and
- By the collapse of the medical malpractice insurance system.

But by working together, this Legislature met these tests.

This Legislature has risen to the challenge. Through regular . . . and yes, a few special sessions . . . you resolutely acted on behalf of the people of West Virginia. This state is much better because of your efforts, and we thank you.

We have been tested – and yet we continued to move West Virginia forward to make this state a better place to live.

Make no mistake, our time of testing is not over.

We will face difficult choices because of budgetary shortages. The national economy is in recession. Our nation is at war. We believe at least 40 states will not meet their budget estimates this year. Because we budgeted conservatively, West Virginia's budget is on target, but we are still facing some very tough times. Our rate of economic growth has been cut in half. More than ever before, we need sound fiscal management and innovative policies to avert financial hardship.

The budget I'm presenting tonight is balanced, invests in our future, contains tax relief and does not raise any taxes.

We will face new hurdles in providing our children with the education they deserve;

We will face new threats to our security and safety; and

We will face new challenges in providing health care for all West Virginians.

These are the tests that are thrust in front of us that can divert us from our determined path. But the ultimate test is yet before us – the test that truly measures us – and that is the test of whether we have the courage to do what is necessary to make us what we desperately want to be.

You and I want the same – to create good-paying jobs; to have an educational system second

to none; to know we can get good health care; to be safe in our schools, in our churches, in our homes and in our workplaces; and, above all, to bring our children and neighbors home from wherever they are living outside our state.

Keep this vision in mind because what I'm going to ask of you tonight will require new approaches; it will take sacrifice. We must be willing to invest, and we must be willing to think imaginatively.

And above all, we must remember that saying, "If we keep on doing what we've been doing, we're going to keep on getting what we've got."

Friends – we can get a lot more.

We have much to do. But the first priority of government must be to protect the public safety. I want to recognize tonight the tremendous efforts of our firefighters, law enforcement, emergency workers and our National Guard – all those people who protect us. But they can't do it alone.

My budget will begin funding new classes of state police. Many counties are without state police coverage they need ... and we need more troopers to provide for the safety of 1.8 million people.

Our police put their lives at risk for us each day. Just last Saturday night, I had the privilege of riding a shift with West Virginia state troopers as they patrolled in southern West Virginia. These men and women give so much to us – it's time we give something back to them.

In addition to addressing the manpower shortages in the state police, I have presented a bill tonight that assures that equal benefits are to be paid to survivors of state police officers killed in the line of duty.

This is only the first step and not the final step. I am committed to doing more for our state troopers.

The National Guard has been outstanding with their service over the past year.

The men and women who serve us and keep us safe also are important members of our families, our communities, our businesses and our churches across this state. As we salute those who have been called to active duty, let us also honor and remember their families. This Legislature took action last year to preserve benefits for those families, and for that I thank you.

I'd also like you to welcome, and I have been asked for security reasons only to give her first name, Patricia, whose husband is on active duty with the National Guard. Their daughter, MacKenzie, and his mother, Susan, represent the hundreds of families who pray with us for the safe return of a service member. Patricia, MacKenzie and Susan – please stand and let us recognize you and all the National Guard families.

I also thank the employers across the state who saw key members of their businesses called

away over and over to fight the floods, the fires and now to fight the terrorist attacks on the United States. These employers make it possible for our citizen soldiers to defend our communities and our nation.

The National Guard is critical to the safety and security of our people, which is why my budget will also include building the new armories and other National Guard facilities so necessary across West Virginia.

From the horrors of September 11, we have all been asked – what can I do to help? That’s why we’re forming West Virginia Watch – a volunteer organization of citizens who will assist law enforcement officials in safeguarding our people, our transportation, our industrial facilities and our natural resources. Now we can all pitch in to help.

Last year, we came together to begin the process of changing our economy. That task is even more urgent today as we face a national recession and the threat of more plant closings and job losses.

I know that a lot of West Virginia families are struggling to make ends meet. We can help them by giving them a break on one large annual expense. Every year, families across West Virginia scrape together money to pay for back-to-school shopping trips. Tonight, I am submitting legislation to provide a Sales Tax Holiday on school supplies and clothing for three days before kids go back to school in August. This will provide badly needed relief for our families and send a signal that we not only hear you – we are here to help.

But the biggest help for any family is a good-paying job. We need to continue our focus on long-term strategies to attract and keep good jobs in West Virginia.

This year, I have asked Paul Arbogast, the chairman of the Business Roundtable, and Jim Bowen, the president of the AFL-CIO, to work together to help us identify and resolve the issues that hold West Virginia back. They have agreed. This effort will benefit both business and labor, and all of us, as we compete in the global marketplace.

This new climate in West Virginia has not gone unnoticed. We have attracted new investment and new interest.

One business leader brought a totally new type of enterprise to West Virginia. Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, an international law firm based in San Francisco, needed a global operations center. Ralph Baxter, Jr., the chairman and CEO, searched the country for an appropriate site, and he found it in his native state of West Virginia. What he found in West Virginia was the ideal combination of hard-working, skilled people and resources to accomplish his mission. His company is investing \$10 million to create 250 high-paying jobs. Please join me in welcoming home a native son and his wife Cheryl, and thank him for believing in West Virginia’s future.

Ralph has agreed to head a new group called the Governor’s Ambassador Council, made up of business leaders like Ralph from across the nation who have strong connections to West Virginia. This council will advise the state on strategic issues, make sure that our strengths are known to business decision makers and give us objective external reviews of our business policies.

We'll also look to this council to help develop a plan to encourage talented young people to stay in West Virginia or move here from other states.

Over and over, mothers and fathers tell me that their hearts ache whenever a young person senses that his or her hometown has limited opportunity and they must move away in order to find success. Tight-knit families are pulled apart. Children and grandchildren slip away from the nurturing communities that make West Virginia such a special place to live.

I want to bring these people home, and keep our children here.

Let me tell you about one success story where three young West Virginia natives, with the help of the West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust, started a software company, Threewise.com. They're earning rave reviews – and customers – with their new software for real estate transactions.

But many of their classmates have left. We have to change that.

In the 1860s the federal government encouraged homesteading by offering land to people to locate in a certain area. The times have changed, but not necessarily the concept. As we recruit businesses, let us also recruit our people as well.

We can start right now.

We can begin by providing a tax credit that helps people pay off student loans so that new graduates will be encouraged to stay, or to move here.

We must welcome new families with open arms – not punish them with unexpected fees. This year, we must finally eliminate the expensive transfer fee on personal vehicles brought to West Virginia by new residents.

Incentives alone won't bring people back. You and I know that. What will bring them back is a vibrant economy, a place where private investors are willing to take risks and create jobs. It's time to take some strategic steps that will start the process.

In the budget, I have included \$3 million for the Sunny Day Fund to give us the financial flexibility to attract new businesses and create new jobs. Our neighboring states already have this. To be competitive, we need it too.

We must draw in venture capital to encourage entrepreneurship and create jobs. At my direction, the West Virginia Investment Management Board is ready to move forward with a \$25 million plan that will attract \$75 million more in federal funds for a total of \$100 million in new investment capability for businesses in West Virginia . . . and I am asking you to approve this legislation to make that happen.

I am directing the West Virginia Development Office to create a Small Business Ombudsman to assist any small business that wants to stay, wants to grow and wants to take advantage of the opportunities West Virginia offers.

We also must support communities that take bold steps to reinvent their economies. That's why we are going to support the Wheeling Victorian Outlet Center, a public-private partnership that will result in the renovation and rehabilitation of more than 100 historic buildings in the heart of the city of Wheeling, and the creation of a new shopping destination that will generate hundreds of jobs.

We must help working people adapt to change. We're already offering workforce training to 1,000 current employees of businesses that believe they can profit from a better-educated workforce. And, because we've streamlined our bureaucracy and developed a new workforce investment plan, I am announcing tonight that the U.S. Department of Labor has selected West Virginia to participate in a pilot project that will be a model for other states.

Additionally, we must join the 46 states that allow local governments to attract private investment in their communities through tax increment financing. It's a simple idea: for a limited time, pledge the additional local taxes that arise from new development toward the investments that make that growth possible. Working with business and labor, we'll have a new way to create jobs.

A year ago, I promised a top-to-bottom review of the various tax incentives that have been developed for business over the past several decades. This first-ever review is complete.

We must eliminate 11 tax credit programs that have proven to be ineffective, including the "Super Credit," an accountant's "super" nightmare. This super credit has a 16-page application form and a minimum requirement of 50 jobs that shuts the door on small business.

Tonight, I am asking you to replace the unproductive incentives with four new tax credits for: economic opportunity, manufacturing, electric generation and research and development. We will make these programs simpler and easier for businesses to use and more accessible to small employers who are the backbone of so many communities. This is that 16-page application I told you about.

Pass my legislation and we replace this 16-page application with this new one-page form.

We have never had a serious effort in West Virginia to encourage research and development. This, too, must change. In addition to our new tax credit for research, I propose a sales tax exemption for research and development activity. This will instantly cut the material costs of West Virginia researchers by six percent.

I also am pleased to report tonight that this budget will provide funding to match a \$9 million grant from the National Science Foundation to support biomolecular science and information technology research efforts at Marshall University and West Virginia University.

We will also increase the higher education research budget by 250 percent.

But the real result of all this investment comes when private enterprise enters the picture.

I am pleased to announce tonight that the Verizon Corporation has committed \$200,000 toward biometrics research and development in West Virginia. It just gets better.

In addition, a new biotechnology company, Protea, has been established to take advantage of the expertise of West Virginia University researchers. It is already creating jobs and creating a buzz in the biotech world that the next great center of growth for this industry may very well be in West Virginia.

This enterprise, because of the vision and entrepreneurship of the people who formed it, is leading West Virginia into a whole new area of high-paying jobs.

But that's not what is most important about what this company does. This company will take ideas out of the laboratory and convert them to products that significantly improve peoples' lives. West Virginia is going to give the world new treatments for cancer and other diseases, based on scientific developments at our universities. I ask you to welcome Steve Turner, the man behind Protea, and the leader of West Virginia's biotech revolution.

After last year's devastating floods, many businesspeople across southern West Virginia were pondering their futures. Could they, should they, rebuild? Was there a future for small business there?

In Mullens, I visited the flower shop immediately following the flood run by Lynna Jo Bowling. It was a mess – totally wiped out, but she was determined to rebuild. But she felt, as so many other businesspeople did, that she could not pile more debt on what she already owed.

Working together, we created new tools for hardworking people like Mrs. Bowling. Our forgivable loan program, our microloan program, and our decision to release state surplus furniture to flood-stricken businesses helped dozens of enterprises get their doors open again. We didn't do the work. We provided the tools, and they made them work with their determination and spirit.

Today, that flower shop and many others like it are back in business. I know - I did much of my Christmas shopping there and in several other businesses in Mullens. Mrs. Bowling, your courage in reopening that store is making Mullens a vibrant town again and is an inspiration to our state. Please stand and take the recognition you so richly deserve - as you speak for so many southern West Virginians.

Because of the resilience and perseverance of our people – Lynna Jo's story is being repeated in town after town. On behalf of Lynna Jo Bowling and those like her, I want to thank the Legislature for having the confidence to commit \$43 million in funds toward rebuilding housing and small businesses. That investment is beginning to pay off.

And in southern West Virginia, we are at an important juncture. We must set a new course for the region that builds on the strength of its natural resources and plans for a new economy. To chart this course, I am announcing the creation of the West Virginia Recovery and Investment Strategy Enterprise – West Virginia RISE.

West Virginia RISE will tie together the existing infrastructure with future investments throughout the region by both the public and private sectors. It will address housing, economic development, infrastructure and land use planning, and will incorporate the

ongoing work of the regional task force already addressing long-term flood prevention.

By the next State of the State Address, West Virginia RISE will provide this body and citizens of southern West Virginia with a road map to a much brighter future.

We will do much of that, incidentally, through something this Legislature created, the Coalfields Development Office. It was created for that purpose, and we will rise with that office.

And while we expand into new economic areas, we must maintain our strong base of mining and manufacturing. West Virginia is a world leader in energy supplies and creates raw materials for construction and industry across the nation.

The Ohio Valley is threatened by a flood of imported steel just as dangerous to that region's economy as last summer's floods were to the economy of southern West Virginia.

Last year this Legislature approved \$1 million in funding to help our steel industry in adopting new technology and developing new products and we have put it to work. And we have put it to work. Our commitment to the steel industry spoke loudly in Washington – as did the unanimous support of labor, management and community leaders – in spurring the federal government to take action against steel dumping.

Just a few weeks ago, I traveled to Washington to personally make the case for steel to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

Now I have to talk to you again for a moment because things are happening in the Ohio Valley, and I may have to come back to you and ask for your immediate support.

As you well know the steel industry is in a state of short term of liquidity – cash flow problems. A number of our companies in this country are facing those problems. Some have already gone under – LTV for instance.

Weirton Steel and Wheeling-Pitt are struggling tonight. Each has its own unique situation. During the last six weeks, I have been on the phone and in negotiations constantly working with Wheeling-Pitt Steel to revert their short-term situation.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary remedies. That's why I asked you to keep that sense of vision in mind. Tonight, the steel industry in Wheeling-Pitt is facing a challenge.

I want you to know, as governor of this state I have, in negotiations with all the major partners involved – Wheeling-Pitt, its parent company, other business groups, Governor Taft of Ohio – committed this state to \$5 million, if that will help provide the means to keep this company operating so that it gets through the short-term crisis and it can get to the longer-term area where it begins to make money.

Additionally, others have stepped forward, including the state of Ohio. I say this because this commitment is there from the state of West Virginia. We wait now to see what others will do that are involved in these negotiations.

Our commitment is strong and solid to the Ohio Valley and to Wheeling-Pitt and to the men and women who work there. I ask the others involved in these negotiations to remember that we're not talking about just three or four weeks or three or four months.

We're talking about a way of life.

We're talking about 3500 families with good paying jobs.

We're talking about a culture.

We're talking about an entire region of our state and country – the Ohio Valley on both sides of the river.

We're talking about the ability of a region to move forward.

We're talking about small businesses that may not be related to steel, but sell a lot of products whether it's food or clothes or whatever to the men and women who work there.

We're talking about a total way of life in West Virginia and Ohio and this part of the country. That is why we stand ready, and I will come to you if I need to on a moment's notice.

We are ready to stand with the men and women of Wheeling-Pitt and Weirton and all those areas.

And for those who are watching tonight, wherever you are in the Ohio Valley, I hope you just saw this expression. West Virginia stands with you.

We remain committed as well to a thriving energy industry.

Our state Energy Task Force is developing a statewide energy plan to provide a direction for research, for policy, for environmental protection and for new production techniques.

We took great strides in the past year toward responsible environmental protection. A vast majority of West Virginians have reached the realization that none of our dreams – a clean environment, a healthy economy, a place where our children will want to live – is possible without us all working together.

One thing we cannot allow to continue, however, is the dreadful human cost of coal mining. Thirteen times last year, and once already this year, a family lost a father, or a brother or a son mining coal in West Virginia.

This budget contains an additional \$1 million – a 25 percent increase – to strengthen the state's coal mine safety agency. These funds will improve our ability to work with coal miners to improve safety and training and our ability to effectively inspect and enforce safety standards. This is long overdue.

I am also introducing a bill that will change the present penalty system. No longer will serious mining violations be less expensive than a parking ticket.

There is another major development for the coal mining industry.

I am pleased to report that earlier today, my administration reached an agreement to settle most of the issues in a long-running dispute over who would be responsible for the unpaid Workers' Compensation premiums of coal mining contractors.

A total of nearly \$50 million will be paid to the state by the coal companies who were ultimately responsible for these debts. One-fifth of that sum will be paid immediately. The rest will provide a steady stream of income over the next 10 years. This is money that may help us retire some of the unfunded liability of the compensation system. It's also money that won't have to come from the pockets of other businesses that pay their premiums on time.

We are still willing to talk with other companies that have not settled and owe debts to the Workers' Compensation Fund.

The court cases that led to this settlement began years ago, and were kept alive in the courts thanks to the Affiliated Construction Trades unions. When my administration came into office, we joined the battle to collect these premiums. We owe ACT thanks for its efforts tonight.

Stewardship of the land is one of our responsibilities as citizens and as leaders of government.

One of our goals must be the protection of the special places held dear by our citizens. For generations, we have enjoyed the beauty of the Blackwater Canyon.

Earlier today, the president of Allegheny Power, Jay Pifer, signed an agreement to sell 250 acres in the Blackwater Canyon to the state of West Virginia and to donate an additional adjacent 250 acres. This land includes the last mile of unprotected river between the town of Davis and the Blackwater Canyon. We have by this action permanently guaranteed public access to this land for recreation.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to Mr. Pifer and ask that you join me in recognizing him and his company for their efforts.

As we develop a more diversified economy, we also must welcome new people and new ideas to West Virginia.

In 2001, for the first time, the number of trips visitors made to West Virginia topped 21 million. We hosted the World Rafting Championships this year, created a Motorsports Council and developed a tourism database and Website that is helping thousands of people find the exact vacation experience they are seeking, right here in Wild, Wonderful West Virginia.

Transportation is vital not just to tourism, but to all types of economic activity.

We're developing the infrastructure to serve more tourists and business travelers all over West Virginia. We will spend \$575 million that were in state and federal funds to build

new roads and upgrade existing roads throughout the state. We're going to finish building Corridor H and continue building Corridor D, the Coalfields Expressway and the King Coal Highway, West Virginia Routes 2, 9 and 10, and U.S. Route 35.

Two weeks ago, I visited Senator Byrd and the congressional delegation and ensured them that we are committed to providing matching money for every dollar of federal highway funds they so ably sent this way.

But the most important thing we do is to make sure we give our kids the best education they can receive.

Education is economic development.

Our schools are improving every day. I visited with hundreds of students and teachers in the past year. We have some inspired kids out there and some very inspiring teachers. Our school service personnel work hard. Our students are scoring better than ever before on standardized tests, contributing to their communities and preparing themselves for college, for vocational training, and for life.

Thanks to this Legislature, our top high school seniors this year are filling out the first set of applications for the PROMISE Scholarships. I want to remind parents and students and teachers that the deadline for filing a PROMISE application and filing with a high-school guidance counselor is January 31. If you work hard, play by the rules and are a qualified student, the law in the state of West Virginia is that you will earn a PROMISE Scholarship to any West Virginia institution of higher education – public or private – two year or four year.

We're building new state-of-the-art schools for communities across West Virginia. We're also making sure schools are safe, including operating a 24-hour-a-day toll-free safety helpline. And every county now has a mandate to provide character education that – besides teaching the three Rs – teaches two more, responsibility and respect.

Preparation for learning starts at the earliest ages. That's a lesson my wife Sandy and I learned when we became parents. She's been traveling the state, talking with new parents about the importance of reading to their children with the Love to Learn program.

Early learning is critical, and that is why this budget will include funds to advance the Educare Program to coordinate and promote pre-school activities for four-year-olds.

One area where our schools are behind other states is in the amount of time students actually spend in the classroom. I am proposing that all students spend 180 days each year in the classroom. Not all counties meet this minimum standard – this must change. We can't teach our kids if they are not in the classroom.

Our college-going rate is higher than ever before, but still less than the nation as a whole. One way to reverse this is to get students to begin thinking about college earlier so they get the preparation they need. Former Governor Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, has asked West Virginia to join with three other states in a model program to encourage public school students to start thinking about college in the seventh grade. We will fund this worthwhile effort.

Last year, 31 additional West Virginia teachers earned National Board Certification, the teaching profession's highest credential, doubling the number of nationally certified teachers in the state. This Legislature deserves credit for providing additional incentives for teachers to meet this high standard.

And our business community recognizes the value of good teachers. That's why this year's teacher of the year, Jeanne Gren, of Woodburn Elementary in Monongalia County, will drive away tonight with a brand-new Toyota, thanks to Toyota Motors, and \$5,000 from Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield. Jeanne, will you please stand as we thank you and all our educators for the difference you are making in our children's lives.

In a time of national recession and in time of war, our state budget simply cannot be stretched to accommodate what our teachers truly deserve. But thanks to all the efforts of our state agencies in restraining costs, and with some amount of effort, we have been able to provide a pay raise and a change in the longevity schedule that will raise teacher pay this year by an average of \$1,200.

This builds on the progress we began last year when we added \$1,000 to teachers' salaries and five years to the longevity schedule to encourage our most experienced teachers to remain in the classroom.

Our higher education system is also faced with new opportunities and challenges. The number of students increased by three percent, and more than 78,000 West Virginians are now earning college credit at our public colleges and universities.

We are challenging our post-secondary institutions to provide these students with an even better education. We're coordinating policies among all levels of education to assure better-prepared students. We are introducing legislation to partner with the private sector to attract and keep outstanding faculty. And we are demanding higher standards and measurable achievements from both students and educators.

This year, we must strengthen our community college system and better define its role:

We must stabilize their budgets, limit tuition increases and provide free or reduced community college tuition to people working to get off the welfare rolls – and my proposals will do just that.

Our colleges must expand educational opportunities at nontraditional locations. We're going to begin that process right now – and right here. I am announcing tonight that we will hold classes here at the State Capitol – and elsewhere – to enhance the career ladder for working people.

Working together, we've done a lot for the health of our people this year. We've told thousands of parents about the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, on TV, on radio and on the Internet. Hundreds of volunteers went door-to-door with me to spread the word. We found 10,000 more children who qualified for CHIP or Medicaid. Our goal, along with that of Senator Jay Rockefeller who led the fight for CHIP in Washington, is to make sure every child in West Virginia has access to health care.

Additionally, the prescription drug benefit now available with the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card has saved a half-million dollars in the first three months for senior citizens, an average of 17 percent.

This is one of the most successful drug discount programs in the nation. The next time you're in one of the 300 pharmacies that participate in the Golden Mountaineer Card Program, thank them for what they do to give you an instant discount.

And while I have your attention. If you are age 60 or over and have not yet received your free Golden Mountaineer Discount Card in the mail, I urge you to call the Bureau of Senior Services. You may well be eligible for reductions in the price you pay for prescription drugs.

West Virginia is leading other states, as well, in seeking to reduce costs for medicine purchased by state agencies, such as the Public Employees Insurance Agency. Our multi-state buying pool is well on the way to completion and has drawn interest from small and large states.

We have made progress, but must make some changes if we are to help West Virginians be as healthy as they can be:

- We will begin a new advertising campaign, created with the help of young people, to combat the tobacco industry's efforts to attract more youthful users;
- To assure that we will have the funds in future years to meet the health care needs of West Virginians, I will introduce legislation to go into the financial marketplace to lock in benefits from the tobacco lawsuits;
- For our veterans – within the next 30 days we will issue a request for proposal for the construction of the urgently needed new West Virginia veterans' nursing home;
- I will introduce legislation to reduce the blood alcohol limit to .08 so that we can remove impaired drivers from the road; and
- I will introduce legislation so that people who are stricken with mental illness are provided the same health coverage as people with physical illnesses or injuries.

One of the crucial issues that confronts us is how we can continue to assist people who are making the transition from welfare to work.

For several years, West Virginia enjoyed the benefits of a surplus in federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families – or TANF.

That surplus is now gone and, while we continue to receive federal help, we cannot spend dollars we do not have. The TANF advisory panel made some very difficult choices and challenged us to find new state funds to begin to fill the gap created by the shortfall. Because of savings identified elsewhere, I have included \$20 million in new general revenue funds to support these essential programs.

Let me talk about one of those programs. We depend on families to care for our children who are the most vulnerable . . . the children who may, through no fault of their own,

find themselves without loving parents. It is in this situation that foster parents open their homes and hearts to children who need a lot of love. Some of our most caring citizens serve as foster parents.

The \$20 million I have allocated in the budget will help protect these foster children. I urge you to make this appropriation a priority and help give families a chance to help these children.

Now I want to take a moment to express the thanks of all West Virginians for the services provided this past year by our state, our county and our city public employees.

Time and time again, they were there to help where the need was greatest. Our highway workers doubled as security personnel after September 11, keeping a 24-hour watch on crucial roads and bridges. Our forestry staff who fought fires on long shifts and were away from home and families for days on end. Our social workers dealt with people and families in crisis after crisis.

State employees also worked hard this year to make each citizen's everyday encounters with government more efficient and more pleasant. They are making a difference – and we are committed to a customer-service orientation in every department.

Our state employees are not paid well enough for the work they do. This needs to change.

This year, despite the tough budget times, I am asking you to:

- Provide an \$804 across-the-board pay raise for all state employees.
- And for the first time - we must remove the 20-year cap on increment pay and provide \$50 for each additional year of service.
- And we must finally end the debate over the unfunded pension obligations of state government and establish a secure method of financing this debt.

We have integrated the Internet into the fabric of our work – making it possible for citizens to obtain many services 24 hours a day.

This year, for the first time, I was able to get my hunting license online. You can reserve a spot at a vacation resort; you can buy a NASCAR license plate online now. This is just the beginning.

As an example of how this administration is committed to using technology to make government more accessible, I would like to present the budget and the legislative package I have outlined tonight to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House.

You may remember that last year, I handed each of them a foot-thick notebook. This year, these documents are on these CDs – which will also be available to each member of the Legislature. In keeping with the new tradition I started last year, the bills in my legislative package are ready for you to begin work tomorrow.

In meeting the tests we faced last year, West Virginians showed their strength as they

banded together to recover from floods, to fight fires and to guard us against terrorism.

Despite all that we faced, we are better off today than a year ago.

- More students are in college.
- More children have health care.
- Senior citizens have new protection.
- Businesses have invested in our culture.

We pushed forward on the clear agenda that the people of West Virginia demanded.

We could not have done this without the thousands of West Virginia citizens who dedicate themselves to service – National Guard soldiers, disaster volunteers from dozens of nonprofit groups, teachers, school service personnel, police, firefighters, public employees, religious leaders, community leaders and church members.

West Virginia is at its best when we work together, committed to a common cause and strengthened by our shared resolve.

And our challenge now – our great test – is to have the courage to do what's right for our people, our state and our future so that every West Virginian can find good-paying jobs; every family can have affordable, quality health care; every child can get an education that teaches the skills and the values they need to succeed; and, most important, that every West Virginian will find the opportunities they are seeking right here at home.

We stand together, as West Virginians and Americans, proud of our accomplishments, challenged by our circumstances and confident in our future. We will continue to work toward that future – the future our children deserve – and we shall prevail.

And we shall conduct ourselves so that God will Bless the State of West Virginia and the United States of America.

Thank you.

Third State of the State Address

January 8, 2003

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Board of Public Works, Justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Members of the Legislature, Distinguished Guests and My Fellow West Virginians:

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to take a moment to recognize a man who sat where you

are sitting tonight. Former House Speaker Lew McManus committed his life and dedicated his energies to promote all things that advanced West Virginia. His character as a public servant was unfaltering – and his love for life and our state was immeasurable. Lew passed away last month. I ask all of you tonight for a moment of silence as we remember this great speaker and citizen of West Virginia.

Last year, as we gathered in this Chamber, the shock and horror of September 11 were fresh in our minds. Smoke was still rising from the ruins of the World Trade Center.

Our skies are clearer today. We have shown that our spirit cannot be crushed. And we have shown that whatever divides us, we will unite and fight when our nation is at risk.

On the podium tonight are the colors of many West Virginia military units. Last year at this time, I told you that these would remain posted in this Capitol for as long as men and women of these units remain on duty in defense of our nation.

West Virginia National Guard and Reserve units have served around the world and around the country this year. Even this week, more West Virginians have been activated for duty.

Their commander, Adjutant General Alan Tackett, cannot be here tonight because he is recovering from surgery. But I know he is watching, and I send him the thanks of all West Virginians for what he and his soldiers are doing.

We owe a special debt of thanks to our own Brigadier General Wayne “Speedy” Lloyd who served as commander of an international air base in Kyrgyzstan, with troops from eight allied nations, for a large part of this year. This is the first time in U.S. Air Force history that a guardsman has commanded an air expeditionary wing deployed overseas. General Lloyd, please stand and accept our state’s gratitude.

Ladies and gentlemen, many West Virginians serve the cause of freedom. Last year, two proud West Virginians lost their lives in combat in Afghanistan to protect us and the values we hold dear.

Allow me the honor of speaking their names, and join me in a moment of silence to reflect upon what they have done for us:

- Staff Sergeant Gene Arden Vance of the West Virginia National Guard; and
- Staff Sergeant Anissa Ann Shuttleworth Shero of the United States Air Force.

There are two other brave West Virginians I want to recognize tonight.

Trooper First Class Robert J. Elswick of the West Virginia State Police was shot in the head in the line of duty. He spent more than a month in a hospital. Doctors gave him little chance to live. But he’s a tough West Virginia trooper, and he fought back. I am happy to report that he is alive and improving tonight at a rehabilitation center – and our prayers are with him every day.

Let’s also remember Sargeant Scott Paugh who was critically injured when a driver crossed

the center line and hit his cruiser head on. Scott is recovering at home, and we wish him well.

When West Virginians make such sacrifices on our behalf, it places a burden upon all of our shoulders. We owe it to them to create a state and a nation deserving of the loyalty and fidelity that they have shown.

We have taken West Virginia far in the past two years, and we face many challenges as we look forward. But we cannot falter. We cannot turn back. And we cannot lose sight of what the people of West Virginia elected us to do – strengthen the minds and characters of our children, create jobs, give people the tools to create economic success and provide for the health and safety of us all.

The economic challenges that have been with us from the very start of this administration have forced us to cut state spending again and again. Across the United States, governors and legislators are wrestling with billion dollar deficits, dwindling revenues and increasing demands for services.

We will face this challenge this year in this legislative session, and we will emerge with a leaner, more effective state government.

The budget I am presenting tonight will be balanced. It cuts spending. It contains no general tax increase.

This budget includes spending cuts that total more than \$200 million. Just like the families in West Virginia, we've had to tighten our belts in these difficult economic times. We're concentrating on our priorities – jobs, education and health care – and moving ahead in an effective way toward realistic goals.

Working together, my administration and this Legislature have accomplished much for our people.

We fought hard for jobs and working families:

We are investing more than \$200 million in new Economic Development Grants that will generate more than \$1 billion in new and expanded projects creating thousands of jobs.

Last year, we completely rewrote our business tax incentives, making it easier to invest in job creation in West Virginia.

Our new Research and Development tax credit program is already attracting cutting-edge industries. Our new Venture Capital initiative can translate into hundreds of millions of dollars in new investments.

Private enterprise working with us, the leadership of Senator Robert C. Byrd and the rest of our congressional delegation and with our colleges and universities, has made West Virginia the Silicon Valley of biometric technology – technology that will improve the safety and security of every American and bring good-paying jobs to West Virginia.

We are investing in the future at the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute – established by our own United States Senator Jay Rockefeller – a West Virginia based enterprise that is breaking new scientific ground in tracing the root causes of Alzheimer’s Disease and exploring new treatments.

Last year at this time, our steel industry was teetering on the brink of extinction because of unfair foreign dumping. My Economic Development SWAT Team helped arrange an emergency loan to Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel to save some of our state’s best manufacturing jobs. Today, thousands of workers are making steel 24 hours a day at Wheeling Pitt – orders are up and pensions are being paid on schedule.

The SWAT Team has been busy elsewhere. They have been actively involved in many job retention efforts all over the state. And, as a result, thousands of West Virginians are still working today.

We have created 4,500 other new jobs in communities across West Virginia in a time of economic downturn.

But that’s not enough. I’m fighting every day to attract investments to create jobs. My administration’s top priority is to ensure that every West Virginian will have the opportunity to work at a good-paying, secure job. I’ll never stop fighting for this.

We made education a priority:

We provided 3,500 PROMISE Scholars an opportunity to go to college. This year’s freshman class is larger than ever. This year, with the PROMISE Scholarship, 25 percent more of our best-qualified students are staying at home in West Virginia.

Our public school teachers received one of the largest pay raises in the history of West Virginia last year – the second-highest percentage increase in the nation.

Our teachers and school service personnel are fantastic people. They care about the children, they work hard and they make our schools special places. As we started this tradition two years ago, we recognize one teacher who does it so well – one teacher who stands for thousands of others – our State Teacher of the Year.

Our teacher this year is from West Milford Elementary School in Harrison County. She’s well loved there. In addition to our thanks, two West Virginia companies – their representatives are seated in the Chamber tonight – have recognized her work. She will receive a \$5,000 award from Mountain State Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the use of a 2003 Toyota from Toyota of West Virginia.

Let me present to you our State Teacher of the Year, Mary Kay DeVono.

I also want to acknowledge all the parents and teachers who work with our youngest children on building the reading skills that form the foundation of education. I’d like to recognize one of those parents specifically – I know her pretty well. First Lady Sandy Wise has been traveling the state talking to parents and caregivers about the importance of reading and

talking to children early and often with her Love to Learn message.

Sandy, thank you and all the parents in West Virginia for what you are doing for education.

We now require character education in every school in the state because we believe it's just as important to teach our children right from wrong as it is to teach reading and writing.

We provided \$2.3 million to Marshall and WVU for research to improve lives and lay the foundation for the knowledge-based economy our children deserve. And we put more than \$10 million toward research parks in university cities to capture the jobs that research creates.

We provided the largest number and amount of needs-based college scholarships in West Virginia history.

We worked to keep our state healthy:

In the past, West Virginia has had to turn back available federal funds because we didn't reach enough children with the Children's Health Insurance Program. We made covering each child a priority and provided health care to a record 36,000 West Virginia children. I'm proud to announce that, for the first time, not one dime of unused federal money is going back to Washington this year.

We provided state-sponsored medical liability insurance to West Virginia physicians and hospitals when their insurance companies abandoned them. By the end of this month we will cover 1,000 doctors – doctors who would have been forced to leave our state if we had not acted. We also provide needed coverage to 28 hospitals and health facilities.

We established a prescription purchasing pool with three other states that will lower the prices on brand-name prescription drugs and save \$25 million over the next three years.

We added a new drug discount plan to the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card and West Virginia seniors have already saved \$4 million on their prescriptions.

We are ready to break ground this spring as soon as the federal part of the funding is assured for the \$24 million Clarksburg Veterans Nursing Home.

In 2002, I asked you for added financial support to improve safety in our coal mines. You provided it, and the results are encouraging: last year, we had the safest year in our mines in recent history.

West Virginians pulled together to recover from natural disasters, and we were there to help:

We vowed to rebuild flooded communities, and we're doing it. And, this time, we're building flood proof housing – nearly 600 families have relocated to safe, dry housing out of the flood plain. Many of these homes are on reclaimed surface mines.

There will soon be another 100 housing lots opened in Premier in McDowell County. I have directed the construction of a community center so that those strong West Virginia families will have a place to gather for the betterment of the entire area.

We're putting flooded businesses back in operation. We've issued nearly 1,000 forgivable loans and micro loans and helped hundreds of businesses rebuild, restock and re-establish the vital services every community must have.

We're working with local governments to plan a better future for communities hit by floods. Last year I announced, in this Chamber, West Virginia RISE, a comprehensive program to improve life in Southern West Virginia for decades to come. Already we have coordinated economic development tools such as land use planning in several counties, making land outside the flood plain suitable for development.

I'm proud of what you and I have accomplished in the first half of this administration. Out of adversity, we have created opportunity; in times of crisis, we, working together, have provided leadership.

The challenges we face for the next two years will be every bit as hard. We face a real budget crisis in the state government. We have unfinished work in developing our economy, educating our people and ensuring our health care.

Last year, because of our management, West Virginia was one of only seven states to show a surplus. But we are not immune from the national economy that has resulted in growing budget shortfalls for almost every state. But make no mistake. We can't look to Washington to bail us out. We're going to have to change the way we do business in West Virginia.

Tonight, I have placed before you a budget that begins a bold restructuring of state government in West Virginia.

Ladies and gentlemen, I told you many months ago that the funds available for the 2003–2004 budget year would not be enough to cover the predicted cost in the growth of government. We began unprecedented discussions with your legislative finance staff two months ago – earlier than any governor has done before – to prepare for this challenge.

I asked every branch of state government – without exception – to review all their programs and plans and to develop the upcoming budget based on a 10 percent reduction below this year's spending level.

We're going to start cutting at the top.

The Governor's Office will not be exempt. We also will cut our budget by at least 10 percent.

This budget proposes a smaller Governor's Cabinet – eliminating the post of Commerce Commissioner and combining the posts of Secretary of Tax and Revenue and Secretary of Administration. But this is not just a matter of eliminating administrative salaries – we're combining many of the overlapping functions and duties of the agencies and subagencies under these posts to create real savings.

I also have requested that we merge the Governor's Office of Technology with the Office of Information Services and Communications. We spend millions on technology, and it's simply not coordinated as well as it should be.

We're going to serve our children better by coordinating the maze of overlapping children's programs in state government. We're now operating 257 separately funded programs for kids and families – many under-funded and unable to fully meet the needs of the families they serve. We must combine the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families and the West Virginia Bureau of Children and Families into a single agency that gives families one-stop access to assistance in meeting children's needs.

I asked a year ago that state agencies cut their fleets. Let me be frank. I have not been satisfied with the results. There are still far too many state cars on the road. So, West Virginia, get ready for the largest surplus car sale ever. Effective today, I have signed an executive order reducing the vehicle fleet by 15 percent by March 31. We have placed a freeze on new purchases, and we will cut the fleet by an additional 10 percent next year.

Let me take a moment to thank the state's public employees for their response. I asked for their help. They have responded overwhelmingly. Our special public employee website has already received more than 700 suggestions for how to run state government better.

The single most common suggestion from state employees was to cut vehicle waste. We have a state employee with us tonight who gave us one of those suggestions. She is an engineer in the Division of Highways.

We're going to take her suggestion and make it our policy.

Kristi Cole, of Raleigh County, please stand as we thank you and all the public employees who are helping to restructure state government.

Yes, we will do steep budget cuts this year. But this crisis forces us to do what all of us know must be done to restructure state government to make it operate more effectively and efficiently. Because if all we do is merely cut the budget, we have failed. Every business must review its operations at least every five years. It's time state government does the same.

When I met in a satellite town meeting with 2,500 of our public employees recently, they understood. It's not a question of if we change. The only issue is how and when.

I say now.

The people of West Virginia have demanded – loud and clear – that we not allow the budget crisis to distract us from solving some longstanding challenges.

For many years, it has been a mark of pride to “have a doctor in the family.” We're proud of, and appreciative of, the doctors in our extended family of West Virginians. We're proud of the men and women who mend our wounds, bring our children into the world and ease the pain and suffering of our loved ones.

The hard work and commitment of our physicians make our state a better place to live.

My number one commitment is to the health and safety of the citizens of West Virginia.

We must guarantee that every West Virginian has access to the doctors he or she needs and every West Virginia doctor has access to reasonably priced medical malpractice insurance.

The proposal I put before you tonight addresses both the tort system and the terrible economic pressures created when the national insurance companies jacked up prices and abandoned doctors who had paid premiums for decades.

This proposal levels the playing field so our doctors have the same protections as doctors in other states, but still retains fairness for patients who are truly injured by medical mistakes.

We must set reasonable caps, varying with the severity of injury, on awards for pain and suffering. I will propose a base cap of \$250,000, with a sliding scale similar to that recently adopted in Ohio.

We must hold people responsible only for their share of injuries they cause.

We must protect our trauma care system by setting a \$500,000 cap on liability for medical providers – including doctors and emergency workers.

We must take into account all payments made to an injured party so that no one is unduly enriched or paid twice for one injury.

It's time to set partisan politics aside. The bill I place before you today addresses each of these issues.

Tort reform is one part of the solution. It is not the only part. Affordable insurance is the other. Last year, we brought nearly 1,000 doctors into the state-run insurance program. But that's not enough. We can't leave the fate of our health system in the hands of insurance companies who know little – and care even less – for the health of West Virginians.

I am placing before you a proposal to create a \$20 million fund supported by the tobacco settlement to offset for three years the costs of continuing medical liability protection for doctors who are forced to switch from private insurance carriers to the state provided Board of Risk and Insurance Management. Our experienced doctors are being punished for an insurance crisis they did not create. This fund will assist those who want to remain in practice.

We're also opening our coverage to other doctors who need more affordable and dependable coverage and who want to take advantage of this assistance. There will be added help for doctors who remain with private insurers.

Let me take this moment to speak directly to every doctor in the state. Right now, the state of West Virginia guarantees that every qualified doctor will be covered by malpractice insurance. Pass my legislation, and that insurance will become much more affordable.

When combined with the tort reforms we passed last year, reforms that have already caused a sharp reduction in suits being filed and kept 1,000 doctors practicing in West Virginia, my proposals will make West Virginia a state that has economic incentives for doctors to stay, to start new practices and to build careers and families.

The health of tens of thousands of West Virginians is at stake. I urge this Legislature to put this bill at the very top of its agenda.

We have other health issues to address.

Tobacco remains the single biggest threat to the health of West Virginians. We are making strides in tobacco prevention. But for decades we have ignored the best weapon in this fight – the tobacco tax.

The cigarette tax has remained unchanged since 1978. It's just 17 cents a pack, one of the lowest in the nation. That 17 cents doesn't even begin to cover the health costs to West Virginia taxpayers that are generated by each pack of tobacco sold – let alone the misery caused by heart and lung diseases and cancer, all related to smoking.

This budget has no increases in income tax, sales tax or business tax. But increasing the tobacco tax will have the dual effect of discouraging smoking – especially among our children – and helping balance some of the costs imposed on all of us by the effects of smoking.

I propose an increase in the West Virginia cigarette tax to 55 cents per pack, which is about the average paid by smokers in other states. Every single penny of this tax will be directed toward health care – and by applying it toward federally matched programs, this money will help us avoid a \$300 million shortfall this year in health care.

There will be powerful forces at work against this proposal. There is no alternative. If you don't pass this, you will have to cut \$300 million from the health budget this year alone. Ladies and gentlemen – that's nursing home care, that's senior citizen care, that's prescription drugs, that's children's health care and that's hundreds of health care jobs.

Pass this bill.

West Virginia senior citizens also have a health issue that cannot wait. We must do even more to restrain the runaway costs of prescription drugs. No West Virginian should have to choose between food and medicine, or should be forced to skip pills to make a prescription last until the next Social Security check arrives.

We are taking on the big brand-name drug companies, and we're fighting for discounts on prescriptions. This year, I will continue negotiating with the brand-name prescription drug manufacturers and to maintain and, hopefully, expand the savings available with the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card.

We will continue and expand the program that helps doctors choose less costly generic medicines instead of heavily advertised brand-name drugs.

There are several steps we can take this year that won't cost us money but will help West Virginia families.

I have asked this Legislature twice before to toughen our drunk driving law. We must adopt the .08 alcohol level as proof of impairment. We have waited too long and too many lives already have been lost. If we don't act this year, we'll also lose more than \$2.5 million in federal funds that go into our highway program. That's money that can be used for essential road projects.

And we must enact an ATV safety bill in this session. I am the first governor to call for this legislation. Too many young people have been killed or crippled, and the time to act is now.

We must also change our adoption laws to allow parents who adopt children in other countries to bring them to West Virginia without facing an extra set of bureaucratic barriers.

Our State Police are our main line of defense against those who break the law and against threats to our public safety in times of crisis and disaster. We have trooper shortages across the state – only one county has 24-hour state police protection. This year, we invited 1,200 recruits to test for appointment to the State Police. We will start not one but two classes – nearly 80 new officers – in the next month. I have directed another class to start later this year. And I also have included \$1 million in this budget to address a longstanding fairness issue for our younger troopers by upgrading the Plan B trooper retirement plan.

We must not let the budget crisis derail the progress we have made in public and higher education in West Virginia. Education is still the centerpiece of our economic development plan and still the key to our future.

We insist on teaching our children values. We insist on emphasizing character. And, in return, we promise quality education and opportunities for every child, every young person and every adult with the desire to learn.

I have exempted both the PROMISE Scholarship and the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program from budget cuts. We will keep the promise we made to the next generation.

In the audience with us tonight are four members of the first class of PROMISE Scholars. These four young people represent the brightest hope we have for the future of our state. I will ask each of them to stand as I call their name.

- Katie Molinari is a graduate of Parkersburg South High School in Wood County and is a freshman at West Virginia University.
- Justin Gore is a graduate of St. Albans High School in Kanawha County and is a freshman at Marshall University.
- Lindsey Wimer is a graduate of Pendleton County High School and is a freshman at West Virginia University.
- Bridget Fuller is a graduate of Yeager High School in McDowell County and is a freshman at Marshall University.

They represent 3,500 PROMISE Scholars who are about to begin the second semester of

their college education. Next year there will be more.

Please recognize West Virginia's future.

West Virginia, in the past decade, has moved from the rear to the front among the nation's leaders in education in grades K-12 – both in terms of resources and in terms of results. Since 1993, we've had the third largest increase among all the states in per-capita spending for education – a 36 percent increase in 10 years. We've spent this money well – better schools, better-paid educators, better programs – and we are reaping the rewards.

As we face a tighter budget, we cannot retreat from this progress because it is the one best hope we have of creating a brighter future for West Virginia.

It is such a priority for me that education will not be reduced, even as we must make cuts elsewhere. We are not taking one dollar away from teachers and students in grades K-12. In fact, our K-12 public education budget is higher than ever before. We're also helping parents with school costs.

Last year, this Legislature endorsed -- for just one year – my back-to-school sales tax holiday. It gives parents a break on clothing and educational supplies for kids in the fall. It was a rousing success, and even brought shoppers from other states to spend their money in West Virginia stores. I ask you to continue that sales tax holiday this year.

Let's talk about growth. Other states have cut back on schools, cut back on roads, cut back on investments in infrastructure. Don't count West Virginia in that pack.

We will put hundreds of millions of dollars this year into schools, roads, housing, water and sewers. And we'll do it with the help of our own economic development grants and programs. We'll do it with the federal funds secured by Senator Byrd and Senator Rockefeller; Representatives Nick Joe Rahall, Alan Mollohan and Shelley Moore Capito; and the private sector.

This year, we will invest nearly \$2 billion into infrastructure for our future. Some may say step back; we say move forward.

Investment and job creation are the real answers to the problems we are facing today. We have to create jobs and create economic opportunity to make West Virginia the state people look to when they invest, when they decide where to live and when they decide where to raise their children.

I will fight every day, as I have fought every day throughout my career, to create good-paying jobs for West Virginians. That's my number one job.

This year we will add even more tools to our job creation toolbox.

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund, which has helped thousands of West Virginia families own their own homes, has developed at my request a \$28 million economic development program, the first of its kind.

Additionally, the Economic Development Authority loans money to businesses. The current limit on EDA loans for all projects is \$150 million, a limit that's been reached. That's good news. We're helping lots of new businesses, but we can't stop. If we want to be in the running for the next generation of manufacturing plants and new-economy enterprises, we need to raise the limit to \$175 million. I ask you to do so without delay. We've got projects right now that we can move if we can finance them.

And, thanks to an unprecedented partnership between business and labor that, if you will recall, I created last year and announced in this Chamber, we now can offer tax increment financing to new and expanded businesses. The All for One Committee united labor leaders like Jim Bowen, Kenny Perdue and Steve White with business leaders like Paul Arbogast, Dana Waldo and Mike Basile. I ask them to stand and accept our thanks for what they have done to bring us together.

The business-labor partnership also is alive and active in our pursuit of the "Vision Shared" initiative.

We know this works, and we will ask these partners to work together on another crucial initiative this year – eliminating the Workers' Compensation problems that affect our competitiveness. I consider this challenge as critical as the others I have discussed.

Business and labor leaders have agreed to help solve this problem once and for all. They recognize that Workers' Compensation issues make West Virginia less likely to attract investment. And I welcome members of the Legislature joining us in solving this problem.

We already have identified and will implement administrative changes that will save West Virginia businesses \$135 million each and every year.

We must eliminate the Second Injury Fund that is the cause of most of our \$2 billion plus unfunded liability.

We must create a deficit reduction account – safe from raids by future legislatures and future governors – to guarantee that premiums paid to reduce the debt are used only for that purpose.

Two years ago, I ended this speech by handing two large bound books of legislation and budget documents to the Speaker and the President. This was the first time in my memory that the governor ever presented all of the legislative agenda on the opening day.

I do this because I know that you need time to work on legislation and because I believe in the urgency of working hard and fast on the real issues that face us from day one of the legislative session.

Last year, we condensed the budget and the bills to two tiny compact discs and gave them to each member on the first day.

We've made it a tradition. This year, we're going a step further: The executive budget and my legislative proposals are being transferred as I speak to your e-mail accounts.

They also are being delivered electronically to the press, to state agencies and many citizens – and we’re saving a ton of paper and printing and postage costs in the process.

Ladies and Gentlemen: You’ve got mail – and we’ve got work to do.

We have a historic opportunity this year. We must show that we are worthy of the trust the citizens of this state have placed in our hands.

We were sent to this Capitol to make difficult decisions.

We need to keep our doctors, get care for all the children and secure affordable medicine and medical care for everyone who needs it. We will.

We need to help businesses grow. We need to continue to attract new jobs and protect the ones we have. We have to fix our Workers’ Compensation system. And we will.

We need to strengthen our schools and universities. We need to teach the basics well, pass our values on to the next generation and provide our children with opportunities to learn, to live and to work in West Virginia. And we will.

This is a bold agenda in tough times. I realize that this program will involve some of the most difficult work the West Virginia Legislature has been asked to do in a long, long time. We will leave our children a great legacy if we unite for the entire state and place this government on a sound footing. The choice is ours.

My inspiration and my guide are our West Virginia people. When adversity strikes, they don’t whine. They don’t hide. They don’t run.

We have seen it in the towns and rural communities that have bounced back from the devastating floods of the last two years. We have seen it in the courage of our soldiers in the Armed Forces. We have seen it in the example of our children – who took up the challenge, won the PROMISE Scholarships and are earning them as they succeed in college. We have seen it among our elderly who have built our state to what it is today.

We must accept the facts of our situation, take responsibility, make tough decisions and then move ahead with the compassion, the resolve and the confidence to do what is right for the people of West Virginia to rise above partisan politics and build the future our children deserve.

I look forward to working with you, and I thank you for your hard work and your dedication, and I ask God’s blessing on this Legislature and on the State of West Virginia.

Fourth State of the State Address

January 14, 2004

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Board of Public Works, Justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Members of the Legislature, Senator Jay Rockefeller, Congressman Mollohan, Distinguished Guests and My Fellow West Virginians:

Before we begin the important work of the state, we must remember the thousands of West Virginia men and women in uniform. They are deployed across the world in freedom's cause.

On behalf of every citizen, I thank the men and women who have placed themselves in harm's way on behalf of the United States. Several of those soldiers are with us tonight. Let us recognize a soldier who has made a great sacrifice.

I present to you former Private First Class Jessica Lynch of Palestine, Wirt County.

Two other soldiers with us tonight represent thousands of West Virginians in our armed forces. They are Staff Sergeant Marlon Leftwich with the West Virginia Air National Guard who served in Iraq, and Sergeant 1st Class Benjamin Gentry III with the Army National Guard who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Join me in honoring our soldiers like Marlon, Benjamin and Jessica by submitting to the voters this year a constitutional amendment to provide each member of the military who has served or is serving as a result of conflicts in Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan with a cash bonus. Our state has done the same in past wars. We must do the same in this one.

We cannot forget the veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. In October, we broke ground on a state-of-the-art nursing home facility, the first of its kind in the state.

We have lost several dedicated public servants in the past year. Delegate A. James Manchin, who brought humor, heart and hope with him everywhere he went; from our administration, Tom Keeley, a long-time state and community leader who worked every day to create positive changes; and someone who was beloved by all of us, Senate Sergeant of Arms Tony DeRamio. Please join me in a moment of silence as we remember them.

Every West Virginia citizen knows these are difficult times. People are working harder and longer to make ends meet. Jobs are precious. There is less money available for things we want, and we have to dig deeper for things we must have.

State government is not immune from the national economy. Across the country, states have been in crisis. Many have reduced important education programs. In 21 states, public employees have been subject to furloughs, layoffs and early retirement.

In West Virginia, we have avoided financial disaster. We took a hard look at each year's

spending and made difficult choices early. Since 2001, we have reduced spending time and time again, taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of state budgets.

We are showing that taking on tough issues pays off. We have seen the results. That is why we can never go back to status quo.

But this is the hardest year yet. We face a gap of \$120 million between what we expect to collect and what we are projected to spend. Several months ago, I asked each state agency – with no exceptions – to prepare a budget for 2004-2005 with a nine percent budget cut.

West Virginia's state employees have been at the forefront of our savings efforts. Our suggestion-box website has been filled with helpful ideas, like that of Andrew Jensen from Workers' Compensation. His office is saving taxpayers \$40,000 in postage annually, and is providing our customers better service.

Andrew, please stand and be recognized for your contribution.

Thanks to his work and the hundreds of others across state government, we will not have to make across-the-board cuts in every program.

This year, we will have a budget of \$3.2 billion, a figure almost exactly the same as last year. But we can't use yesterday's priorities to allocate future spending. We are balancing our budget mostly by reducing costs. More than two-thirds of the shortfall has been wiped out by targeted spending cuts and only one-third by revenue enhancements.

This budget does not propose any disruptive action like pay cuts, layoffs or furloughs.

As we did last year, we will again exempt state troopers and corrections. And, like last year, I have exempted senior citizens programs from cuts.

Our school budget increases by \$39 million, but we must demand sacrifice from the school bureaucracy.

We have protected children's health and our scholarship programs.

As I speak, my office has e-mailed to the House and Senate, a budget that is balanced, that is reasonable and that prepares us well for the future. With this budget, you cannot only reduce spending, but also invest in health care, jobs and education.

In the past three years, we have made major strides in improving the health of all West Virginians.

- We kept doctors in West Virginia;
- We pioneered the drug discount card for seniors;
- We won the Patients' Bill of Rights;
- We revamped our trauma system;
- We returned an additional \$32 million to public schools through Medicaid;
- We built the first-ever multi-state prescription drug purchasing pool; and
- We guaranteed coverage for uninsured women with breast or cervical cancer.

In West Virginia, we take care of our children. We've gone to schools, to swimming pools and to neighborhoods to find uninsured children and sign them up for the Children's Health Insurance Program. More than 94 percent of our kids are covered. We're now the model for other state outreach programs. Because of our success, we now have been awarded nearly 19 million extra federal dollars this year.

A diagnosis of cancer is one of the great fears any family faces. I'd like to welcome a cancer survivor who is with us tonight. David Zimmerman is one of thousands of West Virginians who understands what fighting cancer really means. In 2000, David was diagnosed with colon cancer. After two years of treatment, he remains cancer-free.

David, please stand to be recognized for all you do with the American Cancer Society and to protect all of us.

West Virginia is taking a national role in preventing and curing cancer. We're one of two states that are full partners with C-Change, an organization that brings together researchers, providers, patients and national leaders to conquer cancer. Former President Bush co-chairs the group. With us tonight is nationally renowned cancer specialist Dr. Marty Murphy, editor of *The Oncologist*, the world's largest cancer periodical. He and I will host a national meeting of C-Change's business roundtable this year, where CEOs of some of this nation's largest companies will develop a gold standard for cancer care.

Helping citizens and businesses obtain health insurance has been a priority of this administration.

Small businesses and others are increasingly unable to find affordable coverage. Tens of thousands of hardworking West Virginians are one illness away from bankruptcy.

We now lead the nation in covering our children; unfortunately, we are among the last in the nation for insuring adults. Within five years, our goal and commitment must be to reduce the number of working uninsured by 50 percent.

Tonight, I am announcing a partnership between providers, private sector, insurers and government for a small business insurance program for those who are uninsured. I am seeking legislation to authorize PEIA to coordinate this partnership. We provide the insurance with no additional cost to the state. Put it into effect, and we will make health history in West Virginia.

In 31 other states, people who cannot obtain health coverage because of a pre-existing medical condition can join a high-risk pool. Tonight, I am submitting a bill to make this happen.

Tobacco use remains the greatest threat to the health of West Virginians. Last year, we passed the first cigarette tax increase in 25 years. This was the most important health measure passed in a generation. We've seen tough action can get results, but more must be done.

This year, I ask you to add another one cent per cigarette – just a penny – and also move the smokeless tobacco tax to 20 percent. These modest increases will continue to discourage

smoking and raise \$30 million vitally needed to fund the Medicaid program and \$6.5 million to double our programs to help smokers quit and teach young people never to start. Some say they don't want to pass another cigarette tax this year, but there is another price to pay if we don't take this action.

Our Medicaid program must be cut at least 10 percent if this increase fails to pass. That means senior citizen programs; that means prescription drugs; that means nursing homes; that means children's care programs; and that means additional costs for other crucial health programs. I ask you – don't let this happen.

It is finally time. We must lower the legal limit for drunk driving to .08 percent, a standard known to save lives. We cannot afford to lose more lives on our roadways, nor the \$10 million in federal highway funds we will lose if this bill is not passed. West Virginia is one of only five states without this law. Act now, and we can still regain the \$2.6 million we lost last year.

A leader in the fight against drunk driving in West Virginia is with us tonight. Mark Cheeseman and his wife Barbara came to this issue through tragedy, the loss of their son, Steven, in 2002. He was killed by a drunk driver. Mark now leads Berkeley County Mothers Against Drunk Driving. They'll be in the Capitol this session, working with other parents to remind us of the importance of this legislation. Mark, I ask you to stand so we can recognize you for taking your anguish and converting it into action.

There is another subject causing anguish. All terrain vehicles are vital tools for rural landowners, and can provide an exciting ride through scenic parts of our state. But because of the lack of safety measures, the number of ATV-related fatalities in West Virginia continues to climb. Last year, 27 people were killed, including eight children.

At the very least, ATV riders under the age of 18 must wear a helmet; single seat vehicles must have only one occupant; and all riders under the age of 16 must take a state approved safety-training course. In just the first few days of this year, another child has been killed on an ATV. Pass this bill so you know you have done everything you can to keep our children safe.

One of the most difficult challenges we have faced in the past three years has been in building West Virginia's economy during a national and international downturn. There's a profound difference between this economic slowdown and the ones we have experienced in the previous decade. Our economy is more diversified; our people are better educated; and our efforts at economic development are working better. The national slowdown has cost West Virginians thousands of jobs, but, make no mistake, we weathered the past three years better than many states.

During this time, working with new and existing companies, we created almost 11,000 new jobs. With the assistance of Senator Robert C. Byrd and our congressional delegation, we have helped endangered companies retain 5,500 existing jobs, including many of the state's highest-paying manufacturing jobs in the steel industry.

And, while we're talking about steel, let me say directly to my friends in the steel industry –

we're not going to stop fighting for your jobs!

Tonight, I am pleased to announce that the largest job creation package in West Virginia history is now a reality. Just a few hours ago, the economic development grant committee's work was finalized. Here is the document making that happen.

More than \$235 million in grants will now be released. This money, combined with more than \$500 million in private investment, will be flowing into communities all across our state. The 47 projects that have been on hold for a year and a half will not have to wait another day. We get started tomorrow. Working together, we have put more tools in the job creation toolbox.

We've also secured \$100 million in federal venture capital funds; provided West Virginia's first tax increment financing; changed our tax incentives; established the Sunny Day Fund; and offered companies a 100 percent tax credit for innovation. If you've got a book about West Virginia, throw it out. It's obsolete.

We've also reformed the bankrupt Workers' Compensation system. Injured workers will get their checks, and we're controlling costs to make West Virginia more attractive to businesses.

Let me be clear. We now are able to create jobs that could not have been created three years ago.

The legislation you and I worked on is making a difference. Companies like American Woodmark in Hardy County; PWP Industries in Wood County; Butterfly.net in Berkeley County; Comprosystems in Kanawha County; and Threewise in Monongalia County are investing and creating jobs every day.

We're ready to step forward as the recession ends and investment and jobs begin to pick up around the country. But there are several things we need to do:

We must continue the progress we've made with the Vision Shared initiatives – a massive undertaking bringing together business, labor and government to find real solutions to our economic problems.

There are three Vision Shared proposals this year – an improved research and development tax credit; better access to borrowing for companies with innovative ideas; and elimination of the Civil War-era paperwork requirements on corporations – we've tried it for 140 years – it doesn't work.

We must address the problem of West Virginia's Baby Boom Generation. Workers aged 50 to 64 face special challenges when they find themselves without a job, without health care and without a pension. We are going to help our older workers get back on their feet. They have mortgages to pay; they have kids to put through college; and they have health care needs.

We'll tap the skills of this generation to meet the real needs of West Virginia in the 21st century and provide accelerated retraining to move them into careers where we have

shortages, including nursing, technology and aviation.

There are thousands of West Virginians between the ages of 50 and 64 who suddenly find the security they have been working for is threatened. We are preparing a report to be a blueprint for assisting this important part of our population.

I also am presenting a bill to allow public-private partnerships in financing transportation and infrastructure projects that are needed across the state. This will allow the greatest flexibility in developing the infrastructure needed to attract jobs and industries.

Included in this budget are two measures that will increase state revenues without increasing tax rates.

We must collect unpaid taxes, because each dollar we don't collect is a dollar other taxpayers have to make up. I'm proposing a one-time, 60-day tax amnesty period. If unpaid taxes are submitted during this period, all penalties will be waived and the taxpayer will be charged only half the amount of interest owed. The \$6 to \$10 million we will collect will be used to pay repairs for the State Capitol – the people's house – and one of our most treasured tourist attractions.

We also are going to join several other states that will break from the federal government by continuing to collect the tax on estates that are worth more than \$1 million. Andrea Ramezan Jackson, a student at the West Virginia University College of Law, made this suggestion, and it's a good one. It will affect only the top one percent of all estates and will keep us from having to put \$60 million in additional taxes on working families over the next five years.

Every West Virginian should have the opportunity to participate in jobs, in education and in community life. For the past several years, our state disabilities liaison, Penney Hall, has been working every day to ensure access for all West Virginians. Penney, thank you for all you are doing. We want to strengthen your efforts.

Tonight, to continue our commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act, I am proposing legislation to create a permanent position in state government for an ADA Coordinator.

We continue our commitment to worker safety and, despite the budget shortfall, we will not cut funding that could help save lives in our coal mines. We will continue efforts to strengthen our state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training to investigate accidents and enforce safety regulation. We will not step back in this area. We owe it to the thousands of mineworkers who died in the past century and the far too many who died this past year.

The past three years have seen a revolution in education in West Virginia. We're doing more than ever before to give our children a quality education. Last week, Education Week Magazine ranked West Virginia as one of the top performers in the country for accountability and standards for our schools, teacher quality and school safety.

Earlier today, I was honored – along with other state leaders – to meet with Melinda Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She was here to award West Virginia libraries

a grant to assist with technology access. In 1997, only half of West Virginia libraries had Internet access. Today, all of our libraries give citizens access. I look forward to working with Mrs. Gates and the Gates Foundation in the future.

We're making other gains too:

Our students are in school a real 180 days.

Safe Schools Helpline is now staffed 24 hours a day.

This administration has improved teacher salaries despite the ongoing budget crisis.

We've rewarded our veteran teachers by lifting the cap on increment pay for teachers with more than 29 years of service.

I'd like you to meet one of West Virginia's finest teachers. A role model for our students, he is a computer science teacher from John Marshall High School. He believes teaching is the greatest job in the world.

He said when you see students teaching other students something you taught them, you realize the ripple effect your lessons will have and the number of people you can reach.

On behalf of the entire state and all parents, I want to thank our West Virginia Teacher of the Year for what he is doing every day.

Once again, the Toyota Motor Corporation, with the help of David Copenhaver, is presenting a new Toyota Sienna. Both the engine and transmission were made just 30 minutes away in Putnam County by West Virginia workers. Also tonight, Fred Early of Blue Cross and Blue Shield will present our teacher with a \$5,000 check.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present West Virginia's Teacher of the Year, David Soltesz, of Beech Bottom, West Virginia.

Teachers like David are the key to West Virginia's future. And we must make it easier to do their jobs; we must recognize them for outstanding performance; and we must protect their safety.

Therefore, I am asking the Legislature to pass the Teacher Empowerment Act. It will reduce the paperwork required of teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators. And we will create a statewide system of tracking dangerous students so they can't simply enroll in another school after they have been expelled. Teachers who achieve the much-coveted national certification will now receive a bonus of \$3,500 – a \$1,000 increase. We'll be awarding this bonus to a record number of teachers this year – 151 of them – six times as many as there were in 2000.

The state of West Virginia has reached out to parents in the past several years by offering a break on sales tax. Last year, these parents saved close to \$2 million on back-to-school purchases. Once again, I will ask the Legislature to approve a Sales Tax Holiday for one of

the most expensive times of the year.

We've doubled the amount of funding to build more 21st century schools; but, as we build new schools, we must preserve rural and small-town schools and sustain the contributions they make to their communities. We also must ensure that every student receives a high-quality education.

I am introducing a bill making school construction funds more accessible to small schools and rural districts. Additional legislation also will set new, lower limits on the time students must travel on buses going to and from school.

You and I both know that no elementary student should ride a bus more than 30 minutes one-way to school.

We must continue to invest in higher education.

I worked with our college and university presidents in developing this year's budget. With a combination of one-time payments and reallocations, we were able to find the resources to fund ongoing programs. Instead of having a nine percent cut, higher education will only have a 2.5 percent cut. We are going to support the higher education bond issue to create classrooms and other facilities needed for the next generation of students.

Our higher education institutions are great reservoirs of talent. They know how to get things done but often are bound by outdated regulations and restrictions. If we expect them to do more with less, and we do, we must cut some of these chains.

I have introduced legislation to give colleges and universities the freedom to find their own solutions to problems. Higher education institutions cannot look the same in five years. We'll judge them on their success – not on how well they follow bureaucratic guidelines.

Our state colleges are changing, too, in their efforts to better serve West Virginia students. The Higher Education Policy Commission has determined that West Virginia State, Concord, Fairmont State and Shepherd qualify to be state universities.

As part of my legislative package, I am requesting that you recognize these institutions' achievements by bestowing university status on them.

In the past three years, our state's universities have vastly expanded their capabilities to do research. Because of their new strength, they have received hundreds of millions of dollars in federal research funding. In biometrics, in cancer research and in energy research, West Virginia is leading the way. In neurosciences, with the help of Senator Jay Rockefeller, we soon will be the world leader in developing new strategies and treatments for memory disorders. But that is not enough.

We must create a landmark research program to allow West Virginia to compete for jobs in industries in the future. Our universities need a steady dependable revenue stream of research funds, and it needs to be more than one year. We have to show we are serious about research.

Tonight, I am urging you to establish such a fund. We will start with an additional \$10 million; expand the Research Challenge Grant Program; hire top-quality faculty and researchers; purchase cutting-edge equipment; and create research opportunities for students.

We will support research that is directly tied to West Virginia's economic development. At least 25 percent of it will be earmarked for energy research.

I also am proposing legislation to create a Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship Program to keep more of our outstanding undergraduates in state and attract more graduate students from other states.

We have steadily increased our investment in student financial aid for postsecondary education. This budget continues that investment. In 2001, our state awarded \$16.5 million in student aid. By next year, that total will climb to \$50 million.

The PROMISE Scholarship has been a major part of this investment, but we also have made substantial increases to the Higher Education Grant Program and the Higher Education Adult Part-time Student Program. Working together, these programs represent a combination of financial aid strategies with one common goal: to increase access to college for West Virginians.

Please join me in greeting two PROMISE scholars in the Chamber tonight who represent the 6,300 students in college – thanks to the PROMISE Scholarship and their hard-work, good grades and positive attitudes.

Amber Bishop from Fayette County, a student at West Virginia University, and Corey Isner from Jackson County, a student at the University of Charleston. They are making a difference. Please stand to be recognized.

Corey's mother, Bea Isner, is a guidance counselor in Jackson County. She's seen the changes PROMISE has made in her school and in Corey's classmates. More than 90 percent of those who earned a PROMISE Scholarship have accepted it and entered a West Virginia college. For the first time in a long time, the number of students going out of state has declined and our state colleges and universities have record-high enrollments.

One of the guiding principles of this administration is that energy and economic development are not the enemies of the environment. I have made environmental protection a priority.

We are adding thousands of acres of recreational land for hunters, fishermen, hikers and bikers to enjoy, including Blackwater Falls State Park, Cheat Canyon, Snake Hill and Nathaniel Mountain Wildlife Management areas.

We reclaimed almost 10,000 acres of abandoned mine sites.

We restored nearly 300 miles of acid-damaged streams to support native trout fisheries.

We worked with the industry and found ways to expedite the permit process for mining

without relaxing environmental protections.

We must not lower our expectations of the coal industry – we can mine coal cleanly, without harming our water and land. West Virginia’s stronger protections should not be lowered to the minimum federal standard.

We’re not done yet.

In the past, we have recognized coal, gas and timber as valuable natural resources; now, we also must count West Virginia’s clear, pure water as equally precious. Currently, West Virginia does not have the tools or information to properly manage its water resources. Tonight, I am introducing legislation to establish a water usage program giving us information on our supply of clean water and on the industries that use it.

We also must continue to protect the quality of water in our streams and rivers to preserve them for future generations. We must reject any attempt to weaken our water quality rules.

We can no longer bury our heads in the sand on the issue of greenhouse gases. To protect the vitality of West Virginia’s energy-based economy, we must continue to take a leadership role on climate change issues.

We are taking the first step to understand the effects of greenhouse gases by introducing legislation to require facilities to register their emissions of greenhouse gases. This soon will be required from the federal government. West Virginia needs to be a leader and act now.

We also are going to reward industries that do more than the law requires to keep our air and water clean.

Tourism continues to contribute more each year to jobs and economic development. I propose to strengthen the bond between tourism promotions and economic development promotions. We will continue our successful efforts to attract tourists from across the country and around the world to West Virginia. And we’ll do more.

I’m seeking authorization to reorganize the Tourism Promotion Fund to target customers who not only will vacation here, but also will do business here. I also will introduce the West Virginia Tourism Development Act expanding the successful tax increment financing program to promote the development of destination resorts and other world-class tourist facilities.

And West Virginia has just scored another hole-in-one. With us tonight is Tim Benton of the PGA Tour, who is bringing a national golf tournament to the beautiful Pete Dye Course this year.

We all have come to understand the increased need for protection in every community whether it’s from crime, terrorism or fraud.

In the past year, we have increased the number of state troopers by 16 percent – the largest increase in any single year in the history of the West Virginia State Police. Two cadet classes

graduated in July and are completing their field probationary period. Another class is in training and scheduled to join the force in April. I have directed another class to begin this month.

Retirements, military call-ups and the loss of troopers to higher-paying jurisdictions are putting a strain on all police agencies in West Virginia. Tonight, I am introducing legislation to reduce the retirement age of state troopers from 55 to 50. We have some of the best law enforcement officers in the country. We need to keep them here.

I want to report to you that our Emergency Operations Center was activated seven times, either for disaster or because of a threat to homeland security, and managed \$94 million in federal and state recovery funds. We've established six regional response teams and created an emergency supply warehouse stocked with essential supplies and ready for immediate distribution.

Working together with this Legislature, we put an end to the illegal video poker business in convenience stores and gas stations. We provided a means to fund hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure and new school construction, and we are sending thousands of high school students on to college.

But in the past year, our roadways and communities have been bombarded by gambling signs.

By executive order, I have removed those signs and now, tonight, I am introducing legislation to make it clear that these signs are never going back up.

The rising costs of home and auto insurance have an impact on all West Virginians. Insurance fraud is a key factor in rising costs. West Virginia is one of only 10 states without an insurance fraud bureau. I am asking you to give West Virginia the authority to catch those who cheat the system and pass along the cost to all of us.

It's also time to protect our citizens from identity theft and other privacy violations. I will present legislation forbidding state agencies from selling or giving away your home telephone number, your address and, most important, your Social Security Number.

Our focus, rightly, is on the immediate future. But we have two important measures on our agenda that will have an impact on future years.

Local government in West Virginia is organized pretty much the way it was founded in 1863. By executive order, I am establishing today a commission to explore what local government should look like in this century. We shouldn't assume the government that met our needs in the 19th century will meet our needs in the 21st century. We also need to take a bold step on long-term debt. Over the past decades, West Virginia has pushed some of its financial obligations on to future generations by creating substantial unfunded liabilities in three of our pension funds. It's time to stop.

Thanks to the Attorney General's work in the national tobacco settlement, our state receives funds each year from the tobacco industry. However, we are seeing a steady decline in the amount coming in each year. We depend on it heavily; yet, it is one court decision away

from drying up.

I am asking that we take the opportunity to secure this money in a lump sum and place \$137 million to more than double the Medical Trust Fund; to use \$348 million to wipe out the unfunded liability within the Trooper A Pension Fund; to use \$45 million to eliminate the unfunded liability in the Judges Retirement System, and to use \$90 million to significantly reduce the unfunded liability in Workers' Compensation.

Think of it – in one act, we remove two of our three major unfunded pension liabilities. We double the amount in the Medical Trust Fund and we make another major contribution to Workers' Compensation.

Budgets and laws are not just words on paper. They are about people. They are about Mark Cheeseman who lost his son to a drunk driver; they are about Corey Isner, with dreams of pursuing a career in business or law and Amber Bishop who wants to be a doctor; they are about David Zimmerman enjoying life after cancer; and they are about Jessica Lynch, a future kindergarten teacher.

I started three years ago a tradition to submit all my legislation on the first night of the session. Tonight, I continue this tradition. All my bills are being transmitted to you by e-mail.

We can begin work tomorrow.

Tonight, to the people of West Virginia, I thank you for allowing me to serve as your governor – it is the highest honor. For the past three years, I have committed myself and my administration to improving the lives of every West Virginian. In the next year, I pledge to work every day to continue to provide affordable health care, protect and increase the number of good-paying jobs and to provide every child the opportunity to get a quality education.

During the past three years, we have taken on many tough issues together. They haven't been easy. But we took them on. Already, our state is better because of it.

This year, we can take on more tough issues. Some say, "Take it easy. It's an election year," but neither you nor I want this – and the public demands more action. We've seen what working hard can do – and we like it.

Some say, "Let's have business as usual." I say, the usual business has changed. We act based on the next generation, not the next election. We set a new standard, and we're never going back.

This will be a year of action. I ask for your help.

I ask God's blessing on this Legislature, on its work and the state of West Virginia.

Chapter 2

EDUCATION

Near the beginning of his Inaugural Address, Governor Wise established that education would be his highest priority:

“For West Virginia, education is the passport to prosperity. And today we commit ourselves to one simple goal crucial for public education and preparing our children for high-paying jobs. Ladies and gentlemen, friends and neighbors, we will become the Education State. We recognize for West Virginia what President John F. Kennedy saw for our country when he stated, ‘Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.’”

Throughout his term, and despite the crises that developed as a result of natural disasters and terrorism, education remained at the top of the Governor’s priority list. His single greatest achievement in this area was the establishment of the PROMISE Scholarship.

THE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

As he set to work preparing his first year's agenda for the State Legislature, Wise returned again and again to a promise he made to voters during the campaign – finding funding for a merit-based college scholarship program which has been established by law, but not funded: the PROMISE (Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-state Student Excellence) Scholarship.

He made funding the scholarship his highest priority during that first year, and he convinced legislators, citizens, parents and students that it was crucial not only to the young people who would benefit directly, but also to the state as a whole.

The funding mechanism was linked to another of Wise's top priorities – the elimination of widespread illegal gambling linked to the availability of unregulated video poker machines in bars, convenience stores and other locations across the state. He proposed replacing the machines with a restricted number of video lottery terminals, centrally supervised by the West Virginia lottery. The plan was adopted during the first (2001) legislative year of his term after widespread and vigorous debate.

During the debate, Wise traveled the state constantly talking to students and parents about the PROMISE scholarship. To some observers, it was as if the 2000 election campaign had never ended. After the bill was passed, Wise continued to visit schools to promote the scholarship, encourage students to get the grades needed to qualify, and to extend their education beyond high school. Throughout the rest of his term, he visited high schools to deliver scholarships in person to as many students as possible. By the 2004-05 academic year, about 10,000 West Virginia students were attending colleges and universities tuition-free as a result of his work.

Governor's Message
February 2, 2001

Keep the PROMISE

One of the key stumbling blocks to achieving economic success in West Virginia – both for individuals and for communities – is the low rate of college attendance among our high school graduates. We have a very low proportion of college-educated persons among our adult population. That must change.

Several other states have found that the quickest and most effective way to motivate students to study harder and do better in school is to offer a simple and concrete reward

– the opportunity to attend college. The PROMISE Scholarship is based on the student’s achievements – not on his or her parents, not on the college’s resources, not on other factors. We are tying this opportunity, this investment, directly to achievement on the part of the individual.

By putting forth a reward for achievement, we’re saying to students that working hard, playing by the rules and meeting tough expectations will earn them the opportunity to attend college. That’s a lesson that should ring throughout our educational system.

This is a key part of my turnaround plan for state government. We will reward success. Education – along with economic development and E-government – will be the hallmarks of my administration.

I firmly believe getting more students to attend college will turn around the economies of our communities, attract energetic people to the state and keep our best students home in West Virginia.

Middle-income students who do not qualify for needs-based aid often delay school, work too many hours or borrow heavily to attend college. The average loan burden carried by our college graduates in West Virginia has increased by more than 50 percent since 1994. These students, if they earn a PROMISE Scholarship, can get some badly needed help.

We’re not abandoning our commitment to needs-based scholarships. The PROMISE Scholarship offers additional aid to students who qualify for a West Virginia Higher Education Grant, a needs-based scholarship. This year, we were able to offer these students only 70 percent of the tuition costs. For any student who qualifies for PROMISE, the new grant will make up the difference between that sum and the tuition.

Some of the states that have introduced PROMISE-type scholarship programs have been surprised by the size of the investment required. We will gradually phase-in the PROMISE Scholarship to reduce the impact on the state’s budget. The first year, the 2002-2003 academic year, only the freshman class will be eligible. The predicted investment that year will be about \$9 million, and we expect to serve more than 4,000 students. The annual investment will reach about \$25 million per year by the fourth year.

This is a large investment. But it is an investment we cannot avoid, and should not. If we truly believe that our children are our future, we must put their interests first – and keep the promise.

Talking with Students and Teachers

I've been traveling around West Virginia in the last few weeks talking with students and teachers about the PROMISE Scholarship proposal.

I've learned a lot. I always do when I visit a school. One of the things that's impressed me the most is how positively students react when they're presented with positive incentives to do well in school. They tell me they really want to see the PROMISE Scholarships funded so that they can have a brighter future.

Our higher education staff in state government has been studying the experiences of other states with similar programs, and they've come up with ways to make West Virginia's even better.

Some states use a grade point average only. The PROMISE proposal calls for both grades and standardized test scores (primarily the ACT) to be used in determining if a student has earned a scholarship. Students will need a minimum GPA in high school and earn a minimum score on the ACT to be eligible for a PROMISE Scholarship. This offers a balanced approach to measuring achievement, and it sends a powerful message to students: doing well in school is very important.

Teachers often worry that students will avoid hard courses to keep a B average. The PROMISE proposal requires that students maintain a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 in their core courses, which include four years of English composition and literature, and three years each of science, mathematics, and social studies. Under my plan, students are required to take these courses, and to do well in these courses, to be eligible for a PROMISE Scholarship.

It is useful to look at Georgia and the HOPE Scholarship, on which the PROMISE Scholarship is based. Research has been done on the topic of grade inflation in Georgia, and since the implementation of the HOPE Scholarship, there are more Georgia students who are receiving B averages in high school. But there has been a corresponding increase in these students' average SAT scores, which strongly refutes the notion of grade inflation. The research suggests that there has been a genuine increase in student academic achievement in Georgia, which is something we all want for West Virginia.

Private colleges and universities often have distinctive missions and provide unique learning environments. They offer an important choice for students who are looking for those qualities in a college or university. The PROMISE proposal allows students who qualify to choose between public and private schools.

If a qualifying student decides to attend an in-state private college or university, he or she can get a PROMISE Scholarship. However, the amount of the scholarship does not

cover full tuition and fees at a private institution. For students at private institutions, the scholarship is worth the average tuition and fees at the state's public four-year institutions. This strikes a reasonable balance between public and private interests.

We can make our children's future better. I am working with the Legislature to fully fund the PROMISE Scholarship program. We have to KEEP THE PROMISE.

Governor's Message
April 13, 2001

Student Loans and PROMISE: The Threat of Debt

The amount of money that American college students borrow each year in federal loans has increased by \$20 billion over the last seven years. The average student now graduates from a public four-year college with more than \$12,000 in loan debt.

Education is a worthwhile investment, and student loans are an important part of how we finance higher education. But when loans become burdensome, they work against education.

West Virginia students are borrowing 50 percent more this year than they did in 1994. Some students are graduating from college with more loan payments than they can handle. Other students are afraid to attend college in the first place because of the debt they will have to incur to afford it.

Higher education is simply too important to the economic success of our citizens and to the economic growth of our state to allow the threat of debt to keep students from attending college. That is one reason why the PROMISE Scholarship will be important.

PROMISE will provide a scholarship that covers all tuition and mandatory fees at a public university, college, community college or technical institute in West Virginia for students who meet academic standards. PROMISE encourages students to work hard and achieve academically and, if they do, they won't have to worry about the cost of tuition and fees at a public institution.

For eligible students who choose to attend a private institution in the state, PROMISE will provide a scholarship that is worth the average tuition and fees at public four-year institutions, estimated to be about \$2,800 in 2002-2003. That also is a powerful financial incentive for students to do well in school, and it makes private higher education more affordable.

PROMISE will increase access to higher education by reducing the need for qualified students to borrow money to afford the cost of tuition and fees. This is good for

students, for their families and for our state. And after graduation, these students can enjoy their “home among the hills” and not have to worry about a mountain of debt.

Governor’s Message
May 4, 2001

Sending a Clear Message to Our Students

This past week I signed into law HB 3238 – the PROMISE Scholarship. With the help of the West Virginia Legislature, qualified students will receive full tuition and fees to a West Virginia institution of higher learning. Above all, the PROMISE Scholarship sends a clear message to our students. If you work hard, play by the rules and you qualify – you will be rewarded.

Over the next several weeks, I will be traveling the state visiting your local high schools making this plea to freshmen, sophomores and juniors who will be eligible for the scholarship. Start studying now. Your grades this year and thereafter will count toward your opportunity to earn a PROMISE Scholarship in the fall of 2002. Now is the time to get your grades up and keep them up.

The PROMISE Scholarship will provide a scholarship that covers all tuition and mandatory fees at a public university, college, community college or technical institute in West Virginia for students who meet academic standards. The scholarship calls for both grades and standardized test scores to be used in determining if a student has earned a scholarship. Students must maintain a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 in their core courses, which include four years of English composition and literature and three years each of science, mathematics and social studies.

The PROMISE also encourages students to work hard and achieve academically and, if they do, they won’t have to worry about the cost of tuition and fees at a public institution.

West Virginia has finally kept the promise that was made to our young people years ago. I am looking forward to attending high schools across the state along with our local senators and delegates to personally deliver PROMISE Scholarship to those students.

News Release
January 28, 2002

Wise Reminds Students, Parents and Teachers of Promise Deadline

CHARLESTON, W.Va.–Gov. Bob Wise reminded West Virginia students, parents and teachers that the final day to apply for a PROMISE scholarship is in just three days. Qualified students must fill out the one-page PROMISE Scholarship application and turn it in to their guidance counselor by Thursday, January 31. Wise stressed that no applications will be taken after this date.

“I want to encourage every student who believes they are qualified to apply for this opportunity,” said Wise. “If you have worked hard and played by the rules, you deserve this opportunity.”

High school seniors with a 3.0 G.P.A. who score at least a 21 on the ACT are eligible for a PROMISE Scholarship that will pay for tuition and fees at any public West Virginia institution of higher education and a portion of tuition and fees at a West Virginia private college.

Wise said the PROMISE Scholarship office is projecting between 2,100 – 3,000 successful PROMISE applicants this year.

Two students from Charleston’s Capital High School who have applied for the PROMISE scholarship joined Wise.

Applications can be downloaded from www.promisescholarships.org and questions can be answered at the PROMISE office at 1-877-WV-PROMISE.

News Release
May 2, 2002

Wise Awards First Promise Scholarships; Tells Seniors: “Build Your Dream Here”

CHARLESTON, W.VA. – Gov. Bob Wise today began his 55-county tour to award deserving students their new PROMISE Scholarships.

“Twenty-five years from now, even 50 years from now, historians will look back to this time, this date, this school, this town – and all of you will be in the history books as West Virginians who comprise the first PROMISE scholarship class in state history,” Wise said.

More than 3,800 high school seniors statewide were deemed eligible for the PROMISE Scholarship. Wise hopes once students finish their education, they will stay in West Virginia to start their careers.

“I hope you consider launching your career in West Virginia. Yes, we have challenges, but life without challenge is boring and meaningless,” Wise said. “Take on the tough challenges and build your reputation. That’s why you need West Virginia, and that’s why West Virginia needs you. Follow your dreams, but build your dream here at home.”

Today, Wise visited Roane, Wirt, Wood, Jackson and Mason counties. Tomorrow, he will visit Cabell, Wayne and Lincoln counties.

News Release
April 9, 2003

Many Rural Counties Increase Number of PROMISE-Eligible Students

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the state’s rural counties, including those with a declining high school population, saw an increase in the number of students eligible for a PROMISE Scholarship. Statewide, a total of 3,726 students qualified for the Scholarship in the second year of the program’s operation. About 300 additional students should qualify by May 1, 2003, once their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has been received.

According to recently released information by the PROMISE Scholarship Board, rural counties including Gilmer, Grant, Hardy, Lincoln, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monroe, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Summers, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wirt and Wyoming will have more students eligible for a PROMISE Scholarship. Compared to the number of students eligible at this time last year, this represents an increase in PROMISE eligible students, with more to qualify in the coming weeks.

The Governor noted that Wirt County more than doubled its number of scholars over the previous year as 21 students met the eligibility requirements. Wise said Mingo County, in spite of a large decline in student population, increased its numbers by 15 students. In spite of all the snow and lost school time, Preston County students rose to the challenge and will have 23 more students receiving a PROMISE Scholarship than the previous year. Additionally, at least 40 percent more Summers County students will be receiving a PROMISE Scholarship this year. According to the Governor, “these are the results we have been seeking.”

“The culture of education is changing, especially in the counties that have traditionally low rates of college attendance,” said Wise. “It is one thing to increase the rate of college attendance in our more urban and prosperous counties. It is quite another

when we assist an increasing number of students from counties that are economically disadvantaged. Our message is resonating to students all across the state; work hard, play by the rules, meet the qualifications and no matter where you live or who you are, West Virginia will reward you with a PROMISE Scholarship.”

The PROMISE Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship that awards a tuition and fee scholarship to a West Virginia public college or the dollar equivalent for independent colleges to all qualified students that earn a 3.00 GPA in their core and overall coursework and have a 21 on the ACT or a 1000 on the SAT. For more information, visit www.promisescholarships.org.

News Release
January 20, 2004

Wise Announces Counselor Access to Electronic Data

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced new technology that will allow high school counselors to review the application status of their high school students who have applied for state-level financial aid, including the PROMISE Scholarship and the West Virginia Higher Education Grant.

“This is a wonderful example of technology moving our state forward by making the financial aid process simpler,” Wise said. “Counselors will have the ability to view the data online and print it in a spreadsheet format.”

Counselors have been provided step-by-step instructions to login and gain access to the data.

“Without the help of our school counselors, West Virginia students would not be receiving the financial aid that allows them to make post-secondary education affordable,” Wise said. “This new online interface will help make their jobs a little easier.”

Wise also reminded counselors that the deadline to apply for the PROMISE Scholarship is January 31, and the FAFSA and Higher Education Grant deadlines are March 1.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Most policy debates that concern education at the local, state and federal level center around funding, testing and other hot-button issues. Governor Wise, during his Inaugural Address and throughout his term, often reminded others of the importance of building character among students during their years in school. “And as we teach our children the ‘three Rs,’ reading, writing and arithmetic, let us also commit ourselves to teaching two more – responsibility and respect – with character education that teaches right from wrong.”

In 2001, he proposed, and the Legislature passed, a bill that required character education to be a part of public school curricula throughout West Virginia.

Governor’s Message
February 14, 2003

The Most Important Lesson

Over the past few years, West Virginia has made great strides in many areas of education. Test scores are up; we are among the nation’s leaders in the education of African-American students; and hundreds of young West Virginians are now enrolled in our state’s higher education institutions, thanks to the PROMISE Scholarship.

These students and their parents, teachers and school personnel, have helped our schools advance in important areas such as math, science, literacy and social studies. All of these are vital to academic success and building a strong work force. However, there is no subject more important, and no improvement of which I am more proud, than the character education curriculum recently implemented in our public schools.

For too many years, the loss of instruction in citizenship hurt our schools and our communities. When children are not taught to respect each other and their educators, chaos ensues in the classroom. When we tolerate this, we fail our children. When we fail our children, we threaten our future. We must teach our children right from wrong by adding two new Rs to the original three: responsibility and respect.

This week, I was proud to join Education and the Arts Secretary Kay Goodwin and Superintendent Dr. David Stewart in presenting awards to 10 outstanding students, one each from grades three through 12, for their essays on the subject of citizenship and character.

I expressed to them my belief that, no matter how many other qualifications one may have, without a strong character it is hard to go far. Most employers will agree that their trust of a potential or current employee is unequaled among factors in hiring and promotion decisions.

West Virginia has always been inhabited by people of strong character. From the earliest settlers who braved what was then a dangerous frontier, to the thousands of young men and women who served, and continue to serve, in our nation's military, to the neighbors and strangers who reach out in times of disaster to help their fellow citizens, Mountaineers have always made their state proud. It is important that our schools reinforce the strong lessons our families work to instill in their children.

Character education programs can take many forms. In the earliest grades, they can include simple lessons on how to behave courteously and helpfully with each other and the teacher. Later, students can debate what makes someone a good citizen and what each of us can do to make our community better.

The young students I was lucky enough to meet this week are the best hope for our state's future. They are examples for their peers, and they encourage their teachers with their enthusiasm, talent and, of course, their character.

TEACHERS

Many of West Virginia's public school teachers helped form an important part of the coalition that supported Governor Wise in his campaign for office. But the budgetary issues he confronted early in his term made it extremely difficult to find funding for the investments he wanted to make in teacher salaries and other issues important to this group.

Wise was able to propose and pass several teacher pay raises during his term. But other programs of lasting value were also a hallmark of his program for educators, including incentives for national certification, special home loan programs, and the National Quality Teaching Initiative.

News Release
April 2, 2002

Wise Honors Nationally Certified Teachers

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Saying “no investment pays more important dividends,” Gov. Bob Wise this evening honored West Virginia teachers who have received national board certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Speaking at a Cultural Center ceremony in which teachers were honored, Wise said the 54 educators awarded certification are “planting the flag for others to follow,” and said an additional 79 teachers are in the process of achieving accreditation.

“This cannot help but strengthen the teaching profession – and the end result is better teaching, better learning and better schools,” Wise said.

Wise will sign the teachers' pay raise bill on Wednesday at 9 a.m. in the Governor's Reception Room. This bill gives West Virginia teachers a 4.2 percent increase.

“This is one of the largest increases in the country this year,” he said. “Added to last year's across-the-board increase of \$1,000, it means the average teacher's salary has increased more than seven percent during the first two years of our administration. I'm proud of that.”

Wise challenged educators to be creative in their thinking about partnerships between businesses and schools. He hailed the PROMISE scholarship program as a creative

initiative that will open the doors of higher education for 3,900 high school students this year.

News Release

April 3, 2002

Governor Signs Pay Bill; Guarantees 180-Day School Year

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Surrounded by students at Horace Mann Junior High School, Gov. Bob Wise today signed into law S.B. 247, which includes the teachers' pay raise and guarantees students a full 180-day instructional school year.

“Working together with our legislative leadership we were able to make West Virginia one of the nation's leaders this year in teacher pay raises,” Wise said. “This raise gives West Virginia teachers a 4.2 percent increase.

“I'm proud that the average teacher's salary has increased by more than seven percent during the first two years of my administration.”

Of the 16 states in the Southern Regional Education Board, West Virginia's raise ranks second highest in percentage increase and in actual dollar increase.

In addition, Wise signed H.B. 4017, the Sales Tax Holiday. This law allows consumers to buy back-to-school supplies and clothing tax free for the first weekend in August, as long as each individual item costs less than \$100.

Governor's Message

December 19, 2003

Outstanding West Virginia Teachers

The most important component of our state's future success will be education. With a well-trained work force, we can take advantage of new industries that require skilled, educated employees and entrepreneurs. Education, from birth through college, is the centerpiece of our long-term strategy to fulfill the potential of West Virginia.

Our investments in education are diverse. Students must have access to safe,

modern facilities, advanced classes and cutting-edge technology. They must be afforded the opportunity to further their education beyond high school, regardless of their families' economic status.

Perhaps most important to the academic success of our young people is the quality of instruction they receive. To have the best schools in the nation, we must have the best teachers.

To an ever-growing extent, this goal is becoming a reality. This year, 63 teachers attained National Board Certification, signifying their success against the highest standards in the nation. We now have 151 National Board Certified Teachers working in the classrooms of West Virginia. These dedicated professionals are helping us to become the Education State.

Each teacher who achieves National Board Certification is awarded a \$2500 yearly bonus from the state; many school districts offer additional incentives. These are wise investments in our children's future; studies show a positive correlation between NBCTs and student gains.

More than one third of all NBCTs in West Virginia teach in Title One schools (those with high numbers of at-risk students or economically disadvantaged students), where their services are needed the most. Many teach in areas of teacher shortage, including math and science. They not only enrich the lives of their students, but are leaders in their schools and examples for their peers. I thank each teacher who has put in the long hours and done the hard work necessary to achieve this certification.

Building a strong foundation for education requires teamwork. I look forward to working with teachers, students, communities and lawmakers as we move toward our educational goals.

Governor's Message
Nov. 9, 2001

Home Loans for Educators

Across West Virginia, particularly in areas that border other states with higher salary schedules, school districts have difficulty keeping good teachers on the payroll. Our colleges and universities are constantly in competition with institutions in other states for talented faculty and staff.

We don't have the funds in our state budget to immediately raise teacher salaries to where they should be. I am committed to working for higher salaries for our teachers – but I also am committed to having a balanced state budget each year.

When employers in the private sector are faced with this situation –competitive pressures, limited funds – they often turn to non-cash benefits to build employee loyalty. We're taking a page from that book by offering the Teacher and Educational Employee Loan Assistance Program.

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund has established this new home mortgage program for teachers, school service workers, college professors and college staff. The program offers low down payments, low interest and reduced closing costs for qualified homebuyers. It does not offer a subsidy; it does not cost taxpayers money; and it does not discriminate among employees of public and private schools or colleges.

The program is just one of a number of housing programs operated by the Housing Development Fund. The fund helped put nearly 10,000 West Virginians into homes of their own in the past five years, writing nearly \$600 million in home loans.

The fund is self-supporting. It is able to secure financing at low rates because of the good payment record of the thousands of West Virginia homebuyers – mostly low-to-moderate income – who have purchased homes through this agency since the 1970s.

The Housing Development Fund, earlier this year, committed \$25 million from its reserves to develop safe new housing in areas hard-hit by flooding. It works with local communities and private-sector lenders to encourage home ownership for families from all over the state.

The addition of the new program for educational employees will do nothing to interfere with existing programs. People who are not associated with education have many good options available to become homeowners in West Virginia, and most banks and mortgage companies have good relationships with the fund and will help customers find a program that can meet their needs.

This is the type of self-funded program that allows an employer – the people of West Virginia – to offer an incentive to keep valued employees where they can do the most good.

Business and government leaders who have studied West Virginia's economy say that improving educational standards is the first thing we must do to improve our economic situation. We cannot do that without putting talented people in our classrooms and keeping them there.

I applaud the innovative and hardworking staff and leadership of the West Virginia Housing Development Fund for making this program possible. I will continue to seek out new ways to make our educational system work better for our students – and to keep the good teachers and other educators we need to develop a strong economy.

Governor Announces State Will Participate In National Quality Teaching Initiative

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that West Virginia has been selected to participate in a groundbreaking national research and public engagement project that focuses on quality teaching in all 55 counties.

The project will be headed by The Education Alliance, West Virginia's public education fund, and is supported by a three-year, \$550,000 grant from the Annenberg Foundation through the Public Education Network (PEN). Four other projects were approved for New York City, Washington, D.C., Chattanooga, Tenn., and Seattle, Wash.

"This has been a great year for launching new education initiatives in West Virginia," the Governor said at a morning news conference. "But all of education nationally is in the middle of a great transition, one affected by demographics, changes in society and financing challenges for state governments. We all have to work together to address these and other impending issues in this new century."

The major component of West Virginia's plan is to involve citizens in all 55 counties at the beginning of the project and throughout the entire process. All issues affecting quality teaching – including training, retention, community involvement and compensation – will be addressed during the three-year project, with diverse 20-person county-level teams of local citizens providing input and having a voice that will be heard at the state level.

"Before changes can be made at the state level, we must first create a level of understanding and respect at the community level," Wise said. "It's evident from the research Alliance conducted during the planning phase of this project that area citizens often share a common vision of public education."

"West Virginia's Quality Teaching Initiative is extremely ambitious," said Dr. Hazel K. Palmer, President/CEO of the Alliance, "but we believe that in order to truly engage the public, we must listen to what citizens in all counties have to say about teacher training, retention, compensation, community involvement and other vital issues. This project will begin at the grassroots level, and will culminate with a statewide Public Education Summit in the third year of the project. At every step of this project, people in each county will be informed and involved."

According to Dr. Palmer, the Alliance will rely on its partners – including the Family Resource Networks, the Department of Education and the Arts and the West Virginia Department of Education – to help engage the public, teachers, parents and students, and to ensure that all of public education's stakeholders are represented at every phase of the initiative.

PEN's Teacher Quality Initiative is designed to create policy changes at the local,

state and national levels. PEN's mission is to create systems of public education that result in high achievement for every child.

The Education Alliance is the nation's oldest statewide public education fund and the first organization in America to link at least one business or community partner with every school in a state. The Alliance's mission is to promote student success by involving business and the community in K-12 public schools in West Virginia.

News Release
March 8, 2002

Legislative Session Successful for Education and Jobs Creation

As the 2002 session of the West Virginia Legislature comes to a close, I offer my sincerest gratitude to the legislators for their hard work during this crucial time of decision. Although many people have said this was a slow session, we have truly accomplished a great deal for the people of the Mountain State. Nearly 90 percent of the legislation I have presented has successfully passed through the House and the Senate.

Indeed, I am extremely pleased to report that the majority of my education and economic development initiatives will be implemented. These include – among others – the teacher pay raise, the 180-day school year, the PROMISE scholarship rules, the sales tax holiday, the tax incentive package and the new venture capital legislation.

The 180-day school year will allow teachers full instructional time and enable our students to reach their full potential in the classroom. The legislators also passed the final step in implementing the PROMISE Scholarship that will offer West Virginia's best and brightest the opportunity to receive tuition and fees at any public or private institution in West Virginia.

The sales tax holiday will give a much-needed tax break to families purchasing back-to-school supplies. Last, but not least, I proposed and the legislators passed a good pay raise for our hard-working teachers. Working together with our legislative leadership, we were able to make West Virginia one of the nation's leaders this year in teacher pay raises. We have built upon my original proposal to achieve an average increase of \$1,456.

Together, these education initiatives will breathe new life into our school system and encourage our young people to pursue their higher education right here in the Mountain State. Economic prosperity begins with education, and we have taken an important first step in reaching this goal.

In addition to improving education, we also must improve the economic climate in our state. I am pleased with the recent strides we have taken in this direction. The

venture capital legislation that passed also will provide \$25 million for venture capital investments. These measures will create new jobs and draw in venture capital to encourage entrepreneurship. In addition, our new tax incentive package will replace unproductive tax incentives with four new tax credits. With the implementation of these economic initiatives, we will protect current businesses and attract new ones.

The 2002 session of the West Virginia Legislature has been extremely productive, and I know that the legislation that passed will have a significant impact on education and economic development. The future of West Virginia is bright.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Long before he took office as Governor, Bob Wise had become convinced that the only way West Virginia would break out of its decades-long economic slump was through education. But simply providing young people with an education was not sufficient. If there were no jobs available upon graduation, these young people – and the investment the state had made in their future – would simply move on to success in other states.

Wise insisted that investments in education be targeted to efforts with the potential to add to the state's economy. And he strongly urged educational institutions to match their efforts to the needs of their communities.

Wise also began to set aside state money for investment in university-based research, with the goal of jump-starting enterprises that would become engines for economic development.

Governor's Message
May 17, 2002

Opportunities for Graduates

I have been very fortunate to deliver two college commencement addresses so far this spring. One thing I tell graduates is that times are different. But of the many challenges, the need to think anew is greatest.

These graduates share many things with West Virginia. They have been tested by

educational challenges, by September 11 and by economic recession. The same is true of West Virginia.

They have made great progress, but have not yet reached their full potential. The same is true of West Virginia. They are learning that education is a lifelong process. The same is true of West Virginia. And they have to make essential, fundamental, strategic decisions about the future. The same is true of West Virginia.

My hope is that some of those strategic decisions will lead them to stay in West Virginia. Because 73 percent of West Virginians who attend college here stay in West Virginia. And if we increase the percentage, we increase the pool of bright minds our state needs now, more than ever.

We have many things of which we can be proud. Next year, our college campuses will accept the first class of PROMISE scholars. The math scores of our eighth graders are improving. Our ACT scores have risen twice as fast as the national average. Our board-certified teachers have grown by 57 percent in two years, and we have the nation's eighth-highest computer-to-student ratio.

Our quality of life also is improving. Just last week, the new rankings were released by the Forbes/Milliken Institute, which ranks the best 200 places in the nation for doing business and advancing a career. The Charleston metro area jumped 16 spots in one year; Huntington moved up 19 spots; Weirton-Steubenville climbed 18 spots; Parkersburg climbed 20 spots and Wheeling jumped from 90th to 57th – a leap of 33 places since last year.

Somebody, somewhere, must be doing something right.

With our growth in tourism, which is now a \$4 billion part of our economy, we need everything from managers to accountants to architects to entrepreneurs. Our economy now is biotechnology, new energy uses, e-commerce, infrastructure building, health care, a changing criminal justice system, and – with our changing demographics – social workers.

There are wonderful opportunities for our young people. Take it from one who knows: If you saddle young people with significant responsibilities, use their talents and then get out of the way, young people excel and create their own opportunities.

That “can-do” spirit is needed in West Virginia today.

Whatever road these graduates choose, they are in for a life of surprises. I hope they choose West Virginia.

Governor's Remarks
Biometrics Conference
Crystal City, Virginia
September 23, 2002

A Partnership for Biometrics Development

Throughout our nation's history, colleges and universities have played an instrumental role in economic development. In the agrarian 19th Century, states used the money from the sale of federal lands under the 1862 Land Grant Act to establish universities that would educate citizens in the agricultural and mechanical arts and provide technical assistance to farmers.

These universities became the backbone of the American system of higher education, the greatest system of higher education the world has ever known. The names of these institutions constitute an honor roll of higher learning: California at Berkeley, Cornell, Michigan State, Penn State, Rutgers, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University, among many others.

Today, our universities remain essential engines of economic development at the state level. But in the high-tech 21st Century, the role of universities is different. States are relying on their universities to educate citizens in fields such as forensic identification and nanotechnology and provide research for start-up businesses.

A recent report from the Southern Growth Policies Board, entitled *Innovation U.*, makes the point very clearly: "The American university has set a world-class standard for fundamental, basic research. Less well known is that in the past 10 to 15 years, a new model for the American university, as a partner in its regional and state economies, has also emerged." We do not yet know which states and institutions will make up the honor roll of this new century and new economy, but in West Virginia we are working very hard to make sure our state and our institutions are at the top of that list, especially in the field of biometrics.

Understanding how academe, industry, and government must work together to maintain national leadership in biometrics is critical. In West Virginia, we understand the role of colleges and universities in stimulating economic development.

We also understand the pivotal role of academic research in creating technology transfer and commercialization, spurring small business growth and innovation, and attracting new knowledge-intensive industries. We understand that academic researchers can and will exert significant influence over a nascent national research agenda, particularly in a revolutionary, multidisciplinary field such as biometrics.

Take for instance, the announcement made last week by Sen. Byrd that six West Virginia companies were awarded a U.S. Army contract to manage the U.S. Defense Department's Biometrics Fusion Center in Bridgeport. The companies: Azimuth; New-

Bold Enterprises; Galaxy Global Corp.; West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation; TMC Technologies; and WVU Institute of Technology are proof that good things continue to happen in West Virginia.

Scholars at Stanford influenced computer engineering. Berkeley faculty influenced nuclear science. Carnegie Mellon professors influenced the development of cybersecurity. West Virginia researchers have what I believe is a unique opportunity to influence the national biometrics agenda, and there are many good reasons to believe this will happen:

- West Virginia University is organizing an NSF-sponsored workshop for approximately fifty national experts on a research agenda that addresses scientific, technological, political, economic, and ethical dimensions of biometrics. This workshop will be held in Morgantown, West Virginia, in December. We hope that Morgantown will be to biometrics what Rio is to biodiversity and Kyoto is to the greenhouse effect: a geographic location that becomes synonymous with a major consensus of the academic and policy communities around a specific issue or course of action.
- WVU is home to the Center for Identification Research Technology, or CITeR, one of NSF's Industry-University Cooperative Research Centers. Marshall University, located in Huntington, West Virginia, is one of the four institutional partners in CITeR. CITeR is the nation's first Industry-University Cooperative Research Center dedicated to building new partnerships in the area of biometric identification technology. CITeR's director is WVU Professor Larry Hornak, whose distinguished career includes an NSF National Young Investigator Award in 1992 and more than \$4 million in external research funding.
- WVU is also home to the nation's first forensic identification academic degree program. Students majoring in the program can select from two areas of focus: Biometric Systems and Forensic and Investigative Science. The graduates of this program are the pioneers on the forensic identification frontier.
- We have revitalized our state's EPSCoR Program, and last year, we received a three-year, \$9 million research infrastructure improvement grant from the National Science Foundation. A large part of West Virginia's EPSCoR effort is focused on biometrics, which allows us to leverage additional funding and research capacity in an area where we have existing strength.
- Last year, the West Virginia State Legislature appropriated more than \$2 million as "research challenge" funds to higher education in an effort to spur new and innovative research by university faculty. Among the projects selected for funding is the Biometrics Knowledge Center at WVU, which will synthesize the interactions among all of the disparate academic disciplines that are part of biometrics into a cohesive national research strategy. Another project is the development of DNA testing expertise at Marshall University and an affiliated corporation that would draw on this faculty and graduate student expertise.
- Both WVU and Marshall have well-developed plans for research parks that will serve as incubators for new ideas, the creative power of faculty, and the synergy that occurs when academe and industry work together. As Dan Angel, President of Marshall University, wrote in an editorial a few weeks ago, "The most fertile ground for growth is our universities. In fact, the most important factor in the successful start-up of a biotechnology firm is to have the facilities

and expertise of a university nearby.”

- The Morgantown-Charleston-Huntington biometric axis that runs through the center of West Virginia also includes the Department of Defense Biometrics Fusion Center, located in Bridgeport, and the West Virginia High Tech Consortium, located in Fairmont, which will soon be designated a National Information Assurance Partnership laboratory.

West Virginia’s established biometrics infrastructure, which includes degree programs, research agencies and technology transfer organizations, has drawn two important industry projects.

The National Biometric Security Project, to be established in Morgantown, will facilitate the application of positive human identification for the security of the civil national infrastructure in direct response to any terrorist threat.

Senator Robert Byrd deserves our thanks and appreciation for his support of this project as well as for his long-term vision of West Virginia’s role in the biometrics industry.

Ethentica by Security First Corp. will develop a biometric center of excellence in Fairmont. The company develops and commercializes sensor technologies and applications.

There is a natural and healthy symbiosis between academe and industry, particularly in a knowledge-intensive, high-tech field such as biometrics. Even a quick survey of our inventory of academic resources, such as I have provided here, reveals that West Virginia is in the right place, at the right time, to maximize the participation of our universities – our intellectual infrastructure – in the growth of biometrics and the economic development of the state.

News Release
February 3, 2004

Wise Celebrates Higher Education, Supports Research Investments

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise talked today with several of the state’s college and university presidents and students about the importance of investing in research. He also declared it Higher Education Day in the state.

“I have asked the Legislature to make a \$10 million investment in our Research Challenge program so we can build West Virginia’s research capacity,” Wise said. “We are at the forefront of research in key areas such as biometrics, energy and neurosciences, but other states are close behind us. We must invest in research now to stay ahead of the competition – this is our window of opportunity for improving research and stimulating

high-tech economic development.”

Wise was introduced today by Charlie Battleson, West Virginia University student body president, who thanked the Governor for his support of higher education and for continuing to invest in its future.

“When we invest in research, students like Charlie benefit from the chance to explore new ideas,” Wise added. Every region of the country that has experienced high-tech economic development has one thing in common – strong research universities that contribute to small business creation and the commercialization of new products and technologies.”

Wise notes that while we should continue promoting recreational opportunities to generate economic development, we must find ways to compete in the changing world.

“This is part of my Tourism Promotion Fund reorganization,” Wise said. “If we invest in research, companies and investors will locate here because of access to cutting-edge researchers and state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. We must send the message that we are serious about research.”

Wise also presented a proclamation to Higher Education Chancellor Howard Mullen declaring today Higher Education Day and praising the efforts of West Virginia’s colleges and universities in promoting higher education.

News Release
March 2, 2004

Wise Promotes Investment in Research

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise met with some of West Virginia’s talented young scientists during Undergraduate Research Day at the State Capitol last week. Forty-eight students representing 14 colleges and universities displayed projects and discussed their research findings with the Governor and other state leaders, emphasizing the value of research.

“These students represent the future of West Virginia. They are doing cutting-edge research in our higher education institutions that may lead to breakthroughs in medicine, energy, biometrics, environmental science and other fields,” Wise said. “We need to support their important work and keep them in West Virginia after they graduate. The best way to do that is to invest in research.”

During this legislative session, Wise is advocating a major increase in state funding

to build research capacity at West Virginia colleges and universities. Under the Governor's proposal, about one percent of the Division of Tourism's video lottery account – about \$8.6 million – would be allocated each year to fund research projects, purchase scientific equipment and recruit outstanding faculty and graduate students in scientific fields. The Tourism Division would receive two percent, or more than \$16 million a year under the Governor's plan.

“The Governor's research funding proposal is both courageous and visionary,” according to Dr. Paul Hill, director of the West Virginia Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). “He is asking the Legislature to make a major new investment in scientific research, which will stimulate economic development across the state.” Data from the EPSCoR Office indicates that for every \$1 the state invested in research in 2003, it generated \$9 in federal funding.

Dr. Michael Castellani of the Chemistry Department at Marshall University coordinated the Undergraduate Research Day program. The program was the latest in a series of events held at the State Capitol to increase awareness about the importance of research to West Virginia's future.

News Release
April 14, 2004

West Virginia's Commitment to Entrepreneurship Boosts Technology Index

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today praised West Virginia's move to 30th among states in the category of Risk Capital and Entrepreneurial Assets on the Milken Institute's State Technology and Science Index. West Virginia saw the second largest gain among all the states by moving up 18 positions to 30th overall.

“Innovation, research and vision fuel economic success,” Wise said. “West Virginia's prudent decision to invest in qualified capital companies shows our commitment to entrepreneurship.”

The institute identifies “capable entrepreneurs and the risk capital infrastructure to support them” as ingredients for long-term success in a knowledge-based economy.

“A state's entrepreneurial capacity and risk capital infrastructure comprise the fuel that determines the success rate of converting research into commercially viable technology services and products,” according to the report.

West Virginia's continued dedication to those specific ideals will be reflected in an even stronger showing in next year's report, Wise said.

“The Legislature and I worked together this session to secure \$4 million in competitive research grants with the stated understanding that research is a critical component of its strategic plan for economic development,” he said. “Recently enacted initiatives specifically address the needs of technology-driven economic development.”

Wise also noted that the Economic Development Grant Committee awarded nearly \$43 million to technology-related projects.

Technology transfer components at Marshall University and West Virginia University, as well as nationally recognized advancements in public education, form important elements of the state’s commitment to improvement, he said.

West Virginia’s overall ranking on the Milken Institute’s report increased from 48th in 2003 to 46th in 2004.

News Release
November 8, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to BRNI

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today awarded West Virginia University \$10 million from the Economic Development Grant Committee for the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute.

“The work done at the Institute benefits not only West Virginians, but people across the world,” Wise said. “Alzheimer’s is a horrible, debilitating disease. This research facility will provide more space for researchers to work to understand these types of diseases.”

This funding will help with the construction of the \$30 million research center. When complete, the center will bring together as many as 40 scientists to study Alzheimer’s disease, which affects 4.5 million Americans.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “Investing in research means supporting the growth of regional economies.”

The grant was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

Wise Announces \$24.4 Million for WVU Research

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced a \$24.4 million funding package that will allow West Virginia University to complete a 12-year research expansion plan in as little as half that time. The facilities will enable the University to add 600 new health sciences research positions over the next six to eight years.

“This is an investment in a future that will benefit every West Virginian,” Wise said. “We benefit from the jobs WVU will create; we benefit from the medical research that will make our lives better; and we benefit from the new private enterprises that will sprout in West Virginia to support this research enterprise.”

The funds will build new laboratories at the University’s Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center and new neurosciences laboratories. It also will create research space in the new Health Sciences Library.

Wise brought together three state development agencies to create the funding package. The Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council will provide \$9.4 million, the Economic Development Authority \$9 million and the West Virginia Housing Development Fund \$6 million. Up to \$3 million of the Infrastructure Council’s allocation will be forgiven if WVU meets its job creation target.

“Governor Wise has been an advocate for higher education, particularly for research, throughout his public life,” said WVU President David C. Hardesty, Jr. “The leadership he has shown in putting together and delivering this unprecedented state commitment to research means his legacy as a builder will long outlast his term in office.”

WVU has developed a 12-year plan to develop strong research capabilities in a number of focused areas of health and biosciences, including neurosciences, cancer and heart disease. The funds provided by Wise will allow the University to speed the recruitment of top researchers and complete most of its research facilities in 6 to 8 years.

“With this up-front financing, we can build facilities that will be among the most advanced at any health sciences center or research institute in the country,” said Robert M. D’Alessandri, M.D., WVU vice president for health sciences. “That will attract top researchers, and they will bring an influx of federal and private research funding to WVU.”

WVU’s health sciences research plan envisions a minimum of 600 – and as many as 850 – new research-related jobs on campus by the end of the decade. Another 500 jobs will be created in the North Central region of the state as a result of indirect effects on the economy – an annual payroll boost to the region of \$55 million.

The funds will be repaid to the agencies by WVU over a 15- to 17-year term, and

will carry interest rates of 3 to 5.3 percent. Payments will be made from the University's share of research grant funding.

News Release
October 6, 2003

Wise Presents Gold Star Awards To 10 Exemplary Public School Partnerships

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and The Education Alliance, West Virginia's statewide public education fund, today honored 10 of the most exemplary school-business partnerships in the state. Each partnership was presented the prestigious Gold Star Award for school-business partnerships and a check for \$1,000. The awards program was made possible through financial support from Dominion.

"I commend and congratulate each of the winners here today," Wise said. "When people work cooperatively with our public schools, our schools are strengthened, and when we have strong public schools, our communities remain vital."

"These partnerships are truly 10 of West Virginia's most outstanding because they focus on the interaction among employees and students, allowing students to learn more about careers and the skills needed in the workplace," said Dr. Hazel K. Palmer, President/CEO of The Education Alliance.

The 2003 Gold Star Award winners include: Arnettville Elementary and United Mine Workers of America, Monongalia County; Burch Middle School and Coal-Mac, Inc., Mingo County; Mason-Dixon Elementary School and Eastern Associated Coal Corporation, Federal #2 Mine, Monongalia County; North Elementary School and HealthWorks Rehab and Fitness, Monongalia County; Oak Glen Middle School and Hancock County Savings Bank, Hancock County; Parkersburg High School and Dupont Washington Works, Wood County; Sherrard Junior High School and Mt. Olivet Lions Club, Marshall County; Weberwood Elementary School and Star USA Federal Credit Union, Kanawha County; West Liberty Elementary School and West Liberty Lions Club, Ohio County; and Wheeling Park High School and WTRF-TV 7, Ohio County.

The Education Alliance, America's first statewide public education fund, received national acclaim in 1999 for becoming the first organization in the country to link at least one business with every public school in a state. The Alliance is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2003.

SCHOOL SAFETY HOTLINE

All parents worry when they send their children off to school. School violence – including a spate of widely-reported horrific school shootings in other states – intensified this worry in the early years of the 21st Century. As Governor, Bob Wise determined that it was important for all West Virginia students and parents to have access to 24-hour-a-day assistance in solving school safety issues. He instituted the Governor’s Helpline for Safer Schools in 2001.

Governor’s Message
September 7, 2001

Keeping Our Schools Safe

For students to do well in school, they need several things. One of the most important is a safe and secure environment. West Virginia has a good safe school record, and I want to make sure we stay that way. The wake of school violence across this country in the past few years has made me even more aware of the importance of ensuring the safety of our students.

That’s why I have activated the Governor’s Helpline for Safer Schools. This past week I had an opportunity to travel the state visiting schools to urge West Virginia students from kindergarten through high school to speak up against school violence.

I want to make sure that every student knows that help is here. If you are a student, a parent, a teacher, or an administrator and you feel in danger at any time, or feel that someone in your school is in danger, I want you to pick up the phone and call immediately.

The toll-free Helpline for Safer Schools will be operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the West Virginia Fire Marshal’s Office. Trained professionals will answer anonymous calls and report any threat to schools immediately. Callers will always talk directly to a trained and caring person – never a recording.

The toll-free number, 1-866-SAFE-WVA (1-866-723-3982), has been assigned for all schools in West Virginia and can be accessed in and out of state.

School is a place where we want our children to feel safe and secure. This helpline will offer students an opportunity to take an active role to keep their schools safe.

Always remember, “You have a voice. Use it.”

Governor's Hotline for Safer Schools: 1-866-723-3982

Now that summer vacation has begun for West Virginia students, an important program that protected them during the school year will tackle the new challenges and threats of the summer months. The Governor's Hotline for Safer Schools will be open to receive calls throughout the summer, helping communities deal with threats to their children.

The Hotline has received 162 calls so far in 2003. Callers to the Hotline have brought to light all manner of problems, from bullying to unsafe school conditions. In one case, a citizen noticed that a student using a wheelchair was being dropped off by his bus at the side of a busy highway. The citizen called the Hotline; by the next day, county school officials had identified a safe alternative drop-off location.

In another case, a student called and indicated he was having self-destructive thoughts. Thankfully, the Hotline staff quickly notified school administrators who contacted local mental health authorities and got the young man to a safe place. The professionals at the state Fire Marshal's office, who run the Hotline, have handled hundreds of similar calls since its inception in August of 2001. The dedicated people who run this model program and the local officials they work with are performing one of the most basic and vital tasks of government; they are protecting the vulnerable and the innocent.

When a student, parent or community member calls the Hotline, his or her name and personal information are kept confidential. Hotline staffers immediately contact the appropriate local authorities or school personnel. Staffers have successfully dealt with fire code compliance, disability access and drug abuse complaints.

The toll-free number for the Governor's Safer Schools Hotline is 1-866-723-3982. It is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If at any time you witness a threat to a child's safety, inside or out of school, please call. Remember – your information will always be kept strictly confidential.

I am very proud of this program and know that as more people are made aware of it, the service to children can be increased.

Together, we can make West Virginia safer for children.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The children most at risk for difficulty in school and beyond are those who are not ready for school when they begin kindergarten. Governor Wise gave strong support to initiatives to make more pre-school educational opportunities available to young children across West Virginia.

First Lady Sandy Wise also focused her efforts on the education of the very young, and launched the Love to Learn program to encourage West Virginians to read to children.

Governor's Message
February 8, 2002

Investing in Our Future

Last week I had the opportunity to glimpse at the future of West Virginia.

I was fortunate to visit several schools, preschools and child care centers across the state to discuss important education initiatives including teacher pay raises, a 180-day instructional school year, student loan tax credits and Educare, an initiative designed to promote and coordinate pre-school programs for children from birth to kindergarten age.

I also had the opportunity to spend some time with the children on this tour. They were bright, inquisitive and eager to learn. Their teachers work hard to provide them with educational materials and activities to encourage that need to learn. In the preschool programs that I visited, this was especially apparent.

We now know that education doesn't begin in kindergarten - it starts at birth. Studies show us that the years from birth to kindergarten are the first and best chance we have to prepare children for the future.

West Virginia Educare helps young children prepare for school and lifelong learning by making sure that they have access to quality early education programs and that their families get the support they need during this important time in their child's development.

Educare is not a new early childhood program. Educare brings together and improves upon the early education programs that already exist in the community and helps fill in gaps, if necessary.

Currently there are eight pilot Educare communities in West Virginia that encompass almost 60 programs. Each Educare program has certain standards and approved curriculum that enhances learning opportunities for children.

Educare also is designed to respect the diversity of our state and our communities. The Educare collaboratives have the flexibility they need to meet the unique needs of their community; no two Educare communities are exactly alike.

Some communities have used their funds to provide transportation for children to programs. Many have improved training for providers. Some Educare collaboratives help parents pay the cost of childcare, which is critical to helping them be able to go to work.

Communities receiving Educare funds must develop a plan to coordinate early care and education services in their community. This can include childcare centers, Head Start, public schools, family child care and private preschools. They also must maximize the funding resources that these programs bring to the community.

My budget allocates \$700,000 more to the Educare initiative to continue the work of these pilot projects. The Educare legislation that is being considered will also work to phase in additional Educare communities throughout West Virginia.

Educare is an investment in the future. For every dollar we spend on early education, we save more than seven dollars in the future costs of social programs, crime and remedial education.

Education is the key to economic development and the earlier we start, the better. Our children deserve the best opportunities possible and Educare is critical to their future success and the success of West Virginia.

First Lady's Message
October 18, 2002

Our Children Love to Learn

(This column was prepared by First Lady Sandy Wise.)

One of my favorite things to do is read to children. I love to sit with a child on my lap and share a good story – and, more important, reading helps our children learn. That's why I launched Love to Learn.

Love to Learn is about preparing children for school from the moment they are born, through the everyday, loving activities of their parents and caregivers. I wanted to do

something to support West Virginia parents by providing information and helpful hints about reading and talking to young children.

Let's face it, we're all busy, and sometimes it feels as if there aren't enough hours in the day. But, finding the time to read and talk to your child can make a world of difference.

When you are holding your baby in your lap while you read to him – he is not only learning about language – he is also learning to associate your love for him – with a love for reading and learning.

When you ask your toddler about his day, he learns how to think and speak – and he also learns that he is important to you.

There is scientific evidence that reinforces the importance of reading and talking to young children. A young child's experiences affect how the brain grows and develops. This, in turn, impacts every aspect of a child's life.

A baby's brain grows rapidly in the first three years of life. Because this growth is so important, children love to learn. Learning experiences are as important to them as eating or sleeping.

As parents, we have a natural instinct to respond to our children's needs. We feed and comfort them. We read and talk to them. And, by doing so, we help their brains expand and develop.

When our children were born, Bob and I started reading and talking to them right away. We didn't know about the brain development research then, but it was obvious that our children wanted and needed that attention from us. They would respond to our words with smiles, coos and with a focused attention – they were learning.

Experts tell us that young children must first build a foundation for future learning. Children need a warm and intimate relationship with parents and caregivers. They need opportunities to explore their world and feel safe while they do.

The earlier we start reading to them, the better. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that we read to our babies every day, beginning at six months of age. The younger a child is when he starts experiencing books, the more likely he is to enjoy reading and being read to as he grows up.

Over the years, we have read every book imaginable to our children. We have read books about princesses and firemen. We have read about ballerinas and snakes. We have become friends with untold numbers of bears, mice, dinosaurs, bunny rabbits, elves, frogs, dogs and even a Cat in a Hat. Every book had a different lesson.

Some would rhyme, teaching our children about the richness of language. Some would teach life lessons such as the importance of sharing, friendship and family. Others would spark our children's imagination, helping them to think beyond their everyday experiences and learn about creativity.

Along with reading, it is important that we continue to communicate with our children throughout the day by talking to them. They may not understand exactly what we are saying, but they will understand that we are connecting to them.

We would talk to our children all the time. I would talk to them while they were getting dressed in the morning or while we were making dinner. Every family activity we did together gave us something to talk about. When we went to the grocery store, we would talk about things we saw. In the produce section for example, we talked about the different kinds of fruits and vegetables - what colors and shapes they were. We would count together as we put apples in the bag.

Even though our children are much older now, I still am amazed by those early years of learning. The things that our children said and did when they were young are precious memories. Spending time with them was something I enjoyed as much as they did. And by simply loving them - they could learn.

It is the magic and the potential of the early years of life that have inspired Love to Learn. This project has been developed to support all of us, as parents, as we meet these first and most important parenting challenges.

It's a simple idea that can make a profound difference for West Virginia's children and their future. By building a solid foundation for future learning, our children will be ready for school and for the challenges that face them as they grow.

BACK TO SCHOOL SALES TAX HOLIDAY

During his second State of the State Address, Governor Wise made one of the most popular proposals of his term – the Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday. The idea was to give parents a break at one of the most expensive times of the year – when they were buying clothes, school supplies, computers and other essential items to help their children be ready for the resumption of classes after the summer vacation.

The measure won immediate support from across the state. And, although it cost the state government several million dollars in revenue, it was renewed each following year of Wise’s term by the Legislature because of strong support from both parents and from the business community. Many parents who had often traveled to other states to shop for school clothes and other items remained in West Virginia – and parents from nearby states crossed into West Virginia to take advantage of Sales Tax Holiday promotions organized by retailers.

Governor’s Message
February 1, 2002

Giving Families a Break at the Cash Register

I know that every year when August rolls around it means two things – the kids are heading back to school, and they need new school clothes. During this time, West Virginia families struggle to make ends meet while trying to provide their children the things they need.

This past week, I had the opportunity to tour retail outlets across the state and talk with shoppers and merchants about legislation I have proposed for a three-day back-to-school sales tax holiday. I believe this legislation would be a boost for families and for West Virginia stores.

The holiday plan, now being considered by the legislature, would remove the state’s six percent sales tax from clothing, shoes and school supplies the first weekend in August – from Friday through Sunday. Families would be able to purchase items up to \$100 without paying a sales tax on them.

I know that every penny counts and when you are spending money for new school clothes, paper, pencils, backpacks and shoes, your bill at the cash register can add up quickly. This sales tax holiday also will encourage parents to spend this money in West Virginia. In many of our border counties, this legislation will give shoppers from West Virginia and

nearly states another reason to shop in the Mountain State.

This sales tax holiday will help businesses in West Virginia. There's no doubt in my mind that stores will use this to pull in shoppers from around the region with attractive offers for a "back-to-school" shopping trip.

This tax holiday can benefit the state in several ways and, with your support, we can help families who are sending their kids off to school.

Governor's Message
April 25, 2003

Saving Families Money

Last year's Sales Tax Holiday was a huge success for West Virginia. Retailers saw a dramatic surge in sales, drawing shoppers from around the state and region. Families took advantage of the three-day August weekend to stock up on school supplies and clothes for the coming school year. Because of the positive response from so many West Virginians, I successfully urged the renewal and expansion of the Sales Tax Holiday for 2003.

Just like last year, shoppers will be able to purchase clothes, footwear, and general school supplies with individual retail values of up to \$100 without paying the six percent state sales tax. I talked to many parents at shopping centers last year, and they told me that with several children to shop for, this discount really added up to significant savings. Customers saved a total of \$1.7 million in sales tax over the three-day period, while West Virginia businesses sold an amazing \$28 million in tax-exempt merchandise.

Last year, computer accessories and calculators up to \$100 were included in the list of tax-free items. The legislation I signed this year will add computers and computer equipment up to \$750 to this list. Technology is one of the most important aspects of education for our children today, and it's important to encourage computer literacy at home and in the classroom. With these additions, shoppers are expected to save \$2.2 million this year.

The six percent sales tax isn't the only discount parents will receive during this period. Last year, many large and small retailers scheduled sales and special promotions to coincide with the Sales Tax Holiday, providing even greater savings for consumers. With the addition of computers, I'm sure we will see even better deals.

As a father of two, I know that back-to-school shopping is one of the most expensive times of the year; I also know that every bit of savings helps, especially in tough economic times.

This year's Sales Tax Holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 1, and ends at midnight on Sunday, August 3. I urge all parents to participate: prepare for the school year, support local businesses, and save some of your hard-earned money.

Governor's Message
July 18, 2003

Sales Tax Holiday: Savings for West Virginia Families

For the past two years, I introduced legislation that saved West Virginia shoppers \$1.7 million in three days. It also boosted sales at retailers across the state, who sold \$28 million in tax-free merchandise during West Virginia's first Sales Tax Holiday.

This holiday was so successful that we are doing it again this year. The first weekend in August will be an opportunity for parents to stock up on school supplies and clothing without paying the six percent state sales tax.

This year, in addition to clothing, footwear and school and computer supplies up to \$100, computers up to \$750 may be purchased tax-free. I feel that encouraging technology education at home and at school is a vital part of our educational agenda.

With these additional eligible items, and the awareness generated by last year's successful event, shoppers are expected to save \$2.2 million in taxes this year. In addition, many retailers are planning deep discounts to coincide with the Sales Tax Holiday.

Back-to-school shopping is one of the most costly times of year for many West Virginia families. The Sales Tax Holiday is a win-win for West Virginia: parents save money, children are prepared for school, and businesses have a new "shopping holiday" to boost revenue and put people to work.

This year's Sales Tax Holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 1, and ends at midnight on Sunday, August 3. I urge all parents to participate: prepare for the school year, support local businesses, and save some of your hard-earned money.

News Release
August 1, 2003

Wise Promotes Third Annual Sales Tax Holiday; Touts Savings for West Virginia Families

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today talked with shoppers and storeowners about West Virginia’s third annual Sales Tax Holiday.

“Two years ago, I introduced legislation to allow families to shop without paying the state’s six percent sales tax during the first weekend in August. This annual Sales Tax Holiday has proved to be a winning situation for everyone involved,” Wise said. “For families, money saved from the taxes can be spent on other necessities. For businesses, greater sales mean greater profits and more income tax revenue for the state.”

The holiday, which begins Friday, August 6, at 12:01 a.m., and ends Sunday, August 8, at midnight, removes the state’s six percent sales tax from clothing, shoes and school supplies.

“A lot of West Virginia families are struggling to make ends meet,” Wise said. “And every year, families across West Virginia go on back-to-school shopping trips. I know how much they cost – how every penny counts. Our hard-working West Virginia families deserve a break.”

Last year, taxpayers saved \$1.9 million over this weekend. This year, savings are projected to reach \$2.2 million.

Shoppers will be able to purchase clothing, footwear and school and computer supplies up to \$100, and computers up to \$750 after a manufacturer’s rebate.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS AND SUMMER EDUCATION

Educators often have noted that some of the progress students make during the traditional school year is lost over the summer months. Governor Wise encouraged and supported efforts to keep students involved with learning, and with their communities, over the summer.

Governor's Message
May 16, 2003

Learning Year-Round

In the next few weeks, schools will close for summer and students will begin their vacations. There will be baseball games, campouts, and fishing trips. And though our youths will not be in the classroom, the vital progress of learning will continue. I am encouraged by the successes of the academic year and have great optimism for the future of education in West Virginia.

Many members of the Class of 2003 will spend this summer preparing for their exciting first year of college. Thanks to the PROMISE Scholarship, more students will be able to fulfill this dream and more of them will be attending our West Virginia institutions. This will be a benefit not only to their futures, but to the state's: with a better-educated work force, we can attract modern businesses that will bring West Virginia into the digital era – and statistics show that 70 percent of college graduates remain to work in the states where they earned their degrees. This investment in the hard-working students of West Virginia will pay off well in the years to come.

Many other students are participating in two exciting contests that showcase our state's heritage and pride. I recently kicked off the West Virginia State Quarter Design Contest, and we have received many submissions. The deadline for submissions is May 23; think of what West Virginia means to you and log on to www.wv.gov.org to find out more about the contest. Help your children research West Virginia history and come up with a creative design that reflects our heritage – it's a fun way to combine art and social studies. West Virginia's submissions will be announced on West Virginia Day, June 20.

Our State Seal Contest isn't new; in fact, it's become a tradition that I look forward to each year. While learning about West Virginia history, fourth grade students are invited to submit artistic reproductions of the Great Seal of West Virginia. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about each aspect of the Seal: the historic industries of our state, the circumstances and date of her birth, and the meaning of our state motto, *Montani Semper Liberi*.

Summer vacations offer more opportunities than ever for young people to pursue educational adventures. Many college students will be participating in the Governor's Internship Program, working and learning in government offices, non-profit agencies and businesses large and small. These bright students will not only gain insights into the world of work, but also will be exposed to the numerous career opportunities available to talented people in West Virginia.

There are too many possibilities for summer learning to list them all; 4-H projects, community library reading programs, neighborhood cleanups, day and overnight camps and sports – from tennis to soccer – can impart valuable lessons about teamwork, creativity, and dedication.

These months away from the classroom should not detract from what students learn in school, but complement it. Whether a child chooses to work, attend a camp or volunteer in his or her community, education can be found everywhere.

Governor's Message
July 9, 2004

A Summer Education in West Virginia

Educating our children is the greatest investment we can make for our future. Over the past four years, we've worked hard to change the future of education in our state. We've fully funded the PROMISE Scholarship and kept our best and brightest students here at home.

We have several other state programs that enrich education while honoring our children. The governor's academies target individual interests and specific talents of our students. Each academy brings together some of the state's most gifted students every summer for a series of sessions aimed at broadening their youthful horizons.

The Governor's Honors Academy is an intensive learning experience that challenges the academic skills of students while enhancing and clarifying their post-secondary education goals. The mission of the program is to help students grow intellectually and creatively in a culturally diverse atmosphere.

The Governor's School for the Arts offers participants an intensive artistic and social experience. The program provides individual and group instruction in the arts for current high school sophomores who attend school in West Virginia. The courses focus on dance, theater, vocal music, instrumental music, visual art and creative art.

Finally, the Governor's School for Math and Science focuses on middle school students at time during which many students lose interest in these subjects. Participants

use scientific and mathematical operations as they study space and weather and work with faculty and staff to describe aspects of the planning, development and operation of a space station simulator. The school hosts a total of 120 students in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades; students are selected from each county in the state.

This year's Governor's Honors Academy is being held at Marshall University in Huntington; the Governor's School for the Arts and Governor's School for Math and Science are at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

I extend my gratitude and congratulations to the participants of these academies and to the parents, educators and communities that have supported them each step of the way.

Qualifications and deadlines for each program vary. For more information please visit the official website of the West Virginia Governor's Schools at www.wvgovschools.org.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Governor Wise encouraged educators to prepare for the state's future needs and to address the educational issues facing groups traditionally underrepresented in the student bodies of higher education and graduate schools. While a proponent of traditional educational values, he encouraged innovation in how to make education available and attractive to more students.

News Release
June 4, 2003

Wise Launches Collaborative Effort to Improve Higher Education

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced an important collaboration between state and national education groups.

State leaders will combine efforts for strengthening West Virginia's higher

education system. They also will work to ensure that the state's public schools and colleges and universities can accommodate the rapidly growing numbers of West Virginia students needing a high-quality college education in the coming decade, as well as the increasing demand for a highly skilled workforce.

"Now is the time for state leaders to make a strong statement about the critical need for our students to have access to the college education and training they need to become productive citizens," Wise said. "West Virginia is committed to producing the highly skilled workforce needed for today's high-tech, global economy. This partnership is critical in helping us identify what needs to be done to better prepare our students for the 21st century workplace."

West Virginia is one of a handful of states chosen to work with the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Policy, a consortium of education organizations that has received support from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The collaborative will work with the Governor's Office, the State Board of Education, the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), legislators and higher education and business leaders to help the state identify a long-term agenda to improve the effectiveness of the K-20 education system. The project is being kicked off with a forum at the Charleston Marriott today.

Last fall, 81,081 students enrolled in the state's public colleges, community colleges and universities; 11,034 enrolled in private institutions. This represents a four percent increase over the fall enrollment in 2001, but much more needs to be done. Of the 17,833 students who graduated from public or private high schools in West Virginia during 2001-02, an estimated 10,081 (56.53%) enrolled in higher education institutions in the Fall 2002 semester.

The Governor's Office will work closely with these groups on the partnership. J. Michael Mullen, higher education chancellor, also welcomed the expertise of three highly renowned national education groups in the partnership – the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, the Education Commission for the States, and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

"We have a pretty good idea of how many students will need to be served by our colleges and universities during the next decade, but student enrollment is just the beginning of the planning process. We need to retain and graduate a much larger share of those enrolling. We also need to make workforce training and adult education courses available to our citizens in every region of the state," Mullen said. "It is essential we have a visionary strategic plan that empowers our colleges and universities and meets the long-term needs of business, industry and students. We'll need a collaborative effort with the governor, the Legislature, our local schools, institutions and business leaders to make this work."

The National Collaborative project will bolster HEPC's work on the state's strategic master plan for higher education, which is required by law. The plan, "It All Adds Up," focuses on six goals of Preparation, Participation, Affordability, Competitive Workforce, Economic Development, and Accountability.

News Release
August 7, 2003

Wise Creates Minority Students Strategies Council

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today signed an executive order establishing the Governor’s Minority Students Strategies Council. The council will address the growing academic disparity between minority and non-minority students in the West Virginia school system.

The council will explore such issues as the increasing number of minority students in special education as well as the relatively low number of minority students in the gifted programs. Other areas include discipline, expulsion and testing scores.

“The council will isolate the causes of the academic disparity and recommend solutions to the problems,” said Wise. “I believe all students in the Mountain State deserve access to a rigorous curriculum regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.”

The council will present an annual report that identifies specific problems of disparity and offer solutions and strategies to the Legislature, the Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts and to both the Higher Education Policy Commission and the State Board of Education.

Wise appointed Patricia Petty-Wilson of Dunbar as chairperson. Other members are Darryl Lee Baynes, Wheeling; Madhu Chaturvedi, Charleston; Otis Cox, Morgantown; Daniel Crockett, Dunbar; Clinton Giles, Charleston; Thomas Hargis, Huntington; Viola Huff, Vienna; Dr. Patricia Kusimo, Charleston; Tony Smedley, Charleston and Lisa J. Woo, Charleston.

For more information visit the website at www.allWVstudents.org

News Release
April 16, 2002

Governor Announces Comic Book to Encourage Higher Education

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise, along with Higher Education Chancellor J. Michael Mullen, State Schools Superintendent David Stewart, and Secretary of Education and the Arts Kay Goodwin, today announced the release of a publication for fifth graders intended to promote the importance of higher education to children and their families.

Planning Your Future, which takes the form of a comic book, was initiated by Chancellor Mullen in an effort to raise awareness and conversation in the classroom and at home about the value of a college education.

“Making students aware of their options early is critical to sparking curiosity about college,” Wise said. “The earlier students start thinking about postsecondary education, the more likely they are to pursue it.”

Last fall, a statewide competition was held to find a character for the comic book. Entries were received from all over West Virginia. Jordana Bitner, a senior at Liberty High School in Clarksburg, was the winner of the contest. She received a \$100 savings bond for her drawing. Bitner’s creation is now known as “Ed Wiz.”

The comic book will be distributed to all fifth graders in West Virginia. In addition, a web site, <http://www.edwiz.info> has been created for a more interactive approach. It includes a narrated version of the comic book, a career configurator and links to other educational resources.

“I really encourage parents to sit down and read this with their children,” Wise concluded. “Ms. Bitner has done a great job and kids should relate to this character.”

Planning Your Future is the first in a series of publications from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the Department of Education, and the Department of Education and the Arts.

EDUCATION COST CONTAINMENT

Governor Wise's relationship with the state's educators and college leaders was generally very positive – they shared values and goals, and Wise supported providing more resources for education. But early in his term, he angered some of them by publicly urging the Higher Education Policy Commission to reject most of the proposed tuition increases requested by state-operated colleges.

Wise wanted no additional barriers to access for West Virginia students.

Wise also stepped up the state's efforts to match students with available financial aid.

Governor's Message
May 11, 2001

Keeping College Affordable

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission recently rejected proposed increases in college tuition. I applaud them for taking this action. I have worked throughout my career to make higher education accessible and affordable for West Virginians. Shifting a disproportionate share of cost increases to students is unfair and unwise.

We are entering a new era in West Virginia. With the PROMISE Scholarships, with increased focus on work force investment, and with the shift to a 21st century economy, education will be a factor in everyone's life – not just something for the young.

The state's role will be to provide quality education and increased opportunities for people to participate in learning.

We have some simple goals that should be kept in mind:

More West Virginians should be enrolled in colleges, universities and other post-secondary education.

Education should be affordable to all.

Those seeking to improve themselves should not be subjected to economic disincentives. Unreasonably or excessively high tuition is a barrier to access.

I do not believe it serves our citizens and students to impose large increases – in the double-digit range at some colleges – based on the costs and prices in other area.

The tuition and fees at our community colleges are higher in West Virginia than surrounding states. By freezing community college tuition and fees, we will improve access to these institutions.

The commission is likely to approve reasonable increases – four percent at most – for undergraduates in four-year schools. In future years, the rate of increase should function as an incentive tool, motivating institutions to offer an education that is both high quality and affordable.

Our colleges and universities must change to serve the changing needs of students. And we will invest in institutions that show they are doing a good job in meeting students' needs.

News Release
October 22, 2002

Online Application Makes It Easy to Apply for Financial Aid

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise, in cooperation with American Education Services (AES), today unveiled a hassle-free online application for financial aid available at <http://www.wvapply.com>.

“One-stop financial aid shopping has come to West Virginia,” Wise said. “Through a streamlined process, students will be able to go online and complete one application for both PROMISE and the West Virginia Higher Education Grant. Completion of the application should take a student no more than several minutes.”

All necessary information such as ACT, SAT scores and grade reports will be electronically sent to the Office of Financial Aid and Outreach Services at the Higher Education Policy Commission office. Students and counselors will no longer have to worry about the transmittal of that information as it will be done automatically once the common application for financial aid has been completed.

Students still will have to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This can be completed on the West Virginia Mentor website.

This new process will alleviate many of the concerns raised by school counselors last year. Counselors will no longer have to make eligibility determinations or process applications. This should allow counselors to spend more time in a direct counseling

relationship with students and reduce the amount of paperwork.

“Internet technology has redefined how we search for information used to make important decisions, and then enables us to act upon those decisions instantly,” said AES president and CEO Michael H. Hershock. “West Virginia Mentor provides all the tools and resources needed to empower West Virginia families to plan for a higher education – and it’s as simple and convenient as point and click.”

AES is a not-for-profit multifaceted financial aid services organization serving nearly four million students nationally through its guaranty, servicing and financial aid processing systems. The funds generated from its extensive operations are used to improve higher education opportunities and lower the cost of financial assistance for students and families while streamlining the entire process for the higher education community. AES provides 24/7 customer service through its e-Communication Center.

The website address is <http://www.wvapply.com>.

News Release
December 16, 2002

Wise to Host Annual Financial Aid Meetings

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise is meeting with students and parents across the state this week to discuss the various forms of financial aid available to West Virginia students and parents.

“This meeting gives us a chance to look at all the tools available to go to college or get some kind of higher education,” Wise said. “The message I want people to get out of this meeting is that no matter what your income is, there’s a way for you to get some kind of higher education. We can put together the tools – the PROMISE scholarship, state grants, federal assistance, loans, work study – we can find a way for you to receive a higher education.”

More than 80 percent of college students use some form of financial aid. The meeting will include discussions on what kind of aid is available and how to apply.

“Our state’s financial situation will not deter us from our vision for the future – education will remain a top priority,” Wise said. “I’ll take a back seat to no one in the funding that I have put into education and the commitment I have made in terms of teacher pay raises, school service personnel increases, the PROMISE scholarship, needs-based scholarships, the higher education grant and the bill I signed that put \$18 million initially into Higher Education.

“We will not cut back on our seed funding because, at the same time we’re restructuring, we must be helping our state’s economy grow, and that is going to be one of the main charges of this administration. That is why education and economic development are so critical to making sure we aren’t constantly in this financial situation.”

The deadline to apply for the PROMISE Scholarship is January 31, and the deadline for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant is March 1. Both programs require submission of the FAFSA by March 1.

Wise is scheduled to hold a meeting tonight at Woodrow Wilson High School in Raleigh County beginning at 7 p.m. He will hold additional meetings tomorrow at 7 p.m. at Hedgesville High School in Berkeley County and Thursday at 7 p.m. at Fairmont Senior High School in Marion County. Last week Wise met with parents and students at Cabell Midland High School in Huntington.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Governor Wise was a lifelong supporter of providing additional resources to schools and colleges. He paired this with a strong inclination toward greater personal and institutional accountability. Wise made it a point to seek out and highlight the achievements of students and teachers. He supported initiatives that held schools responsible for assuring the success of their students.

News Release
July 2, 2002

West Virginian Named One of America’s Top 10 Youth Volunteers

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today commended Nina Vasan, 17, of Vienna for being named one of America’s top 10 youth volunteers for 2002.

Vasan received a national Prudential Spirit of Community Award for her outstanding volunteer community service. Selected from a field of 28,000 applications across the country, she received \$5,000, an engraved gold medallion and a crystal trophy

for Parkersburg High School. In addition, she will have \$25,000 in toys, clothing and other juvenile products donated in her name to needy children in her area by Kids in Distressed Situations Inc., the national charity of the children's apparel and products industry.

Vasan also was honored May 5 at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, along with James Taylor, 13, of Worthington, West Virginia, and the top two youth volunteers of other states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"Nina and James are excellent examples of West Virginians who care about the world around them," Wise said. "They have taken the initiative, and I thank them for their community service."

Vasan, a recent graduate of Parkersburg High School, founded and is president of a nationwide network of thousands of volunteers in 44 states who support the efforts of the American Cancer Society (ACS). Her organization, ACS Teens, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer research, helped change state tobacco laws and conducted a variety of cancer control programs.

Taylor, a sixth-grader at Monongah Middle School in Monongah, builds bird and bat houses, feeds birds year-round, and gives educational presentations about bats. He also volunteers at a raptor center, where he has built perches and worked on cages.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards were created seven years ago by Prudential and NASSP to encourage youth volunteerism and to identify and reward young role models. Since then, the program has honored more than 40,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

News Release
May 20, 2003

Wise Unveils "West Virginia Achieves"

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today unveiled the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) website and implementation plan logo, West Virginia Achieves.

"West Virginia Achieves is our way of ensuring that every child in the state gets a good education – an education that will guarantee a successful future," said Wise.

Parents and students can visit wvachieves.k12.wv.us to learn more about the plan.

"We want to make sure kids and parents know what is expected of them in light of the No Child Left Behind Act," said State Schools Superintendent David Stewart. "Schools

and teachers are accountable for what a student has or hasn't learned in the classroom. We want everyone to understand the significance of this landmark legislation.”

The Board of Education and the Department of Education will travel to schools across the state to promote West Virginia Achieves.

The No Child Left Behind Act changes the culture of American schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options and teaching students based on what works. Foremost among the four key principles is the insistence of stronger accountability for results.

West Virginia was the ninth state to receive federal approval of its accountability plan. States are expected to develop strong accountability systems, establish high standards and hold all children to the same standards. They must also provide highly qualified teachers.

Governor's Message
September 5, 2003

Education, the Foundation of our Future

Nationally and at state and local levels, Americans of all political persuasions agree education reform must be one of our highest priorities. American students must keep up with their counterparts abroad if we are to compete in the global marketplace. In West Virginia, we are working hard to bring our educational system to a higher level.

Among the most useful tools for improving education are accountability and other reforms for individual schools. Congress recognized this in passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, which requires each state to make significant progress in all areas of educational attainment.

No Child Left Behind will require West Virginia to develop 17 new or updated tests for various grade levels and curriculum subjects. The federal government estimates that West Virginia will have to spend \$41 million to develop and implement these required tests. However, Congress intends to pay only \$34 million.

Since I took office in 2001, West Virginia has faced tough budget issues and reaffirmed our commitment to education. Unlike most states, we ended the most recent fiscal year with a surplus. We have sent thousands of hardworking, bright students to college with the PROMISE Scholarship. Because of our fiscal management, our bond rating remained stable in a recent assessment. And this month, the College Board released statistics showing West Virginia as one of the most improved states in successful completion of Advanced Placement exams.

We have accomplished these successes because financial responsibility and education have been top priorities of my administration. Congress must now match our commitments by fulfilling the promises of the No Child Left Behind legislation. When Congress authored this bill in 2001, the specific authorization for Title I in fiscal year 2004 was \$18.5 billion; currently, the House appears ready to pass a bill funding Title I at a reduced level of \$12.4 billion. The original funding level would fully serve 6.2 million children; the House version leaves more than 2 million of these children behind.

Senator Byrd has again stood up for West Virginia's children by introducing an amendment restoring \$6.1 billion to Title I funding. I have joined with the governors of 24 states in urging Congress to adopt this amendment and keep its promise to America's children.

An estimated 326 schools in West Virginia fall below federal standards. I am committed to improving every child's educational opportunity; I look forward to Congress's cooperation in this difficult but important task.

News Release
September 4, 2003

Wise Announces West Virginia among Leading States in Midwest on Advanced Placement Exams

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the number of West Virginia students who scored three or above on Advanced Placement (AP) exams jumped 11.6 percent in 2003, according to data just released by The College Board.

In the Midwest region, only Iowa posted a higher mark at 15.9 percent. West Virginia also outpaced the national average on scores of three or above by 4.2 percent. A score of three is passing on most AP exams, and students can receive college credit for scores of three or greater.

“The Advanced Placement program is a very important benchmark of student achievement and college preparation, and this information demonstrates that more West Virginia students are recognizing this importance,” said Wise. “We are very proud of our students for their outstanding performance on AP exams and grateful to our teachers who work hard to prepare students for these exams.”

West Virginia also is among the leading states in the Midwest in AP program participation. In 2003, the number of West Virginia high school students taking AP exams jumped 11.3 percent, from 2,781 to 3,096. The total number of AP exams taken by these West Virginia students also rose dramatically, from 4,184 to 4,791—an increase of 14.5 percent. Both increases are the second highest posted among the 13 states in the Midwestern region,

which includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

“The upward trend in our Advanced Placement participation rates is good news, but we must work even harder to bring the benefit of AP classes and exams to all students in West Virginia,” said Kay Goodwin, secretary of Education and the Arts. “I would like to see every West Virginia student be able to take full advantage of the possibilities that AP offers.”

The Center for Professional Development (CPD), an agency of the Department of Education and the Arts, supervises the Advanced Placement program in West Virginia. For more information about AP in West Virginia, please contact Dr. Gail Looney, the executive director of CPD, at 558-0539.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The globalization of the world economy presented great opportunities for West Virginians in the first years of the 21st century. Much of the state’s business depended on exports, particularly in the energy and forest products sectors.

Yet the education system was not oriented toward helping students find a place in a worldwide economy. We appointed a broad-based commission to begin the work of preparing students to be leaders in international efforts.

Executive Order
May 9, 2003

Establishment of the West Virginia Commission on International Education

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 11-03
By the Governor

WHEREAS, the globalization of markets, knowledge, and finance is creating unprecedented economic, trade, educational, and political opportunities and challenges for West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, West Virginia has shared in that globalization by exporting \$2.2 billion in foreign trade in 2001, and

WHEREAS, foreign investments in West Virginia have created approximately 30,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, globalization has led to the integration of cultures, ideas and communications and has increased the overall production and exchange of goods and services worldwide; and

WHEREAS, West Virginia has participated in that integration as host to more than 2,100 foreign students and their families during the 2001-2002 academic year, resulting in a net contribution of \$34.4 million to the State's economy; and

WHEREAS, despite this integration, less than 1.1% of the citizenry of West Virginia is foreign-born, and less than 3% of its population bilingual; and

WHEREAS, fewer than 30% of West Virginia high school students enrolled in a foreign language course during the 2001-2002 academic year; and

WHEREAS, to remain competitive in the global marketplace West Virginia must continue to prepare its students and educators to meet the growing demands of business, government, and society for a workforce and citizenry capable of living and working effectively in a global environment; and

WHEREAS, to meet this competitive challenge, West Virginia's educational community must foster opportunities that enable its students, educators, business community and citizens to attain awareness and understanding of this global environment through increased education in foreign languages, cultures, and issues.

NOW THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Governor of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. The West Virginia Commission on International Education is hereby created.
2. The Commission shall be appointed by the Governor and composed of not less than twelve members, who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor. The Governor, at his discretion, may appoint additional members to the Commission.
3. Serving as members of the Commission shall be
 - a. The Secretary of the Department of Education and the Arts, ex officio, or his or her designee;
 - b. The State Superintendent of Schools, ex officio, or his or her designee;

- c. The Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission, ex officio, or his or her designee;
 - d. The Director of the International Division of the Development Office;
 - e. The Foreign Languages Coordinator of the Department of Education;
 - f. The Executive Director of the West Virginia International School;
 - g. Two faculty members of West Virginia higher education institutions with international expertise and experience;
 - h. Two faculty members of West Virginia K-12 schools, one from grades K-8, one from grades 9-12, with international expertise and experience; and
 - i. Two private sector business representatives with international expertise and experience.
4. The Secretary of the Department of Education and the Arts shall serve as the Chair of the Commission.
5. Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement from the Department of Education and the Arts for necessary expenses incurred during official Commission business.
6. The Commission shall:
- a. Compile a comprehensive inventory of West Virginia's international education resources at all grade levels;
 - b. Develop a strategic plan for how these resources can be used most effectively to increase awareness of foreign languages, cultures, and issues among West Virginia students, educators, businesspeople, and citizens; and
 - c. Deliver a public report on its findings and policy recommendations for promoting international education in West Virginia.
7. The Commission shall meet at least three times prior to the release of its final report, and may hold additional meetings following the release of the report. The location of all Commission meetings shall be distributed across the State to allow for greater geographical access and participation.
8. The Commission may consult with outside experts and receive testimony from the public during its regularly scheduled meetings.
9. The Commission shall release its final public report no later than November 21, 2003. This report shall be shared with the Governor, both Houses of the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the Higher Education Policy Commission.
10. The West Virginia Commission on International Education shall be dissolved on or before May 31, 2004, unless extended by further Order of the Governor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this ninth day of May, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Three, and in the One Hundred Fortieth year of the State.

News Release
June 26, 2003

Wise Announces State Commission, Cyrus Vance Award to Promote International Education in West Virginia

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced the creation of the West Virginia Commission on International Education, a board charged with assessing the current status of international education in West Virginia and making recommendations for increasing the international awareness of students and educators.

The commission consists of educators and administrators from K-12 and postsecondary systems, private businesspeople, and state government officials. Kay Goodwin, secretary of Education and the Arts, will chair the Commission.

“In order to compete in the global economy, protect our homeland security and prepare our students for the future, we need to know and understand more about the world we live in,” Wise said. “This commission will develop a roadmap for increasing the international knowledge and understanding of our students.”

Wise also announced a call for nominations for the 2003 Cyrus R. Vance Award. The Vance Award, named in honor of Clarksburg native and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, recognizes the efforts of an outstanding West Virginia educator or educational organization in the area of international education. The award comes with a \$5,000 prize to assist the winner in developing international education activities. The 2002 Cyrus R. Vance Award winner was Dr. Sudhakar Jamkhandi and the Center for International Understanding at Bluefield State College.

“This award honors one of West Virginia’s most distinguished natives, Cyrus Vance, who dedicated his career to international peace and understanding,” Wise said. “With this award, we also recognize the pioneering efforts of educators to bring the world into our schools and increase the awareness of our students.”

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Governor Wise's efforts on behalf of West Virginia students, teachers and educational institutions attracted the attention of people around the state and outside its borders. He was recognized regionally and nationally as an innovator in shaping the state's responses to education challenges and was called upon by other governors and national officials to contribute to the broad national discussion that was centered around the "No Child Left Behind" initiatives.

News Release
May 5, 2002

'Shatter Stereotypes, Celebrate Our Successes, and Launch Your Careers Here,' Wise Tells WVWC Graduates

BUCKHANNON, W. Va. – Urging West Virginia Wesleyan graduates to shatter stereotypes, Gov. Bob Wise today said those looking for meaningful, challenging careers should look to West Virginia – especially in emerging fields of tourism, international relations, sociology, education and environmental studies.

"We have to think anew," Wise said. "West Virginia presents a whale of an opportunity for launching a truly great career, and for building a legacy so strong that your generation can boast, 'We changed West Virginia.'"

The Governor was awarded an honorary doctorate degree during commencement ceremonies here this morning.

Noting that West Virginia is uniquely challenged by changing demographics, he said "hard work, not bumper sticker slogans," produces results and "anything less would be unworthy of your generation. We're not the first generation to be challenged and we won't be the last."

The Governor noted he is traveling to all 55 counties to present the first PROMISE scholarships to deserving high school seniors as a demonstration of his belief in the importance of a college degree.

"We're able to do this at a time when states are struggling with serious challenges, yet enrollments continue to increase," he said. He noted 73 percent of West Virginians who attend college here stay in the state. "That's why it's critical that we keep building on those numbers," he added.

Many young people enjoy the challenge of building a state, he said, pointing to his reliance on young West Virginians in key posts in his office:

- The Governor's chief of staff, Mike Garrison of Fairmont, is 33 years old.
- Press secretary Amy Schuler Goodwin of Wheeling is 31 years old.
- Federal-state relations liaison Chip Slaven of Grafton is 34 years old.
- Secretary of tax and revenue Brian Kastic is 34.

"He's from Ohio, and I'm proud of that, because it proves we can attract young talent to West Virginia."

He cited educational successes to celebrate, including the fact that average ACT scores in West Virginia are rising twice as fast as the national average, the number of board-certified teachers has grown by 57 percent in two years (one of the fastest growth rates in the nation) and the scores of 4th graders and 8th graders in mathematics are improving.

"West Virginia students have improved their statewide student academic performance more rapidly than others, and much of that is because 98 percent of our schools have Internet access, one of the highest percentages in the country," he said.

"Clearly, higher educational institutions like West Virginia Wesleyan help us maintain our focus." He praised Wesleyan's new criminal justice major as an indication that colleges are adapting to changes in the West Virginia economy, WVWC's 100 percent pass rate for its teacher education graduates and the college's new technology plan.

Governor's Message
July 11, 2003

West Virginia: The Education State

In recent months, West Virginians have tackled many difficult challenges. Thankfully, we have taken significant steps in some of the most important areas of state policy: Workers' Compensation reform, economic development projects, and sound budget management will all help to lay a solid foundation for West Virginia's future prosperity.

We must never forget, however, that what will always make a community great are its people. The citizens of tomorrow's West Virginia must be ready to face challenges unknown today, and they must have the skills to succeed in a 21st century workplace. It is for this reason that I consider our investment in education to be the cornerstone of West Virginia's economic development strategy.

Since I took office in 2001, I have focused on education at all levels. The PROMISE Scholarship, unfunded until 2001, has sent thousands of qualified students to college, many

who otherwise couldn't afford to attend, and others who would have attended school out of state. By creating opportunity for all students and keeping our brightest young minds here at home, we are creating a generation of skilled and educated workers.

The recent special session of the Legislature presented opportunities to renew my commitment to educational progress. Classified employees of higher education institutions deserve our thanks for making state colleges and universities great places to learn – we can now recognize them by funding pay increases, especially for those workers who have many years of service in higher education.

Funds also were secured to continue the Governor's Honors Academy, hosted this year by Marshall University, and the Governor's School for the Arts at West Virginia University. These programs have been a great success story, exposing talented high school students from all parts of the state to a college atmosphere. For the second year in a row, WVU is also hosting the Governor's School for Math and Science. Programs like these help bridge the gap between high school and higher education and are great recruiting tools for our colleges and universities.

I pushed for investments in every level of education, from \$1 million in safe schools funding to \$1 million in ongoing research grants. No longer will working students be at a disadvantage when applying for financial aid – an additional \$1 million is earmarked for grants to part-time students. We're investing in community and technical colleges and doing our part to meet the challenges of the No Child Left Behind Act.

We are able to fund these programs because of prudent financial management, and this is a continuation of that philosophy. This investment will pay off for generations to come.

Governor's Message
August 15, 2003

Education: The Future of the South

Each state in the union faces its own unique challenges. A western state may be dealing with a drought as we, in West Virginia, recover from deadly flooding. One state may have a shortage of teachers, another too few doctors. Each year, lawmakers in every state and territory work on the issues and problems that face their constituents. While challenges vary from state to state, working together, we can learn from one another.

For this reason, the Southern Governors' Association, formed in 1934, works year-round identifying the challenges southern states face and forming strategies for success. SGA's membership is composed of governors of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia and West Virginia.

It is my pleasure this year to be the first West Virginia governor to chair this fine organization and host the SGA annual meeting September 21-23 here in Charleston.

Southern states have changed much since 1934. In many communities, traditional manufacturing jobs are declining and new high-tech industries are blossoming. Even the smallest southern towns are now linked by commerce and communication to the global marketplace.

The member states of SGA must adapt to the realities of a technology-based economy. The most vital component will be education. For this reason, I have made "Higher Education Access: The Bridge to Economic Prosperity" my Chairman's Initiative for 2003.

West Virginia and our fellow SGA member states are blessed with some of the finest higher education institutions in the world. Our colleges and universities consistently produce some of the most desired graduates, especially in emerging fields like biotechnology.

We also have made great strides in our public school systems. Graduation rates are up, and we are working hard to prepare students for college and the 21st century work force. We must ensure that these bright young people have access to the training they need to succeed. Scholarship programs, both need-based like the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program and merit-based efforts like the PROMISE Scholarship, are some of the most important tools in increasing access to higher education.

There is much more we can do, especially with the miracles of modern technology. With broadband Internet access, rural residents can access world-class lectures from home or library computers, and small local schools can utilize the same research tools as major universities. Prospective students can be matched with schools, educators and financial aid programs from around the nation.

We also are modernizing our financial aid programs to meet the needs of West Virginia's population. We've made it easier for part-time students, many of whom are working and raising families, to secure the assistance they need to further their education. The Higher Education Adult Part-time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program is one of only a few nationwide directed specifically at the needs of non-traditional college students.

Our educational strategy, both as a state and on a national level, must reach all segments of our communities. Education should be available to all who desire and require it; in the end, it is a wise investment in our future.

Working together, the members of SGA will utilize new technologies and innovative financial aid policies to link two of our most valuable resources: our young students who are eager to learn and our top-notch educational institutions. As a result, we will build the south of the future into the best it can be.

Wise, Governors Urge Congress to Increase Education Funding

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and 24 of the nation’s governors sent a letter to Congress today asking the Senate to increase education funding to states and local school districts.

“We strongly support accountability and higher standards, but we cannot accept unfunded mandates and broken promises,” Wise said. “This is about all children deserving the best possible education. If Congress does not fully fund this act, poor children in rural and urban schools will be left behind.”

It is estimated that 326 schools in West Virginia fall below federal standards. To comply with all the terms of NCLB, the state needs to develop or augment a total of 17 different tests for different grade levels and academic subjects. To create the most effective tests, the General Accounting Office estimates West Virginia will need to spend \$43 million between now and 2008; however, West Virginia will receive only \$31 million from the federal government.

“We are deeply concerned that the funding levels for educating disadvantaged students and children with disabilities remain far below the levels promised in the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,” the governors wrote in the letter.

Funding levels passed in the House FY2004 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriation bill are significantly below the levels contained in the 2004 Budget Resolution passed by Congress earlier this year.

When Congress wrote the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, it authorized specific funding levels for Title I for every year through fiscal year 2012. The authorized amount for fiscal year 2004 is \$18.5 billion. That is enough to fully serve 6.2 million needy children, according to the Congressional Research Service. This bill provides just \$12.4 billion – only enough to fully serve 4.1 million children.

Senator Robert C. Byrd offered an amendment Tuesday that would make good on Congress’s promise to fully fund the Title I program providing an additional \$6.1 billion in funding.

“Senator Byrd can always be counted on to fight for West Virginia’s children,” Wise said. “His efforts to urge Congress to keep its promise to the states are appreciated across the country.”

“We have come a long way in working to provide quality education for our children – we continue to have a long way to go,” the letter stated. “We look to Congress to

honor its commitments to provide adequate federal resources for the education mandate it has imposed on states.”

News Release
April 22, 2004

Wise Praises Gates Foundation Grant

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today praised the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for awarding a \$390,000 grant to help southern governors begin to the process of creating high-performing rural schools that ultimately improve graduation and college-going rates throughout the South, an effort he initiated during last year’s Southern Governors’ Association’s annual meeting in Charleston.

The project, *New Traditions: Options for Rural High School Excellence*, will focus on providing southern state education leaders new ways of meeting the challenge of improving struggling rural schools, most notably by identifying a range of successful schools that can be emulated and replicated. “This grant is going to help provide funds to identify successful high school models and give southern governors direction on how to duplicate them,” Wise said. We will be able to learn from each other to find innovative solutions to a growing problem.

A group of key education advisors appointed by governors from SGA-member states will have the opportunity to visit a variety of small high schools throughout the country to learn how they have been able to raise achievement, graduate more of their students and send them off to college, despite facing obstacles that are similar to those faced by many rural schools in southern states. The project will also help identify high-performing rural schools in the South, providing state leaders with an opportunity to learn from successful schools that are close to home.

According to the Manhattan Institute, one-third of eighth graders in America today do not graduate from high school, and, of those who do graduate, less than half are prepared for college. The problem is even greater for minorities, with nearly half of all African-American and Hispanic students not making it to graduation day.

Rural high schools, like those in urban areas, struggle with high dropout rates and confront many of the same problems. Their populations are racially diverse, many of their students live in poverty, schools are hard to staff and their budgets are limited. Yet, to date, high school reform efforts have, in large part, focused on big city schools.

“We’ve got to increase the number of poor and minority young people who graduate high school and go on to college, and that means concentrating more of our efforts in the rural South,” said Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education for the Bill &

Melinda Gates Foundation. “There’s no question that governors in the South have the will and the ability to do what it takes to help graduate more students that are prepared for college and work.”

The final report for this project will be released and discussed at the Southern Governors’ Association’s 70th Annual Meeting, September 12-14, hosted by 2003-4 SGA Chairman Governor Mark R. Warner in Richmond, Va.

News Release
February 23, 2004

Governor Wise Meets With President Bush, Cabinet Members About Medicaid And No Child Left Behind

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined other governors in meetings with President George W. Bush and key cabinet members during the annual National Governors Association meeting.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson talked with the governors about Medicaid and Education Secretary Rod Paige discussed No Child Left Behind. The governors also met with Secretary of Commerce Don Evans; Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao; Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Secretary of Treasury John Snow.

Wise expressed concern with federal proposals that would reduce the amount of money available for Medicaid payments and noted that West Virginia must be on a level playing field with other states.

“In today’s health care climate, states must fight for every dollar available in reimbursement,” Wise said. “People in Washington need to understand our dire financial situation and work with us.”

Wise also renewed his call for federal support of No Child Left Behind.

“When we are facing budget shortfalls and being forced to make cuts, this gap between federal money and federal mandates puts West Virginia and every state in a very difficult situation,” Wise said. “I support higher standards, but we need funding to implement this plan.”

Wise noted West Virginia has been working toward higher standards and better accountability for several years and added that West Virginia is one of only 14 states to have standards-based exams at all grade levels and in every core subject.

Secretary Goodwin to Receive National Public Service Award

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary of Education and the Arts and a lifelong advocate for higher education and the arts in West Virginia, has been selected to receive a 2004 National Public Service Award from the National Academy of Public Administrators.

Known as the “Nobel Prize of Public Service,” the annual award is designed to honor individuals who make outstanding contributions and whose accomplishments can be viewed as models of public service within and outside the work environment.

In supporting Goodwin’s nomination, Wise wrote, “Her position as cabinet secretary is the capstone of a lifetime of public service . . . I believe she is richly deserving of recognition for her contributions to her home state of West Virginia. It is rare to be able to say with conviction that an entire state is a better place because of the efforts of a single person. Kay Goodwin is that rare person.”

J. Michael Mullen, chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission, wrote in his letter of support for the nomination, “As a higher education policy leader in three states over 30 years, I have had the privilege of working with a handful of excellent public servants who were deeply committed to making a difference in the lives of all citizens. . . . Even among these colleagues, Kay Goodwin stands out as an exemplar of commitment, dedication, and excellence in public service.”

Prior to her appointment as cabinet secretary, Goodwin held a variety of leadership positions in higher education and the arts, including chairman of the University of West Virginia System Board of Trustees; chairman of the West Virginia Humanities Council; and chairman of the West Virginia Commission on the Arts.

Goodwin also was appointed by President George H.W. Bush in 1990 to the National Independent Commission to Review the Grantsmaking Procedures of the National Endowment for the Arts. Among her many accolades, Goodwin has received honorary degrees from Glenville State College and West Virginia State College; the WVU Outstanding Alumna Award; the WVU President’s Distinguished Service Award; and the Distinguished West Virginian Award.

Goodwin and three others will receive the 2004 NPSA Awards during a national conference of public administrators in Portland, Oregon, on Monday, March 29. The award comes with a Steuben crystal eagle and engraved wooden base.

News Release
September 14, 2004

Wise Honored by Southern Governors; Addresses Panel on Merit-based Scholarships

RICHMOND, Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today was honored by fellow southern governors for four years of leadership and participation in the Southern Governors' Association.

Wise, who is the only West Virginian to serve as SGA chair, hosted the conference last year in Charleston.

"I am honored to have been a part of such a worthwhile organization that allows governors to join together in a bipartisan manner to discuss issues that affect the South," Wise said. "I've learned many things from my colleagues and hope they have learned from me."

Wise also participated in a discussion about merit-based scholarships and their role in the South, including the PROMISE Scholarship and the Georgia HOPE scholarship.

"The PROMISE Scholarship is changing the way we view education in the Mountain State," Wise told the panelists. "More of our students want to stay in West Virginia and they're working harder to do it."

News Release
January 7, 2004

Wise Announces West Virginia Tops in Education Reform Survey

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that West Virginia is the valedictorian of school reform. According to Quality Counts 2004, a report compiled by Education Week, West Virginia's cumulative grade in areas such as accountability and standards, teacher quality and school climate leads the nation.

Quality Counts 2004 examines the complexities of bringing all children, including those with disabilities, to high performance levels of state testing.

"Education is at the top of my priority list," said Wise. "We've worked diligently to ensure a quality education for all West Virginia students. The Quality Counts report confirms that West Virginia is headed in the right direction."

West Virginia received an “A” under the Standards and Accountability section of the report. The high mark is because of West Virginia’s addition of standards-based exams, called the WESTEST, at all grade levels in math, science and social studies. West Virginia is one of 14 states to have such exams in every core subject and grade span.

West Virginia also received an “A” under the Resources section. Nearly 75 percent of students in the state are in districts that spend at least the national average per pupil. West Virginia spent \$8,400 per student in the 2000 – 01 school year.

West Virginia received a “B-” under both Improving Teacher Quality and School Climate. “Quality Counts” reports that the state requires its teachers to pass a full battery of tests to earn their initial licenses and West Virginia also outperforms other states in the level of positive parent involvement.

“The Governor’s Office, the Legislature and the Board of Education have been working together to improve the quality of education for all the students in West Virginia,” said State Superintendent of Schools David Stewart. “Obviously, this collaborative effort is paying off.”

In addition, “Quality Counts” reports that a higher percentage of students in West Virginia attend small schools at the elementary, middle and high schools levels. For example, the average elementary class size in the state is smaller than most nationwide classrooms, at 19.4 pupils.

Education Week is a weekly education publication distributed nationwide. The eighth annual “Quality Counts” report was compiled with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Chapter 3

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

Bob Wise began his term in office determined to concentrate on reviving West Virginia's ailing economy and revitalizing its education system. He achieved many of his goals in these areas. Yet he spent far more time during his four years in office on issues of public safety and security. The repeated and devastating floods that struck early and often required a massive shift of state resources into emergency management. And in the days and months following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, West Virginians looked to their state government and its leader for guidance, for action, and for preparedness to face the next disaster.

Wise was taking action to combat the threats of domestic and international terrorism before September 11 and had organized a group within his administration to consult with experts on homeland security. In July, 2001 – two months before the attacks – Wise was the keynote speaker at a large gathering of homeland security experts organized by the bipartisan National Governor's Association. The speech was not widely noted at the time but is of particular interest in light of the events that followed.

At the hour of the September 11 attacks, Wise was in Kentucky at another Governors' meeting. He, like most of the other Governors there, was grounded by the national ban on air travel that was instituted not long after the World Trade Center was hit. His State Police detail rushed him back to Charleston by car, where he took personal charge of the state's response in the days and weeks that followed.

This section of the Governor's papers also includes additional public safety measures taken by Governor Wise, including the response to forest fires and other disasters, the restriction on illegal gambling, coal truck safety and the state's first ATV safety initiative.

HOMELAND SECURITY ADDRESS

Governor Bob Wise
Keynote Address
National Governors' Association
Summit on Domestic Terrorism/Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.
July 10, 2001

Over the next two days, as you carry out the work of this Policy Summit on Domestic Terrorism, I am sure that you will find much to learn from your counterparts in other states. You are the experts in this field – the people we as governors depend upon for advice and action in our darkest hours. You are also the people who can do the most to prevent – and to prepare for – acts which can threaten our citizens, our institutions and our natural resources.

Now that I am a governor rather than a Congressman, I can start to complain about the slow and cumbersome federal bureaucracy. But I have nothing but praise for the response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in responding to the flooding that has struck my state twice already this year.

The first floods struck in May. So far, more than 1,700 West Virginia families have registered for help by calling on the FEMA's toll free hotline. About 1,300 homes have been inspected and more than \$3 million in aid delivered to families, businesses and local governments.

Last weekend, we were again struck by torrential rains that caused flash flooding in a wide area of the state. FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh deserves special thanks from all of the West Virginians who were struck by these tragedies. He showed that government can be responsive – and truly helpful – to people in need. He has been in personal contact with our state's disaster team and has made sure we have immediate access to crucial federal resources.

Floods, hurricanes, forest fires and other natural disasters are something for which we in West Virginia – and the leaders of most states – have developed good emergency responses. We work hand-in-hand with our federal counterparts and have a fairly good set of resources at our disposal for planning, training, response and recovery.

But there are other threats for which we are far less prepared.

The Cold War is over. But we now must be ready to meet some new threats – particularly man-made threats that grow out of the increasing vulnerability of our people and resources to acts of terrorism and violence.

The tragedy in Oklahoma City and the bombing of the World Trade Center are two prime

examples of this threat. But each governor in the NGA could tell you nightmare scenarios in his or her home state.

For us in West Virginia, we are concerned with the security of our chemical industry. In the Kanawha Valley – just a couple of miles from the State Capitol and in the midst of our largest urban area – is one of the nation’s largest concentrations of chemical manufacturing facilities. We have had accidental releases of chemicals from time to time – and we have developed response strategies for these.

But are we prepared for deliberate assaults on our chemical safety systems? As Governor, do I have the resources – the trained personnel, the infrastructure and the command system – to respond to such an attack?

I have been introduced to a new term lately by West Virginia’s emergency planners: Homeland Security.

Homeland Security is our response to those who would threaten to disrupt our society with acts of violence – it also includes our response to threats like:

- Natural disasters
- Weapons of mass destruction
- Narcotics trafficking

States are primarily responsible for training and certification of emergency responders and local law enforcement personnel. For example, 95% of law enforcement is at the state and local levels. But resources are scattered and uneven.

As new threats arise – biological, nuclear, cyberterror, etc. – states will need to develop and share more of their expertise. Local and state agencies are often the last to have access to technologies developed at the Federal level. Federal resources are required to assist in the research, educating, training and certification of the first and emergency responders.

The states have the most crucial roles in domestic preparedness and response to emergencies. We can divide the state’s roles into three categories: planning, response and recovery.

Disaster planning: Effective disaster planning is localized, with state and local governments having primary responsibility for establishing networks of responders, identifying and maintaining emergency response infrastructure (vehicles, protective gear, firefighting equipment, etc.). Disaster planning also includes strategies to avoid and prevent disasters from occurring. Large-scale incidents will require multi-state and national response. States must be a part of planning for such events.

Disaster response: First responders are always local and state. States need assistance in financing, organizing and maintaining systems for responding to disasters; they also may need assistance during a disaster in effectively mobilizing and deploying resources.

Disaster recovery: States are the most experienced level of government in dealing with the aftermath of emergencies. FEMA, as I have said, is particularly helpful, both financially and operationally, in helping communities and individuals recover from an event. But we could

benefit from an integrated knowledge base that would allow state officials to draw upon experiences of other states and localities in establishing a recovery operation in the shortest possible time frame.

How can states improve preparedness and response to disasters?

The answer is in better organization and in taking advantage of new information and communications technologies to integrate:

- Military resources
- Law enforcement
- First responders
- Emergency response agencies
- Higher education institutions
- Private sector resources and technology

We realize that in the event of a major threat to our homeland security, our military and civilian personnel will be required to work as a team, so we believe they should train and prepare as a team.

This presents some serious difficulties in rural areas, where volunteer fire and rescue personnel form the first line of defense in any emergency. Most of these volunteers cannot leave their home communities for extended training, and it is crucial to bring the training to them.

But professionals in law enforcement and emergency services also could benefit from a more fully integrated training system. There are more than seven and a half million first and emergency responders on call for us, right now, across the nation – and each of them could benefit from a more complete and accessible system for training on these issues.

In addition, there is a large body of knowledge in place, particularly among the federal agencies that have had to respond to acts of terror at home and abroad, that could be of critical importance to state officials in each phase of homeland security.

Meetings like this one – which bring together the top people in each state who deal with issues of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery – are vital to building and maintaining a coordinated network of state and federal resources.

But we must also build a system for homeland security that involves those on the front lines – all seven million, in each of the more than 3,000 counties across the United States.

I know that these are issues to which you have devoted considerable time and effort, and I thank you.

As the Governor of a state which has benefited mightily from such efforts – and has contributed greatly to homeland security as well – I thank you for inviting me to this event, and for the work you do, each day, to keep us safe in each of the states.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 AND AFTERMATH

Press Release

September 11, 2001– 12:44 p.m.

Governor Closes Capitol Complex

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has requested that all state employees leave the Capitol complex in an orderly fashion as soon as possible. Because of today's events, there has been heightened concern over the safety of the employees and their families. In order to keep telephone lines clear for emergency communication, we are shutting down state offices at the Capitol Complex and requesting that people not use phones in the complex for other than urgent communication.

Statement from Governor Bob Wise

September 11, 2001 – 5 p.m.

As Americans, we in West Virginia are shocked, saddened and angered by the terrorist events today. This was a callous act of war that will remain forever in our hearts and memories. Our prayers are with the dead, the injured and the families who have been stricken.

Because of the concern and uncertainty in the hours following the tragedies of the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, I directed the state offices in the Capitol Complex be evacuated. I greatly appreciate the professionalism and dedication of all the public employees who stayed at their posts despite their concerns.

Although there have been no specific, credible threats to any government or private buildings in West Virginia, we have been stepping up security precautions at the Capitol and elsewhere, and have been in contact with businesses to offer whatever assistance is necessary to secure their facilities.

Today, I met with the members of our state's Joint Task Force on Terrorism, led by the FBI and including our State Police, National Guard, the Office of Emergency Services, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and other public safety agencies. We are in constant contact with the federal authorities. We are developing security plans for both the public and private sectors.

I have instructed all public safety agencies to remain on 24-hour alert until further notice, and to remain in constant contact with Federal agencies so that we can react instantly if there is any change in the situation.

We must remain vigilant. We will secure our state buildings overnight, and intend to operate the State Government at full strength tomorrow.

There will be some inconvenience tomorrow as we implement increased security measures at the Capitol and elsewhere. I am certain that West Virginians will understand the need for these measures.

We will be operating tomorrow as usual. We will be operating under increased vigilance and security, but we will not permit terrorist acts to succeed in halting the operations of a free and democratic government.

I ask all West Virginians to join with me in prayer for the victims of today's acts.

Proclamation
September 13, 2001

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
At Charleston
A PROCLAMATION
By the Governor**

WHEREAS, George W. Bush, President of the United States, issued a Proclamation on September 13, 2001, relating the attack and series of despicable acts of war on America on September 11, 2001 and the carnage and destruction in New York City, Washington, D.C., and the countryside of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, President Bush proclaimed that civilized people around the world denounce the evildoers who devised and executed these attacks, and stated that all resources of the United States and our cooperating friends and allies will pursue those responsible and punish them severely, until justice is done; and

WHEREAS, President Bush proclaimed that all citizens of these United States mourn with those who have suffered great and disastrous loss and pray for healing and for the strength to serve and encourage one another in hope and faith; and

WHEREAS, President Bush called upon every American family and the family of America to observe a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, honoring the memory of the

thousands of victims of these brutal attacks and comforting those who lost loved ones, and proclaimed that we will persevere, will find healing and recovery, and, in the face of evil, will remain strong and united, One Nation Under God; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush, President of the United States, by virtue of the authority vested in him by the Constitution and laws of the United States, proclaimed Friday, September 14, 2001, as a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of West Virginia, and in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation issued this day, **DECLARE** that the State of West Virginia shall join the nation on Friday, September 14, 2001, in a Day of Prayer and Remembrance in West Virginia, commemorated by our citizens and places of worship, and mark this day with noontime memorial services, the ringing of bells at that hour, and evening candlelight remembrance vigils, and encourage all employers across West Virginia to permit their workers to join others during the noon hour to pray for our land and share our grief.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this Thirteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-ninth year of the State.

Press Release
September 14, 2001

“West Virginia Gives” to Coordinate Volunteer Aid; N.Y. State Seeks Donations

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – At the request of the White House, Gov. Bob Wise has designated the West Virginia Gives organization to coordinate all West Virginia offers of volunteers to the victims of terrorism in New York and at the Pentagon.

“If you have resources to offer, please call 888-WVGIVES (888-984-4837) to see how to best get the help to the people in need,” Wise said.

The phone bank will be staffed from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week for at least the next several weeks.

Wise participated in a White House conference call Thursday with governors from

across the nation. FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh, Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta, FAA Director Jane Garvey and Deputy Attorney General Larry Thomson each briefed the governors on the recovery effort and offered the President's thanks for the efforts that the states had initiated.

"The tremendous outpouring of support from across the nation has been a true inspiration to all New Yorkers as we work to recover from Tuesday's outrageous terrorist attack," New York Gov. George E. Pataki said.

Federal officials asked each governor to designate a coordinator and a single point of contact for people and organizations in their states that want to help. Wise has appointed Joe Martin, the state's secretary of military affairs and public safety, to coordinate West Virginia volunteers.

"Hundreds of emergency and medical professionals have already indicated their willingness to help wherever they are needed," Wise said. "By establishing a coordinating agency to organize their efforts, we can help alleviate confusion and bottlenecks in getting help to those who need it."

Those who wish to make a cash contribution to disaster relief can direct it to: **New York State World Trade Center Relief Fund; P.O. Box 5028, Albany, NY 12205.**

"We welcome all pledges of support to the newly established New York State World Trade Center Relief Fund, which will provide critical support for our ongoing disaster relief and victim assistance efforts," Pataki said. "The support we receive from compassionate and patriotic residents of West Virginia will never be forgotten by the people of New York State."

The fund will support the World Trade Center emergency response and victim support. New York has established a toll-free donations line, (800) 801-8092; however, Pataki suggested mailing donations rather than calling because the line has been swamped with callers from across the country.

Executive Order
Sept. 28, 2001

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
At Charleston**

**A PROCLAMATION
By the Governor**

WHEREAS, agents of terrorist groups have destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City, attacked the Pentagon Building in northern Virginia, and created a situation that led to a commercial aircraft crash in western Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, many thousands of innocent citizens were killed or wounded as a result of those attacks; and

WHEREAS, the chief tools used in these terrible attacks were commercial aircraft that were hijacked and transformed into piloted explosive devices; and

WHEREAS, evidence exists to suggest that other commercial aircrafts were targeted for use in similar criminal acts;

WHEREAS, the President of the United States, George W. Bush, has called upon all state governors to mobilize the National Guard to boost security at the nation's airports until permanent security measures can be put in place; and

WHEREAS, this call has been issued as the United States of America is now engaged in a war on terrorism entitled "Operation Enduring Freedom;" and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby **FIND AND DECLARE** that:

A State of Emergency exists at West Virginia's commercial airports; and

This State of Emergency shall continue to exist until the completion of "Operation Enduring Freedom" or otherwise discontinued by proclamation.

In addition, I also **ORDER** that:

The West Virginia National Guard be activated under the authority of §15-1D-1 of the West Virginia Code for the purpose of performing security functions at various checkpoints at West Virginia's commercial airports;

The members of the West Virginia National Guard called for active service under this order be armed to perform these security functions;

These members in active service may use all appropriate force to carry out their duties as authorized under the West Virginia Code.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Twenty-eighth Day of September, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-ninth year of the State.

GOVERNOR
By the Governor

SECRETARY OF STATE

Press release
October 7, 2001

Wise Activates Plan to Protect State

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise met with law enforcement and emergency services officials Sunday afternoon and activated an emergency plan developed in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington. West Virginians can expect to encounter a more visible security presence in many places now that hostilities have begun.

“Our hearts and prayers are with those Americans, including many West Virginians, who are placing themselves in harm’s way today to protect us against terror,” Wise said. “They have our united and unconditional support.”

The enemies faced by the United States today, Wise added, are unlike those in previous conflicts. “We have been attacked in the very heart of our country, and must take action at home to protect our communities, our industries and our natural resources.”

At Sunday’s meeting, Wise and Joe Martin, secretary for military affairs and public safety, were briefed by leaders of the State Police, the Office of Emergency Services, the National Guard, the Fire Marshal, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Natural Resources. Wise ordered these and all other state agencies to a higher level of alert, in accordance with an emergency plan developed over the last month to provide protection against any possible acts of retaliation.

The State Capitol will be closed to visitors Monday and state employees who are scheduled to work during the holiday will encounter extra security. Officials will use the Columbus Day holiday to tighten protection around the building. State offices will operate on a full schedule Tuesday.

“We will provide a police presence at many vital installations and locations around West Virginia,” the governor said. “We have been in continuous contact with the Defense Department to coordinate our efforts with theirs.” In addition to the visible security measures, other actions, as recommended by law enforcement agencies at the federal and state level, have been taken across the state.

Wise plans to visit six airports in West Virginia Monday to inspect the security measures put in place over the weekend with the assistance of the West Virginia National Guard.

Press Release
Oct. 8, 2001

Wise Promises Cooperation with Ridge

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today said that the new assistant to the President for homeland security, Tom Ridge, will get the cooperation he needs from the nation's governors to protect Americans in their homes and workplaces.

“Tom Ridge was my colleague in Congress, beginning in 1983, and for the last nine months we have been fellow governors,” Wise said. “I know that he is well qualified and will devote himself fully to this new mission, and all Americans have an obligation to assist him however we can.”

Wise says Ridge's experience as governor of Pennsylvania will give him an extra level of credibility with the state officials who are primarily responsible for responses to emergencies and threats.

“Most governors were thinking about homeland security in some way before Sept. 11,” said Wise, who was the keynote speaker at a National Governors' Association conference on the subject earlier this year. “But since that date it has moved much higher on everyone's priority list.”

Ridge, who was sworn in today, will face the challenge of coordinating dozens of federal agencies which each have responsibility for some facet of anti-terrorism activity. “We know that to be effective, we will have to cut through the bureaucratic walls that sometimes slow down the actions of governments,” Wise said. “We will do that on the state level, and I know that Governor Ridge will do it on the national level.”

Wise spent most of Monday touring commercial airports in West Virginia and meeting the National Guard troops who are providing additional security in passenger check-in areas. He was accompanied by Secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety Joe Martin and Adjutant General Allen Tackett.

Governor's Weekly Message
October 12, 2001

Protecting Our Home
By Governor Bob Wise

I had the solemn experience on Oct. 10 of visiting the site of the World Trade Center with Governor Pataki of New York and several other governors. Walking the ground where so many Americans died at the hands of terrorists, and so many brave firefighters and police gave their lives to save others, renewed my appreciation for the West Virginians

who place themselves in harm's way in our defense.

Right now, across the world and within our state, men and women are at work protecting our home, the state of West Virginia.

A number of National Guard members have been mobilized to take part in homeland security – including security at our state's airports – and in military action directed by the President. Their families at home deserve our support, and I have instructed all state agencies to make sure that every available benefit is provided to any Guard family that is in need.

Our state and local police, firefighters and other agencies have been at a heightened state of alert since Sept. 11. We have asked many public employees to work extra hours, cancel vacations and days off, and assume extra duties in defense of our public buildings, highways, utilities and industries.

Each of these people, recognizing the challenges faced by our nation at this critical time, has done what has been asked. In the weeks and months to come, there will be new challenges, and we will respond to any threat swiftly and firmly.

There is a renewed spirit of patriotism and duty everywhere in our state. It crosses all the lines that our adversaries may think would divide us – race, religious faith, age, geography and politics.

West Virginians are united. We are safe. We are determined. We continue with our jobs, our family lives, our educational activities, and our community and civic life under the watchful protection provided by the people who serve our state and nation.

Press Release
Nov. 8, 2001

Wise, Southern Governors, Ask Homeland Aid

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Thirteen southern governors, acting at the urging of Gov. Bob Wise, are seeking federal assistance in meeting the increased costs of security in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The bipartisan Southern Governors' Association (SGA) dispatched a letter to President George W. Bush Thursday seeking aid to states for the costs of protecting citizens and property that could become terror targets.

West Virginia, like other states, has incurred large unexpected costs as a result

of the high level of alert that has been in place since September. “Our law enforcement personnel have been working overtime, we’ve called up National Guard troops, and we’ve asked state employees to patrol and protect our highways, bridges, waterways and public buildings,” Wise said. “Every governor knows the front line in this conflict is at our front door and has placed resources where they were needed to protect public safety.”

Most of the new security measures, the governors contend, are not temporary. “The entire concept of security has changed permanently,” Wise said. “The states are facing this unavoidable increased responsibility at a time of decreasing state revenue. We must work together to make sure that the challenge of homeland security is met effectively in every state.”

Wise met recently with U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, to discuss some of the efforts that West Virginia has been making to step up security. Byrd has proposed a \$20 billion homeland security package that includes significant aid to states for these costs.

The letter was signed by Wise, second vice chairman of the SGA, and the governors of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia and the Virgin Islands.

Press release
Nov. 15, 2001

West Virginia Guard to Establish Terror Response Team

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia will establish a 22-member National Guard team to respond to terrorist incidents, Gov. Bob Wise said today.

“This is a program we supported before Sept. 11, and one which has been made even more urgent by current events,” Wise said. “We will move quickly to establish a National Guard support team that can offer expert assistance to local police and fire agencies responding to potential weapons of mass destruction. This fills a critical need in our state’s plan to protect citizens from terrorism.”

The unit will be based in Charleston.

The Pentagon announced today that five states, including West Virginia, have been approved for the National Guard’s Weapons of Mass Destruction – Civil Support Teams. This will bring to 32 the number of states with this type of protective unit. The federal government will provide equipment and training.

“If there is an incident and this team is called in, they will help local officials assess the situation, provide medical and operational support, and establish communications links with federal agencies,” Wise said. “The State of New York used such a team in the response to the World Trade Center attack.”

Each member of the team will get nine months of intensive training, which will include standard first-responder training and special military skills required to respond to terrorist attacks.

Press Release
November 21, 2001

Wise Signs Bill to Exempt Military Pay from Personal Income Tax

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today signed H.B. 605 that will exempt the active duty pay of guard members and reservists from West Virginia personal income tax while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom or in domestic security.

“Since the September 11 attacks on America, we have seen West Virginia’s sons and daughters leave our state to serve,” said Wise. “These men and women have left home without knowing when they will be returning.”

The exemption will be retroactive to guard members and reservists who have been called into active duty within the past several months.

“This is our gift of thanks this Thanksgiving,” said Wise. “We owe so much to these men and women and are so thankful for the job they do with such pride.”

Press Release
November 6, 2001

Executive Order Allows National Guard Troops to Receive Extended Benefits

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today signed an executive order that will allow the Public Employees Insurance Agency to make available health and life insurance benefits to full-time public employees currently covered by PEIA.

“Since the September 11 terrorists attack on America, we have seen West Virginia sons and daughters called into action,” said Wise. “Some of these servicemen and women have left not knowing when they will return, and for some their departure will mean a harsh financial impact by jeopardizing their income and valuable health and life insurance. This executive order will now give them options regarding their coverage.”

Last week, Wise signed House Bill 604, which allows state employees up to 60 working days paid leave when employees are called to serve by the president.

Public employee members who currently have PEIA health care insurance coverage and benefits for themselves and their families may continue coverage while on active military duty by paying their premium share of their respective benefits. Employer participants in PEIA will continue to pay premiums for basic life insurance for their public employee members who are on military duty. Public employees with optional life insurance may continue coverage by paying their premium share.

Press Release
Dec. 7, 2001

Wise Asks Citizens to Commemorate Sept. 11 Attacks

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has asked West Virginians to join together in a singing the National Anthem and observing a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. Dec. 11, exactly three months after the attack that began the current worldwide struggle against terrorism.

Wise will join his staff and others in a brief ceremony on the river side of the State Capitol. He encouraged state and private employers, schools and community groups to gather people together at the same moment for similar commemorations.

President George W. Bush has asked countries across the world to hold remembrance events and to play their national anthems or other appropriate music at the exact moment the first airplane struck the World Trade Center in New York. All U.S. embassies, posts and agencies around the world have also been asked to participate.

Wise Encourages Counties to Support West Virginia Watch, Discloses Toll-Free Number

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today that West Virginia Watch, a program that allows citizens to assist law enforcement officers with keeping the state free of terrorist acts, is up and running.

Wise disclosed the toll-free statewide telephone number, 1-800-352-0927, that citizens may call if they see suspicious activity taking place in their communities.

Wise promoted the program Monday in Charleston, Huntington, Parkersburg and Wheeling.

“West Virginians all across the state have volunteered to help fight terrorism. And many of our residents have specifically volunteered to help by becoming West Virginia Watch members,” said Wise. “The response to this program has been impressive and encouraging.”

Through West Virginia Watch, responsible citizens are urged to assist police with surveillance of industrial plants, businesses, gas lines, waterways, bridges and other critical structures and natural resources. West Virginia Watch members will patrol designated areas and report suspicious activity to intelligence analysts, who will be staffing the toll-free phone lines. Citizens who are not West Virginia Watch members may also call in tips to the toll-free number.

The toll-free line is being staffed about 16 hours a day. Within a month, the toll-free number is scheduled to be available 24 hours per day, said State Police Superintendent Howard Hill.

Wise on Monday also introduced West Virginia Watch’s statewide coordinator, Jeffery Thompson, a six-year State Police trooper. Thompson is a community liaison officer for the West Virginia State Police.

Wise recently asked county commissions to appoint county West Virginia Watch coordinators. These volunteer coordinators will be asked to encourage responsible citizens to participate in this program and to cooperate with the state coordinator.

West Virginia Watch members will not have law enforcement authority, nor will they carry firearms.

West Virginia Watch

It's certainly safe to say that the events of Sept. 11 changed West Virginia.

The tragedies that took place so near our state borders served as a wake-up call. Because of the actions and the intentions of terrorists, we are no longer allowed the luxury of knowing that our state is completely safe and untouchable.

But we have learned good things about ourselves. All across our state, citizens are asking: How can I help?

Well, there is a way. We have put in place a volunteer program designed to help keep our industrial plants, businesses, waterways and other critical places safe from harm. The program is called West Virginia Watch. I announced the formation of the program during my State of the State address. And now that program is up and running.

Through West Virginia Watch, I am encouraging responsible citizens in our state to form Neighborhood Watch-style groups that will assist our police with surveillance of those critical structures and natural resources that are so important to us.

This week, I traveled the state to talk about West Virginia Watch.

The program is important because state, county and municipal law enforcement and emergency service officers are dealing with bomb threats, suspicious mailings, hoaxes and other types of criminal activity that were not part of our everyday lives prior to Sept. 11. Our law enforcement officers are doing a terrific job, but there are times when they need our help.

I've made it clear from the start that we don't need vigilantes. What we do need is interested, well-intentioned, law-abiding citizens to help us keep the precious resources of our state safe.

For this program to be effectively administered, we need someone at the helm. Jeffery Thompson – a six-year State Police veteran – has been named as statewide coordinator of this program. He is a community liaison officer and has served as coordinator for the State Police's safe schools program.

I've asked county commissions to appoint local West Virginia Watch coordinators. Those county coordinators will work with Trooper Thompson to set up effective West Virginia Watch groups throughout the state.

Watch members will be asked to keep an eye out for suspicious activity. If they

see such activity, they should report it to the following telephone number: 1-800-352-0927. Activity reports will be reviewed promptly by intelligence analysts who work for the West Virginia Intelligence Exchange. When appropriate, the intelligence analysts will forward the information from the West Virginia Watch members to law enforcement agencies able to most effectively respond to the tip.

The telephone line is being staffed 16 hours per day, seven days a week. And within a month, the staffing will be extended to 24 hours per day.

I am happy that we are able to offer such an effective program. But I'm especially grateful to live in a state where the citizens would be willing to make such a program work.

Statement to the Press
September 10, 2002

Heightened Security

I think it was only common sense to order a heightened alert. According to the conference call I was on with the White House today, there is no known specific threat in the United States that they're focusing on, and yet it is September 11, and it is a target of opportunity.

Having said all that, this nation is a far different place than it was a year ago, as far as security and homeland security are concerned. I've taken some extra precautions. I did order a counter-terrorism exercise to start today, Sept. 10, just to coincide with the events of September 11. We've suspended that given the heightened alert that has been called.

So we have in place additional resources to respond to any situations that could arise. I want to stress though, neither the intelligence we have gotten through the conference calls with the White House, nor anything we have determined shows that there is a specific threat identified in the United States or in West Virginia.

Yes, people will see heightened security when they come to the Capitol tomorrow, but I would urge people to come and show that we are a united nation, and we won't be daunted by terrorism.

Press Release
September 10, 2002

September 11 Events Outlined

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise again today invited all West Virginians to join him at the State Capitol to mark the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

“The tragic events of Sept. 11 will stay with all of us forever,” Wise said. “They have challenged our nation, and we have responded with a new sense of patriotism. I ask that everyone join me tomorrow to remember the tragedy and pay tribute to the victims and their families.”

The patriotic ceremony will include performances by the 249th Army Band, the Appalachian Children’s Chorus and Nicole Yonkosky of Ripley.

Readings and scriptures will be recited by several members of various faiths throughout the program, and moments of silence will honor the victims.

Wise also has ordered that state flags “at all state facilities be displayed at half staff the entire day of September 11, 2002.

“This is a time for us to come together as West Virginians and as Americans to remember the victims of the attack and pray for those men and women still fighting to protect our freedom,” Wise noted. “This nation is stronger than ever, and we will continue to prosper.”

Wise is joining with state constitutional officers to give state employees time off without use of leave from 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. to attend the event.

The ceremony will be held outside on the north side of the Capitol at 8:30 a.m. Attendees should arrive by 8:15 a.m. In case of rain, the ceremony will be held in the Upper Rotunda of the State Capitol.

Additional parking is available at Watt Powell Park. Shuttle buses will be available at the field.

September 11, 2002

Remarks on the First Anniversary of the September 11 Attacks

Good morning. One year ago, the first airplane crashed into the North Tower. Today we gather in sadness . . . in resolve . . . in prayer and unity.

We gather as a unified government – our Board of Public Works, the Legislature, the Supreme Court, Governor and Mrs. Underwood, the Mayor of Charleston, along with other mayors, and the Kanawha County Commission.

We gather as a united people – determined that terrorism shall be vanquished.

We gather as a union of spirit – calling out to our common God that directs us all and recognizing we need His love and guidance more than ever.

We are here for many reasons –

We come to remember and mourn those who died, beginning with the attack on the North Tower. At the exact times of the other momentous events – the South Tower, the attack on the Pentagon and the brave actions of the passengers to down their plane in Shanksville, Pennsylvania – we also shall observe silence.

We remember the innocents – who harmed no one, who lived the everyday dreams and promises with their families – and whose lives were abruptly ended.

We mourn those who died rushing to save them – the more than 400 New York City firefighters, police officers and EMS workers. In John, we read “The greatest love is shown when one lays down his life for another.” They showed that love – and America suddenly recognized in their everyday responses what we had always taken for granted as the true heroism it is.

We remember and mourn those who have since died to protect us – our men and women in uniform fighting terrorism across the world. Make no mistake – one reason there have been no further terrorist attacks in the past year here at home is because of armed forces fighting thousand of miles away. It is our soldiers’ uncommon valor that has permitted us our common routines.

And we remember and give thanks for those West Virginians who have died so there would never be another 9/11 – Staff Sgt. Gene Vance of Morgantown and Staff Sgt. Anissa Shero of Grafton.

We also come to give thanks to those men and women who protect us at home – our law enforcement, firefighters and EMS workers. Now others stand with them in our Homeland Security effort – public health officials and other civilian personnel. They now have learned to respond to what was once unthinkable, but now is all too often the routine.

We give thanks to the men and women who protect us across the globe. Our own West Virginia National Guard – more than 700 on active duty; the reserves and regular military.

Look at today's event; this one joined by scores like it across the nation. This is exactly opposite of what those who brought death and destruction last year intended. Where they hoped to see a demoralized and frightened people, there is only determination and unity.

We are gathered here today in free and open assembly – when we leave here we will go to other activities. Yes, we do so with more vigilance, but we gather. And we are able to do so because of the men and women who protect us daily. Around us are our veterans. I ask that we recognize all those in uniform representing those protecting us today.

Finally, we come to remember – we come to give thanks – and we come together as one. We are more somber, more determined – yes, more united. We have learned that in a diverse nation, we can gain strength from one another. Terrorists who hoped to exploit our diversity have learned it is our bulwark. In our faith, we come to God in many ways – in many tongues – we call out to Him with different names. But we also have learned in the past year about the common spirit that runs through us all.

This is reflected in our joint services. When we pray, some of us are kneelers, some standers, some sitters. But, like streams running to the ultimate river, our prayers go to God.

Today, we come together for many reasons – to remember and mourn, to give thanks for those who protect us and to dedicate ourselves – that we shall never forget – and that we shall never relent to defeat those who bring death to the innocents.

Press Release
September 11, 2003

Wise Honors Victims of September 11

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Surrounded by firemen, law enforcement officials, EMTs, veterans and members of the Armed Services and National Guard, Gov. Bob Wise today planted two 15-foot red oak trees in remembrance of the tragedies of September 11.

“It’s important for us to gather together to remember and reflect upon the tragic events of September 11 – to remember the victims of this attack and pray for the brave men and women still fighting to protect our freedom,” Wise said. “But this day also is a time to celebrate our state and our country – and to be proud of all we’ve become.”

Wise planted the trees as a remembrance to the victims in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. These trees also symbolize a rebirth of a united nation, he said.

“As we continue to move forward with our lives, I want us to celebrate who and what we are,” Wise said. “We are a united nation. We are a strong people.”

Wise also unveiled the new state license plate as another way West Virginians can pay tribute to the victims of 9-11.

After the ceremony, Wise will travel to Wheeling to sign corrugated steel beams cast at Wheeling-Pitt steel. The beams will be used to rebuild World Trade Center building 7.

Governor's Weekly Message
August 27, 2004

Remembering September 11

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, will forever stay with all of us; they have changed our nation, and we have responded with a new sense of patriotism. Three years on the path of recovering from that fateful day, we are stronger both as a state and as a nation.

On this anniversary, communities from coast to coast will unite in prayer in remembrance of that devastating day. We have come together across lines that divide us, demonstrating to the world our courage and compassion.

While our country suffered greatly as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, we are now enduring the fears and losses that inevitably come with war. We give thanks to the men and women who protect us across the globe: the full-time members of our armed forces and the dedicated citizens who serve in the National Guard and in our nation's other reserve units. It is our soldiers' uncommon valor that has permitted us to go about our common routines.

This is the time for us to reflect on how far we, as a nation, have come and the progress we have made in making our country a more unified place. Citizens are united and determined to protect our freedoms at home and abroad.

On this day of commemoration, we reflect on what freedom really means to us and to our country. We remember the selfless service of the men and women who fight to preserve our freedom, and we honor and offer our gratitude to those who have given their lives in this fight.

We also pay tribute to many organizations and volunteers in our country that continue to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

This nation is stronger than ever, and we will continue to prosper. We have learned that in a diverse nation, we can gain strength from one another.

I ask that everyone join me this September 11 to remember the tragedy and pay tribute to the victims and their families.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Under the terms of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, the Governor is the commander-in-chief of the state's military forces. Governor Wise chose a long-term West Virginia National Guard leader, Major General Allen E. Tackett, to serve as adjutant general. He called upon General Tackett time and time again during his term to support disaster relief efforts, provide security for facilities statewide in the aftermath of September 11 and to assist in other emergencies.

In addition, many members of the West Virginia National Guard were called to active duty in the service of the United States during Wise's term. Hundreds were deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and other dangerous locations. Others were called up to provide security at airports and other potential targets of terror attacks within the U.S.

The Governor ordered that the flags representing each activated West Virginia unit be placed on display in the Capitol while soldiers were away from home in service. He also made it a point to meet with as many Guard members and families as possible before deployment and upon their return, to express the support of the people of West Virginia for their service.

In 2004, at the Governor's suggestion, the Legislature placed a constitutional amendment before the state's voters. It established a cash bonus for any West Virginia soldier who served during conflicts in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. It was passed by an overwhelming 417,976 to 199,590 margin.

Governor's Weekly Message
August 10, 2001

Sincere Appreciation to the National Guard

A devastating series of floods and mudslides afflicted our state in July. Some families were struck two or three times. This catastrophe has been overwhelming, and countless hours of manpower will be needed to transform these waterlogged areas back to inhabitable towns.

As residents begin the long road to recovery, thousands of volunteers have stepped forward to help flood victims sweep, dig and rebuild their lives. There are truly so many people to thank. One group making momentous contributions to recovery has been the West Virginia National Guard.

Under the leadership of West Virginia Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tackett, the flood relief efforts of the Guard, designated "Operation Southern Storm 2001," are the largest in recent history of the organization. Because of the severity of the flooding, many troops have been absent from their homes and jobs for an extended time.

During my visit to the flood-stricken areas, I met many troops who were entering their fourth week of active duty. These are men and women sorely missed by their spouses and children. Many are leaders in their communities and workplaces. At the height of the disaster, more than 2,100 individuals were activated from West Virginia and surrounding states.

The National Guard troops provide great service to the people of West Virginia, and they deserve our continued encouragement. Employer support of the Guard is especially crucial to the success of these citizen soldiers. When a Guard member can answer a call to duty and not worry about the security of the job left behind, he or she can focus on the mission at hand and accomplish it safely. The family at home is more secure, and all of us can rest easier.

The skills and equipment of the National Guard have been an immeasurable help during West Virginia's time of crisis. The units are being released back to their communities as soon as possible.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to troops, their families and their employers for all they have endured. Saying thanks, however, is simply not enough to express the tremendous gratitude that is due. The men and women of the West Virginia National Guard are truly making a difference in the lives of people who need help the most.

Governor's Weekly Message
May 24, 2002

A Tribute to Sergeant Gene Vance

The sacrifices made by those who serve in our armed forces is seared in our minds, and this hits close to home.

From the hills of West Virginia, a young man heard the call, as did many before him.

He answered it on the other side of the world, and he paid the supreme price so we can all be ensured our freedom.

And now a new name, Sergeant Gene Vance, is the first member of the state

National Guard to die on active duty since World War II.

A citizen soldier from Morgantown receives our tribute for carrying the case of homeland security to the terrorists abroad.

Sergeant Vance was a young man. He was a student who worked in a cycle shop, was making a new life as a husband and father and was called to duty before he could even go on his honeymoon.

His unit was based in Kenova. He had been in the National Guard 10 years, and he had already earned a Bronze Star for valor.

I am not able to discern what he was thinking during his military service. There are men and women who served in the armed services who can imagine that better than I.

But I do know, from having talked with his wife and his mother, that he missed these hills and valleys a lot.

The world is a safer place because of the service of Sergeant Gene Vance and men and women like him.

I would like to tell you that the sons and daughters of West Virginia will not be called on again to defend freedom. We can pray for that. But I cannot make that promise.

For generations, more than in any other state, West Virginians have served the United States and the Free World in our armed forces.

Every man and every woman who signs up for duty knows the danger going in. Sergeant Vance understood that. It is the service of a new generation with new and different weapons. But the determination remains the same.

Sergeant Vance knew he would be in harm's way. That is the harsh truth. But he served. That is the impressive choice.

I salute all who are serving. Our sons and daughters who are overseas are in our hearts and prayers as we gather here – and all those who served before them – to assure that “Mountaineers are Always Free.”

Press Release
July 22, 2003

Governor Wise Welcomes Home West Virginia's Hero

As Governor of the state of West Virginia, I am happy to welcome home Pfc. Jessica Lynch. The eyes of the world are on Wirt County as Jessica comes home. And while this is the homecoming of all homecomings for the Lynch family and West Virginia, this also is a homecoming for the world.

Today, we welcome back a young citizen and soldier. She left here – one of many newly enlisted in the military – pursuing both her duty and her dream. She returns a renowned international figure and a symbol of the quiet courage and commitment of all our armed forces. Like our armed forces, she may consider her duties routine; we know they are heroic.

Jessica, on behalf of all the people of our great state of West Virginia, I welcome you home. The entire state has had a yellow ribbon around its heart. We celebrated your rescue and the release of the others who were captured; we mourn and remember the loss of your comrades.

In Palestine, after your rescue, a church put up a sign – “God is still in the business of making miracles.” One of His miracles has come home to the mountains today.

Through all of this, we have come to know your family – your parents, Greg and Dee; your sister, Brandi; and your brother Greg. They have shown the kind of people who make up West Virginia. Their determination, their faith and their patriotism have inspired the world.

Governor's Weekly Message
December 26, 2003

Our Heroes: Not Home for the Holidays

During this hectic and festive time of year, as we enjoy the company of family and friends, let us not forget the men and women who are making a peaceful holiday season in America possible.

In Iraq, Afghanistan and around the globe, the brave soldiers, sailors and airmen of the United States military will spend their holiday as they spend every day; ever vigilant, unflinching in the face of danger and unwavering in their commitment to freedom.

West Virginians' tradition of service is unparalleled by any other state. In most any military unit, you will find a West Virginia son or daughter; indeed, no other state sends a higher percentage of its residents into the armed forces. Since her birth, the Mountain State has never faltered in her contributions to the cause of American freedom and peace around the world.

I encourage all West Virginians to take a few minutes during their preparations and celebrations to remember our armed services personnel and to consider sending a letter, e-mail or care package to a soldier. Many charitable organizations will help you with donations of food, calling cards or air miles.

We also must not forget the families of our West Virginia soldiers. To have one's father, mother or child so far away from home during the holidays is especially trying. These families are heroes themselves; the sacrifice they are making for all of us should never be overlooked. At the same time, they are working in our communities, raising children and supporting each other and our troops overseas.

I also wish to thank each and every veteran of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. Because of their service over the years, we are able to enjoy a peaceful holiday in a free country, with many blessings that are too often taken for granted. This holiday, thank a veteran for his or her sacrifice. Let them know that America and West Virginia will not forget the heroism of our military personnel, past and present.

I wish a joyful, peaceful holiday to all West Virginians across the world, and a prosperous, safe and healthy new year as well.

Press release
June 1, 2004

Wise Unveils Five New License Plates

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today unveiled Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy retired veterans' license plates at the American Legion office in Charleston.

"I am extremely honored to unveil these retired military plates for our veterans," Wise said. "These veterans are true examples of service to our country, and these new license plates allow us to honor them."

Each plate will require a one-time \$10 application fee and a \$30 per year registration cost. To receive a plate, an application must be completed and sent to the local Division of Veterans Affairs Office. After eligibility has been certified, the application should be mailed to the Charleston DMV office or taken to one of the 21 regional offices.

For additional information about these new retired military license plates, you may call the Division of Motor Vehicles at (800) 642-9066 or (304) 558-3900, or visit the web site at www.wvdot.com. Larry Linch, director of Veterans Affairs, may be reached at 1321 Plaza East, Suite 101, Charleston, WV 25301, by telephone at (304) 558-3661 or toll-free at (888) 838-2332.

Governor's Weekly Message
November 5, 2004

Supporting Our Armed Forces

A few weeks ago, I toured the state asking voters to support the Veterans' Bonus Amendment, Constitutional Amendment One. I was pleased to see veterans, legislators and citizens throughout the state promoting this cause. As a state with a deep sense of patriotism, I was confident this amendment would easily pass.

I am proud the Mountain State has become one of the first states to pass this kind of bonus amendment. West Virginia soldiers have a long history of responding when our country is in danger. They protect us without a second thought, and we owe them our gratitude. West Virginia has provided similar bonuses for past wars, and I am glad our citizens have decided to continue this tradition to honor and reward military bravery.

With the arrival of Veterans Day, the passage of this amendment comes at an opportune time. We have chosen this day to honor the courageous men and women who have served in our armed forces. Our veterans believe that the freedoms we enjoy in West Virginia – and all across the country – are worth defending. As we pay tribute to them, I also ask you to remember the brave soldiers who are still fighting in our nation's war against terrorism. This is a day to offer gratitude to our soldiers past and present.

The amendment will provide military bonuses for veterans that served or are serving in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. It calls for each military member who was in active duty outside the combat area to receive a \$400 bonus; each member of the military who has served or is serving inside the combat zone to receive a \$600 bonus; and families of deceased military personnel whose death resulted from service during those conflicts to receive a \$2,000 bonus. This bonus allows us to honor them for their bravery and sacrifice.

On behalf of all West Virginians, I salute the men and women whose service in the military has given us the gift of freedom. Our soldiers have gone to the ends of the earth for us; I am glad we went to the end of the ballot for them. As governor of the State of West Virginia, thank you for joining me in supporting the members of our armed forces.

Welcoming Our Soldiers Home

During my four years as West Virginia's governor, I've had the opportunity to take part in quite a few enjoyable occasions. But few, if any, are more rewarding than witnessing the reunion of a returning soldier with his or her family.

I was able to witness many of these reunions a few days ago when I took an overnight trip to Fort Bragg, a North Carolina Army base. I was there, with hundreds of others, to welcome home members of the West Virginia Army National Guard's 150th Armored Regiment.

I traveled to North Carolina with Gov.-elect Joe Manchin, National Guard Adjutant General Allen Tackett and several others on a 10:30 p.m. flight. The soldiers' airplane landed at 1:30 a.m., and I had the privilege of shaking hands with these soldiers just after they stepped off their airplane and onto the frozen – but welcoming – North Carolina earth. Shortly after their plane landed, the soldiers were taken to a nearby gymnasium, where they were greeted by delighted cheers, applause and hugs of family members and friends.

While deployed, the soldiers had spent most of their time patrolling almost 200 kilometers of the Iraq-Iran border. They were responsible for the safety of more than 300,000 Iraqi civilians. Our soldiers also had been charged with commanding 1,000 members of the Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement and Iraqi National Guard.

When these loyal, honorable men and women left us a year ago, I was there to tell them goodbye and wish them Godspeed. So I was both honored and moved to look each soldier in the eye again and say, "Welcome home."

Please join me in welcoming home these remarkable West Virginians and thanking them – and all of our West Virginia soldiers – for their service to our state and our country.

FLOODS

The four-year term of Gov. Bob Wise was a turning point in many ways in the state's history. But for many families, the most life-changing events of this period were acts of nature – particularly floods.

West Virginia's terrain and climate make its cities and towns particularly susceptible to floods. From the first weeks of 2001 through the very last days of his term in office, Wise was confronted with widespread, repeated and devastating flooding that affected nearly every part of the state at one time or another.

The worst floods were in 2001. In May, and again in July, flash floods ripped through dozens of communities in the southern part of the state, washing away homes and vehicles, submerging public buildings and cutting off transportation and communication.

Wise took a personal hand in the coordination of flood response, spending many hours in the state's Emergency Operations Center in the basement of the Capitol, traveling to flooded communities to inspect the damage in person and provide support to flooded residents and recovery workers.

Wise's trips also helped focus public attention and concern on the victims of the floods, and set the stage for a massive outpouring of assistance from citizens across the state and around the country. West Virginia GIVES, a coordinated effort of private and public agencies, directed millions of dollars of flood aid to families stricken by one or more of the floods during Wise's term.

Volunteers were crucial to flood recovery. Hundreds of people from around the country streamed into the state again and again to help.

The West Virginia National Guard was activated repeatedly to provide search-and-rescue operations and flood cleanup. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, took up near-permanent residence in a set of Charleston offices to assist families and communities with flood recovery.

Governor Wise also initiated a statewide effort to develop new strategies for flood prevention – including locating homes, businesses and public facilities in areas less prone to repeated flooding. In July, 2001, he appointed a nine-member Disaster Recovery Board to work to replace lost housing, repair and improve infrastructure, and lay the groundwork for economic development in the regions hit by floods. The Board has broad powers to buy and sell land, construct housing, develop infrastructure projects and support economic development.

Declaration of State of Emergency
May 18, 2001

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
At Charleston

A PROCLAMATION

By the Governor

WHEREAS, beginning on the Sixteenth day of May, Two Thousand One, and continuing through the date of this Proclamation, heavy sustained rains, flash-flooding, and strong winds have caused considerable damage to private and public property located in Boone, Mercer, Raleigh, Wyoming and certain parts of surrounding counties of West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, this storm and its effects have required evacuations and sheltering of the public and poses a continuing threat to the health, safety, welfare and property of the citizens of Boone, Mercer, Raleigh, Wyoming and certain parts of surrounding counties;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of West Virginia, and in consideration of the foregoing situation, do hereby **ORDER** the implementation of the State's Emergency Operations Plan and the activation of the State's Emergency Operations Center. In addition, I also **FIND AND DECLARE** that a State of Emergency exists in Boone, Mercer, Raleigh, Wyoming and certain parts of surrounding counties. This State of Emergency shall remain in effect for thirty days unless extended.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this Eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-eighth year of the State.

Press Release
8:00 p.m., May 19, 2001

Flood Situation Update

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Tonight, the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services (OES) is reporting that a flash flood watch has been issued for Logan, McDowell, Mingo and Wyoming counties. The watch will remain in effect until midnight tonight.

Some of the most severe damage by flood waters was located in Boone County with more than 35 homes damaged or destroyed along with seven businesses. OES damage assessments also show that 28 homes in Mercer County suffered minor damage. The West Virginia Department of Transportation is providing a 5000-gallon water tanker in Oakvale because of contaminated wells in the Mercer County area.

Also, Wyoming and Raleigh Counties are reporting that 12 homes were damaged or destroyed. In addition, 12 homes were reported to have minor damage in Roane County, and one home in Logan County is reporting damage.

The Governor's Chief of Staff Mike Garrison and Secretary of Military Affairs Joe Martin traveled to Boone County today to inspect some of the hardest hit areas. Garrison and Martin said they viewed the worst damage in Danville and in the town of Jeffery.

Gov. Wise is urging anyone affected by the flood to call the state's toll-free hotline at 1-866-982-4685 for assistance in applying for flood recovery grants. Individuals and families in the declared disaster areas can receive up to \$5,000 to help replace essential appliances, lost items and assist with the cost of repairs. After applications are received, flood damage will be inspected by National Guard Troops.

The disaster call center received approximately 118 calls today. The toll-free hotline will be open beginning tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m.

"I want to advise anyone who has been affected by the flood to call this toll-free number immediately," Wise said. "We want to make sure that every person receives the information and assistance they need during this difficult time," added Wise.

Help Is Still Here

Nothing hurts more than seeing the faces of the families whose lives have been disrupted by the devastating floods we saw last week. The floods in Boone, Mercer, Raleigh and Wyoming and surrounding counties left many homes and businesses damaged or destroyed and left families without their loved ones. Three people, including two small children, drowned.

Through all of this, the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services, the West Virginia National Guard, the American Red Cross and the people of West Virginia have pulled together to help those in need. The volunteers who helped a neighbor shovel mud, fixed a hot meal or offered shelter for the night deserve thanks. You have made the difference, and I thank you for everything. You are true West Virginians.

Help is still here. The American Red Cross is trying to raise \$20 million by June 30 to support disaster relief efforts in communities across the Mountain State and around the country. They have spent more than \$825,000 over the past year to provide vital lifesaving assistance to more than 1,200 families in West Virginia. I urge anyone who can to make a contribution to their effort.

More than 900 families have already contacted us for help in responding to the flood. If you need assistance in applying for flood recovery grants, please call the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services toll-free hotline at 1-866-982-4685. Someone will answer your call from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. seven days a week.

Individuals and families in the declared disaster areas can receive up to \$5,000 to help replace essential appliances, lost items and to assist with the cost of repairs. After applications are received, flood damage will be inspected by National Guard troops. Grant applications must be filed by June 8. I encourage everyone who has not called to make the call today – help is still here.

Wise Takes Cabinet Secretaries, Senior Staff to Flood Areas

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise traveled today to Wyoming County with members of his cabinet and senior staff to get a first-hand update on flood recovery operations. Wise said he wanted the cabinet secretaries and senior staff to talk directly with homeowners and business people about the devastation that was left after the recent floods.

“I have asked all cabinet secretaries and senior staff members to do whatever they can within their agencies to provide any resources that are available to help these families and businesses,” Wise said. “I want them to be able to see what has been done—and think about what they can do within their agencies.”

Wise introduced several Wyoming County business owners to David L. Dickirson, whom he recently appointed to the state’s Council for Community and Economic Development. Wise announced that Dickirson would be dispatched to the area next week, with business recovery specialists from the state and federal government, to start the process of restoring the hard-hit business communities throughout the flood zone.

The Governor has already ordered that filing deadlines for business taxes be extended 90 days for individuals who suffered damage by the recent flooding, and has granted state employers affected by recent flooding a 30-day extension in filing Unemployment Compensation and Workers’ Compensation quarterly reports.

Wise toured the Wyoming County senior center at Itmann and a flood-damaged personal care home in Mullins with Ann Stottlemyer, commissioner of senior services. “The senior center staff have done an incredible job moving tons of mud and debris out of the building, cleaning up, and getting ready to resume their feeding program,” Wise said. He promised quick action in restoring the center’s destroyed kitchen equipment, which is normally used to provide hot meals to hundreds of area seniors each day.

Meeting with Mullins Mayor Randy Brewer, the Governor was encouraged to learn that a portable water treatment plant had been delivered and set up overnight. At about 4 a.m. Saturday the plant began pumping out the first drinkable water produced in the town since the flood. The city water plant is back in partial operation, but a boil-water advisory remains in effect. Water remains a critical need in the flood area, with 17 water systems out of service, 6,500 people without running water and 35,000 people forced to boil drinking water.

Assistance from around West Virginia and the nation continued to pour in on Saturday, including two additional National Guard helicopters from Kentucky. Also Saturday, the South Carolina National Guard announced that it had activated 225 troops for duty in West Virginia.

“All of us in West Virginia are very grateful for the help that has arrived, and that is on its way,” Wise said.

Governor’s Weekly Message
July 13, 2001

West Virginia GIVES

I have spent the last week traveling to the flood ravaged parts of West Virginia visiting with families whose homes and businesses have been damaged or destroyed. It is heartbreaking to see the lives of so many of our fellow West Virginians turned upside down. The floods of July 8 are, by far, some of the worst I have ever seen in southern West Virginia. I am committed to using all of our resources and doing whatever it takes to help the families and business owners affected by this disaster.

With all the losses, it is encouraging to see people already digging out and trying to get their homes and businesses back. Our first mission is to supply the food, shelter and medicine people need. Right now, I am asking every citizen of West Virginia to help in whatever way you can. If you want to donate supplies or volunteer for the flood relief effort you can call your local chapter of the American Red Cross or call 1-888-WV-GIVES (1-888-984-4837). Red Cross shelters are open to provide relief and assistance and will continue to host shelters providing food and assembling cleaning kits for families.

We also have had many private companies, charitable groups and volunteer organizations contribute to the recovery effort. The list is too long to include here, but among the generous donors are The Coca-Cola Co., CSX, Philip Morris, Feed the Children from Okla., Mountaineer Food Bank, Miracle Meadows from Harrison County, The Adventist Community Services in Md., and the West Virginia Communication Workers Local Union.

I greatly appreciate these donations, and I want to encourage everyone to help. If you can’t give money, give your time; if you can’t give your time, give your thoughts and prayers to the families who need it so desperately.

I also have asked that all state agencies make special provisions whenever possible to assist homeowners and businesses cope with the aftermath of the floods.

Once again, West Virginians are pulling together to get through the tough times. Families and business owners desperately need all the help we can give them. I hope all of you will join me in doing whatever is necessary to ensure that these individuals get the assistance they need as quickly as possible.

Senior Citizens Hard Hit by Floods

The floods that have hit 22 counties in West Virginia this summer have been difficult for many citizens: lives were lost, homes destroyed, jobs and family life disrupted. But they were particularly hard on some of our elderly citizens.

Many were forced from homes they had occupied for decades, or saw a lifetime's worth of photos, papers and precious belongings washed away or ruined by mud and water.

West Virginia has the oldest average age of all the 50 states, and many of the communities hardest hit by flooding have a high proportion of older residents. As National Guard, Red Cross, Salvation Army and other relief workers made their way from house to house offering aid, they often encountered elderly people whose families lived far away. Many of the first outside people on the scene were adult children who drove hundreds of miles overnight to check on their parents.

In Itmann, Wyoming County, the storms swamped the senior center and destroyed a fleet of vans used to deliver meals and transport people around the rural area. Senior center staff continued to provide emergency services and home-delivered meals using a borrowed bulldozer to reach older persons who were stranded in their homes. Similar work took place in each county as friends, neighbors and relatives worked side by side to make sure each resident was safe and had food and shelter.

As we move into the rebuilding phase of the flood relief program, I have asked each of those involved in the effort to pay particular attention to the needs of older West Virginians in the flood area.

One thing that has helped us has been the \$100,000 emergency grant awarded to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services to help reimburse its costs in assisting older West Virginians affected by floods. The U.S. Administration on Aging provided the funding to help us preserve critical services such as housing, meals and transportation upon which many frail older adults rely. Support also will help older individuals clean up and remove debris, and obtain emergency supplies such as food, medicine, clothing and household items. The funds will help to repair and replace damaged vans and equipment.

Governor to Appoint Disaster Recovery Board

BLUEFIELD, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced Tuesday that he intends to appoint a nine-member Disaster Recovery Board to oversee relief efforts in the southern West Virginia counties most severely affected by flooding this summer.

In a speech to the Bluefield Rotary Club, Wise said the three goals of the board are to replace lost housing, repair and improve infrastructure, and lay the groundwork for economic development in the region. Brian Kastick, secretary of the Department of Tax and Revenue, will lead the group. Joe Martin, secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety, has also been appointed.

Wise will announce the other seven members shortly, he said.

Under West Virginia law, the Board has broad powers to buy and sell land, construct housing, develop infrastructure projects and support economic development.

“We cannot tie up the recovery process in bureaucratic red tape,” Wise said “The board will have the power to disburse funds from a special disaster relief recovery trust fund – which will allow us to use both public and private funds in the recovery process.”

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund has already committed \$25 million to the recovery effort, and begun the process of developing housing sites for displaced families. The Board will seek out other sources of funds – state, federal and private – to funnel into the flood area.

“We expect action from this board – and we will get it,” Wise said. “This is a terrible time for many people in West Virginia. But it also is a time of opportunity – the opportunity to do things right.”

Wise has said that he will call a special session of the West Virginia Legislature in early August to allocate funds to flood relief and recovery. The Governor is holding meetings this week with legislative leaders to plan the session.

Press Release
August 22, 2001

Wise Appoints Flood Investigation Advisory Committee

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise has appointed a broad-based advisory committee to review data developed by state agencies investigating if mining or logging operations contributed to the recent flooding in West Virginia.

“I have put together this group of West Virginians with diverse backgrounds – including experts in environmental studies, forestry and mining, and people from the affected communities – to ensure that we do this process openly and fairly,” said Wise.

The committee will hold public meetings in the affected counties and communities that were hit hard by recent flooding. The committee will report all findings and give recommendations to Governor Wise by December 31, 2001.

Committee members include:

Julia Bonds, Coal River Mountain Watch
Ben Green, West Virginia Coal Association
Donna Halstead, Coal River Mountain Watch
Elaine Purkey, West Virginia Organizing Project
Cindy Rank, Highlands Conservancy
Delegate Rick Staton, West Virginia Legislature
Dick Waybright, West Virginia Forestry Association
Freda Williams, West Virginia Organizing Project
Gordon Eversol/Micky Brown, Boone County Commission
Matthew Winder, Fayette County Commission
Carl Urps, McDowell County Commission
John Aliff, Raleigh County Commission
Ed Harless, Wyoming County Commission
Matt Crum, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
Randy Dye, West Virginia Division of Forestry
Ed Griffith, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection

Press Release
April 24, 2002

Wise Announces Long-Term Flood Recovery Planning Meetings

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has launched a new initiative to address long-term issues associated with flooding in West Virginia.

“Our most recent serious large-scale flooding occurred nine months ago,” Wise said. “We’ve been concentrating on immediate needs. Now, we need to turn our focus from short-term relief to long-term solutions related to housing, infrastructure and economic development in southern West Virginia.”

The Governor’s Disaster Recovery Board has contracted with the consulting firm of Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade, and Douglass, Inc. (PB) to work with the state in developing a plan that will focus first on McDowell and Wyoming counties, the two counties most seriously hit by the July, 2001 floods.

Planning will begin at the local level Tuesday, April 30, when the Disaster Recovery Board holds a community meeting at Wyoming East High School in New Richmond from 4:30-7 p.m. to give citizens an opportunity to voice their opinions. Earlier in the day, the board members will meet with seniors at the High School.

Public meetings in McDowell County will be held Wednesday, May 1 from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Highland Educational Project building and the War City Hall building. Two other meetings will be held May 2 from 4:30-7 p.m. at the Gary Community Room and the Jaeger High Cafeteria.

“We must use the tragic disaster as an opportunity to spur action to bring security and prosperity to the region,” Wise said. “I encourage the citizens of Wyoming and McDowell counties to attend these public meetings. Together, we can begin a long-term recovery process.”

Flood Victims' Spirits Strong, Compassion Needed

I have spent the last week with our neighbors in flood ravaged parts of southern West Virginia. It is heartbreaking to see the lives of many West Virginians turned upside down, but this spirit is strong and we'll get through this.

These floods are reminiscent of what I saw last year. Some of it is even worse. I'm committed to using all of our resources and doing whatever it takes to help the families and business owners affected by this disaster. If you are affected by these floods, you need to call the Federal Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-621-FEMA. You must be registered with FEMA to receive the help available.

In all of this destruction, I've seen firsthand some tremendous acts of kindness. I am amazed by the compassion and thoughtfulness of hundreds of volunteers and state employees who have pitched right in to help with our relief and recovery efforts. We have been helped by many people including volunteers, federal emergency workers and people from the hard-hit communities themselves.

Our first mission is to supply the food, shelter and medicine people need. And I'm asking you to help in whatever way you can. If you want to donate supplies or money or volunteer for the flood relief efforts please call 1-888-WV-GIVES.

Also, if you are a small business, you can call 1-888-WVA-SBDC to ask about our Forgivable Loan and Micro Loan programs. These help businesses in the flood-stricken areas to rebuild and recover. This program was very beneficial to the small businesses affected by last year's floods. We are looking at the business owners who took out loans last year, and, on a case-by-case basis, are hoping to be able to forgive the first loan and start anew. More on this later.

West Virginians have been tested. Once again, we're pulling together to get through tough times. These folks need all the help we can give them. I hope all of you will join me in doing whatever is necessary to ensure that these individuals get the assistance they need as quickly as possible.

Press Release
November 17, 2004

Wise Announces Flood Funding

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the Disaster Recovery Board approved more than \$3.8 million to assist West Virginians who have experienced repetitive flooding.

“The money distributed through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program allows us to purchase properties located within the floodplain, helping to relocate people living in harm’s way and saving taxpayer dollars by avoiding further expenses when future disasters occur,” Wise said. “The Disaster Recovery Board and the Office of Emergency Services work hand-in-hand to ensure that the funding is provided to the applicants as quickly as possible.”

Applications are evaluated by the Office of Emergency Services and then selected by the Disaster Recovery Board for funding provided by FEMA. This funding will address flood-related problems for more than 70 structures located in Greenbrier and Wyoming counties.

Chris Morris, Wise designee and board chairman, indicated that evaluating these applications and making the recommendations for funding was not easy. “When there are 40 applications requesting more than \$27 million and the available funding is just more than \$3.8 million, it forces you to make tough decisions.”

Governor’s Weekly Message
September 24, 2004

Getting Help for Victims of Hurricane Ivan

I spent the past week viewing the recent damage caused by Hurricane Ivan. I was saddened to see so many homes and businesses destroyed, but I am thankful our state has a great record of working together during severe disasters. I have and always will work directly with FEMA and Military Affairs and Public Safety and its Office of Emergency Services to ensure that West Virginians are getting prompt assistance during a time of need.

In preparation of the storm, I declared a state of emergency for all counties in West Virginia. The state of emergency declaration allowed us to more easily provide assistance as

needed to local and county agencies and directly to residents.

We wanted to be as responsible and proactive as possible in protecting the lives and property of West Virginia's citizens. My hope was that we could look back and say we didn't need all that preparation, but with the creeks and rivers silted from previous disasters, it was better to be safe than sorry.

Thanks to the fast action of our first responders and the Federal Emergency Management Agency teams, I received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for sixteen counties. The declaration allows residents in Berkeley, Brooke, Cabell, Hancock, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Marshall, Mason, Morgan, Ohio, Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel, Wirt and Wood counties to apply for Individual Assistance grants, which are designed to help residents recover some flood-related expenses. Citizens in these counties should apply for assistance by calling 1-800-621-FEMA.

Now, we are dealing with the destruction and damage this storm has left behind. The aftermath of Hurricane Ivan has left West Virginia with millions of dollars in damages. We are going to do whatever it takes to recover. Now we must repair and rebuild our homes, businesses and public facilities and move forward. While picking up the pieces may take awhile, I am confident that together we can get it done.

The state's Emergency Operations Center has been activated and is being staffed by personnel from the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Army National Guard, the Department of Transportation, American Red Cross, State Police, Department of Environmental Protection, State Fire Marshal, Division of Natural Resources, Division of Highways, Conservation Agency and Public Service Commission.

As always, the spirit of West Virginians will prevail...the floodwater has receded and now is the time for action. West Virginians are known for their strength and willingness to help others; I am confident this disaster will be no different.

Press release
January 6, 2005

Wise Declares State of Emergency in 12 Northern Counties

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Gov. Bob Wise today declared a state of emergency covering 12 northern West Virginia counties that are being hammered by severe rainfall.

The emergency declaration covers Brooke, Hancock, Jackson, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel and Wood counties. The region has been hit by a massive storm system that moved into the area on Wednesday. Rain is expected to continue through much of Thursday.

“The state of emergency declaration allows us to pre-deploy National Guard liaison teams and to more easily provide assistance to local and county agencies,” Wise said. “We certainly hope we won’t have to employ significant emergency measures, but it’s extremely important for us to be prepared to do so.”

The state’s Emergency Operations Center is being activated at noon. The EOC will be staffed by personnel from the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services, Army National Guard, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Transportation, Department of Education and the American Red Cross.

The EOC will remain open until further notice.

GAMBLING REGULATION

One of candidate Bob Wise's most oft-repeated pledges during the 2000 campaign for Governor was to "reduce, restrict and regulate" the proliferation of video gambling devices that had spread throughout the state in the late 1990s. Although video gambling was prohibited by state law, hundreds of video poker and video slot machines were installed in bars, convenience stores, gas stations and other public areas. Each was labeled "For Amusement Only" – but the labels were meaningless, and most patrons knew to ask the store owner or bartender to pay the jackpot if their machine recorded a win.

The illegal gambling industry built on these so-called "gray machines" was substantial. Large sums of cash changed hands, outside the view of regulators and tax officials.

Early in his administration, Wise proposed to ban the gray machines, and funnel the demand for video gambling into a system of regulated machines controlled by the West Virginia lottery. The proposal was tied to his PROMISE Scholarship plan, providing a continuing source of revenue for the new program and additional funds for existing state activities.

The proposal was highly controversial, and attracted opposition from two distinct camps – anti-gambling forces who opposed any additional state involvement in games of chance, and bar owners, fraternal organizations and others with a vested interest in the gray machine industry.

The debate dominated the 2001 Legislature. Wise's success in pushing this bill through to passage was a signal victory, and paved the way for the creation of the PROMISE Scholarship. Later, by executive order, he imposed additional advertising regulations on the legal lottery machines.

It's Time to Restrict, Regulate and Reduce Gray Machines

West Virginia is drowning in a sea of video poker machines, better known as gray machines. Some estimates I have seen tell us there are 20,000 to 30,000 of these machines in operation in our state.

Our convenience stores and gas stations are becoming unlicensed casinos. Children wander past gambling on their way to the candy counter. And, for years, the government of West Virginia has sat idly by and let this happen.

Every attempt to regulate this industry has been stopped, sometimes by people who claim that regulating it would "expand gambling." It would be difficult to devise any way to expand gambling any more than has happened in the past four years. It can't get worse. This illegal industry grosses as much as a half-billion dollars a year.

The current situation, more than anything else, breeds disrespect for the law. When the state gives a wink and a nod to an industry that is clearly in violation of the laws, it sends a message that we are not serious about the rule of law. If we expect to raise up a generation of West Virginians with the character to build a better society, we must set a better example.

Whatever our personal views on gambling might be, the time has come to remove thousands of machines from businesses frequented by children, to stop the development of unlicensed gambling parlors and to limit the number and location of new gambling machines.

I appreciate those who say they oppose any expansion of gambling. So do I. But every year they stopped any regulation, they only made it possible for even more gambling. This must be the year West Virginia finally acts to control these machines.

I have introduced a proposal to reduce, restrict and regulate video gambling in West Virginia:

- The number of video gambling machines will be limited to 9,000 statewide.
- These machines will be prohibited in any part of a business open to young people, and there will be a limit of five machines at any one location.
- Operators will have to pass a strict criminal background check and have been state residents for at least two years.
- Anyone who operates an illegal gambling machine after January 1, 2002, will forfeit not only that machine, but also any and all legal and illegal machines under his or her control.

My proposal will do something no one has done before – reduce, restrict and regulate the gray machines – and provide a steady new stream of income to finance the

PROMISE Scholarship, other education efforts and the infrastructure necessary to build West Virginia.

Governor's Weekly Message
March 16, 2001

Gray Machines Continue to Flood into State

During the past several weeks, the West Virginia State Police and the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration and its agents have been traveling the state reviewing the number of gray machines that are in operation.

Through their efforts, we have found that within the past 18 months, there has been an increase of more than 3,000 machines that have flooded into the Mountain State. The number of these machines continues to grow and find their way into local convenience stores and gas stations our children frequent. This is not the kind of growth I want to see for my kids, and you shouldn't want it either.

This is the driving force behind my fight to pass legislation that would restrict, reduce and regulate the number of video poker machines. This bill would remove these machines from places where our children go after school. This bill includes a serious message to those who don't comply through stiff penalties.

This legislation also would include funds for the PROMISE Scholarship and for other educational projects and would be used to fund infrastructure development.

Although the ABCA is continuing to conduct a comprehensive search for all gray machines throughout the state, we are not done.

I am asking for your support to help identify machines that have not been counted. A list of the machines that were located during our search has been posted on our state Website at www.state.wv.us/abcc for your review. If you know of any business in West Virginia with gray machines not listed on this Website, please contact us by e-mail at admin@abcc.state.wv.us or by telephone at 1-800-642-8208.

The information contained in this Website is informational in nature and should not be construed as an allegation of any criminal activity.

I also have included a list so you can see the number of gray machines that are currently operating in your county.

We should not sit by any longer and watch the unregulated proliferation of gray

machines to take over our communities.

This is the time for action.

Regulation of Video Lottery Advertising
October 29, 2003

EXECUTIVE ORDER

By the Governor

WHEREAS, the Limited Video Lottery Act prohibits the advertising of video lottery; and

WHEREAS, the statutory prohibition was enacted to ensure an environment free of outdoor video lottery advertising; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of licensed limited video lottery retailers are using names and/or symbols associated with gambling on outdoor signs and advertising through use of their corporate names and registered names in a manner that directly or indirectly violates this statutory prohibition; and

WHEREAS, the State Lottery Commission has filed amendments to its original legislative rule to further clarify that the use of gambling names and/or symbols on exterior/outdoor signage and in media advertising is illegal; and

WHEREAS, these amendments, if approved by the Legislature, would not take effect until the late spring of 2004; and

WHEREAS, it is not in the best interest of this State and its citizens that improper and illegal advertising of limited video lottery gaming continue; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary that the citizens of this State receive appropriate remediation at the earliest date.

NOW THEREFORE I, BOB WISE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Governor of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

The Director of the Lottery Office, in order to curtail improper and illegal advertising activities by licensed limited video lottery retailers, shall give notice to all limited video lottery retailers and operators that compliance with the provisions of this Executive Order will be enforced effective January 1, 2004.

Licensed limited video lottery retailers may continue to choose any business name as permitted by the guidelines of the Secretary of State, other than a name using the words "video lottery." If, however, a licensed limited video lottery retailer wishes

to operate video lottery terminals under its license, on and after January 1, 2004, it shall not use a name that contains any word or wording commonly associated with video lottery and/or gambling/gaming, including, but not limited to, "casino," "slots," "royal flush," "poker," etc., or use symbols commonly associated with video lottery and/or gambling/gaming in any advertising, promotional materials, or on any exterior/outdoor signage. This Order does not preclude use of the legal name of the licensee inside the establishment if it cannot be seen from outside the building.

Any licensed limited video lottery retailer that does not comply with this policy by January 1, 2004 shall have its license suspended, pursuant to W.Va. Code § 29-22B-402(12), until it is in compliance with the policy.

Non-complying licensed limited video lottery retailers may also be subject to any other penalties and/or sanctions available by law.

Notice of this policy shall be sent to all licensed limited video lottery retailers and operators by November 1, 2003 in order to give adequate time for retailers that are in violation to take corrective actions without penalty.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the twenty-ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Three, and in the One Hundred Forty-First year of the State.

Governor's Weekly Message
November 13, 2003

Protecting West Virginia Communities

Two years ago, I proposed and signed legislation eliminating the illegal video poker machines in West Virginia. Unlike the limited video lottery system we have put in place, these illegal machines were often in grocery stores, gas stations and other places accessible to children and in plain view of the general public.

We changed that. Under state law, only those establishments with a Class A liquor license may apply for a video lottery permit. The machines may not be installed in grocery stores or gas stations. They are no longer present in areas frequented by children or those who simply want to shop or fill up their tanks.

An important component of the video lottery legislation was the prohibition on advertising. Unfortunately, some retailers have tried to exploit a perceived loophole in the law by using words or phrases associated with gambling on their signs and in advertisements.

This violates not only the spirit of the law, but also the strict ban on video lottery advertising.

To clarify this, I recently signed Executive Order 21-03, which specifically prohibits this advertising technique. As of January 1, 2004, use of gambling-related terms or symbols will be explicitly banned in outdoor settings and other advertising. No longer will operators be permitted to use a business name containing these terms.

Responsible businesspeople have no problem with this action. In fact, many video lottery operators state they do not like this sort of advertising, but they felt the competitive pressure to use it when their competitors adopted the practice.

More important, by removing this signage, we are implementing the goals of the limited video lottery legislation. We will limit the system to those places where responsible players frequent and not impose it on the public at large.

It is important to remember the limited video lottery has greatly helped the people of West Virginia. We have sent thousands of students to college with the PROMISE Scholarship, funded important programs for our seniors and boosted West Virginia tourism.

With the cooperation of video lottery operators, civic leaders and citizens, we can have a system that allows for entertainment, funding for important programs and healthy communities.

DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED LAW

Drunk driving has long been one of the major causes of highway fatalities and injuries in West Virginia. In his first State of the State Address on Feb. 14, 2001, Governor Wise proposed reducing the blood-alcohol limit for drivers from .10 percent to .08 percent. The proposal would make driving-while-intoxicated (DWI) convictions easier, and bring the state into line with Federal highway-safety standards, and the level recognized in most other states.

The law, although widely supported by families of victims, law enforcement and health providers around the state, was low on the Legislature's list of priorities. Wise repeatedly added it to his agenda, and it was finally adopted in 2004. Three years and two days after proposing the bill, Wise signed it in a public ceremony attended by dozens of people who had been affected by drunk drivers.

News Release
February 16, 2004

Wise Signs .08 Legislation Into Law

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Joined by state police officers, first responders, legislators, counselors and a family whose son was killed by a drunk driver, Gov. Bob Wise today signed S.B. 166, the .08 legislation, into law.

The new law, effective May 5, lowers the legal limit for driving under the influence from .10 to .08.

“This law is about protecting West Virginians,” Wise said. “By lowering the legal limit for drunk driving, we save lives and provide safer highways for our citizens.”

Wise praised the efforts of Berkeley County Mothers Against Drunk Driving President Mark Cheeseman, his wife Barbara and their children Kimberly and Michael in promoting the passage of this legislation. The Cheesemans' son was killed by a drunk driver in 2002.

“After the tragic loss of their son Steve, the Cheeseman family worked tirelessly to promote the .08 legislation,” Wise said. “They have been a leader in this effort.”

Wise noted that West Virginia now joins 45 other states with a .08 law.

“I'm thankful the Legislature realized the importance of this bill and moved it

through the session so quickly,” Wise added.

In addition, this law prevents West Virginia from being penalized with a loss of federal highway funds and allows the state to reacquire the \$2.62 million previously lost.

COAL TRUCK SAFETY

West Virginia motorists in many areas share the road with large vehicles carrying coal from mines to processing plants or power stations. The coal trucks are an important part of the state’s energy economy. But if operated unsafely, or on roads unsuitable for large vehicles, they pose a danger to the public and to their operators, and can cause considerable damage to roads and bridges.

Governor Wise, responding to motorists and the coal industry, worked to improve the safety of these trucks.

News Release
April 4, 2002

Wise Names Truck Safety Work Group

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced the appointment of ten public officials to serve on a truck safety work group that will hold public hearings and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature concerning safe weight limits for trucks on West Virginia’s highways.

“We have an obligation to address all of the issues associated with truck safety in West Virginia,” Wise said. “The administration is in the early stages of an analysis of the most recent research on matters such as weight, safe braking distances vis-à-vis weight loads, and other issues. The goal is to listen to all of those affected through a series of regional hearings, and then craft proposed solutions to assure safety on our highways.

Creation of the group was agreed to by the Governor, Speaker of the House Bob Kiss and Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin. Wise said he expects the work group members to listen to truck drivers, road construction experts, safety authorities, representatives of coal companies, law enforcement personnel, researchers and others.

“The idea is to listen to perspectives from several viewpoints – to tone down the rhetoric and bring in the facts. Everyone needs to understand a bit better where the other party is coming from – to listen, not just hear,” Wise said. “Listening should help to more precisely identify areas of agreement and disagreement.”

Named to the work group are the following:

By the Speaker of the House: Delegate Eustace Frederick of Bluefield, Mercer County and Delegate Rick Staton of Mullens, Wyoming County

By the President of the Senate: Senator Robert H. Plymale of Ceredo, Wayne County and Senator Mike Ross of Coalton, Randolph County

By the Governor: James D. Williams, chairman of the Public Service Commission; Michael Browning, director of communications for the Department of Transportation; Joe Martin, secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety; Col. Howard E. Hill Jr., superintendent, West Virginia State Police; Ed Staats, chief operating officer, Office of the Governor; and Paul Hardesty, director of the coalfield community development office, West Virginia Development Office.

“I’ve directed these individuals to objectively weigh the positions of all sides with the expectation that a consensus might be reached. I appreciate that this is a work group of individuals from government. Had we honored requests of all who wanted to serve, the process would have become so cumbersome, and the work group so large, as to be nonproductive,” Wise said. “But all who wish to be heard will be heard. At the end of the process, the speaker, the president and I will consider the recommendations we receive from the work group’s members.”

Governor’s Remarks
July 18, 2002

Governor’s Remarks on Defeat of Truck Safety Bill

Yesterday the House, by only one vote, defeated a major portion of the legislation that I had introduced. This action significantly changed the direction of the bill, which was based upon two months of public hearings and a report of the Governor’s Task Force on Truck Safety.

Since this is a significant change, the Senate and House leaderships have agreed that it will take a long time, perhaps weeks, before any kind of compromise could be negotiated. Rather than keep the Legislature in a lengthy Special Session at the cost of \$35,000 per day, I agree with the Legislature’s action to adjourn while we deal with the impact of the House vote and work to find a suitable compromise.

There were two victors yesterday.

First, those opposed to raising weight limits under any circumstances clearly won. Unfortunately, so did those opposed to greatly increased enforcement and safety.

My record has been clear. Beginning in March, we expanded enforcement of the law. The Legislative leadership and I agreed to put together a panel on Truck Safety to hear all points of view and make recommendations.

That panel held nine hearings across the state and issued a comprehensive set of recommendations. I took these and submitted legislation that greatly beefed up enforcement and safety while permitting the designation of a limited number of coal haul roads in which certified trucks could haul a higher weight. Had this legislation passed, there never would have been as aggressive an enforcement in the history of WV.

I fully acknowledge the sincerity of most of those who voted against raising weight limits under any circumstances. I am equally sincere in the desire to have increased safety. My hope is that over the next weeks, we can work together.

Let me note that safety must be uppermost. But the 48 who voted for the amendment also need to recognize the significant economic implications that I fear will be playing out in the next few months. The coal market is already in bad shape. This impasse only adds to the uncertainty.

I am concerned about marginal operations that will not be able to ship.

I am concerned about hundreds of trucking families that will continue to operate under uncertainty. I have already heard of small mining operations that say they will be closing in the next few months with this unresolved issue being a major reason.

I am concerned about the declining severance tax revenues that will threaten us in upcoming months. We already anticipate significant tax revenue shortages in September and October; I hope I am wrong but we foresee the situation only getting worse. That can translate into severance tax shortages going into every county of the state as well as layoffs.

I am concerned about enforcing a law – and we will enforce it – that is extremely difficult to enforce.

We can have safety – and we can have safe trucking. And we will keep working until we get it.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE SAFETY

A substantial number of West Virginians use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for farm chores, hunting, rural transportation and recreation. Many are operated on public roads, although the manufacturers and public-safety experts usually advise that these vehicles are not designed for such purposes. During the 1990s and early 2000s, West Virginia hospitals and researchers at West Virginia University documented a sharp increase in ATV accidents, injuries and fatalities.

In his January 8, 2003, State of the State Address, Governor Wise became the first West Virginia chief executive to call for statewide safety regulations governing ATV use.

It took two legislative sessions to move the bill to passage. But on March 9, 2004, Wise was able to sign a comprehensive ATV safety bill that introduced helmet and training requirements for youth riders and gave local governments the power to restrict the use of ATVs on public roads.

Governor's Weekly Message
February 13, 2004

All-Terrain Vehicles Must be Safe for West Virginians

For many years, West Virginians have used all-terrain vehicles for work and play. They are vital tools for farmers, foresters, utility workers and law enforcement. They also are a wonderful way to enjoy hunting, fishing and sightseeing in the wilds of our state.

For too many families, however, unsafe ATV use has led to tragedy. In the last three years, 75 people have died in ATV crashes. Many of these people were under the age of 18, including eight children last year. Few were wearing helmets, and too many were passengers on machines intended only for one rider.

We must protect our young citizens by requiring that they wear helmets when operating ATVs and that they are properly trained in the safe use of these powerful machines. And we must deal harshly with those who threaten lives by operating ATVs under the influence of illegal drugs.

I do not intend to hamper the use of ATVs by responsible adults on their own land or public or private land where ATV use is permitted. A workable solution must not make

the business of farming or foresting difficult.

All-terrain vehicles have the potential to be a big tourist draw for West Virginia, as well. The Hatfield-McCoy trail has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations, pumping needed dollars into local economies and showcasing West Virginia to visitors from around the country.

Together, we will make ATV use a safe, profitable and enjoyable pastime in the Mountain State.

News Release
March 9, 2004

Wise Signs ATV Safety Legislation to Protect Our Youth

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Joined by legislators, safety advocates and children, Gov. Bob Wise today signed H.B. 4022, the All-Terrain Vehicle Regulation legislation.

"This legislation is an important first step to protecting our youth," Wise said. "It puts safety regulations on the books and leaves room for future governors and legislators to build on its foundation.

"All terrain vehicles are vital tools for rural landowners and can provide an exciting ride through scenic parts of our state, but too many people, especially young West Virginians, have been killed or crippled because of a lack of safety measures," the governor added.

Wise noted that last year, eight of the 27 people killed were 17 years old or younger and only two were wearing a helmet. In addition, one-third of all ATV vehicle crashes involved passengers on vehicles intended for only one rider.

"This bill requires that people under the age of 18 wear helmets on public and private property," Wise said. "It also prohibits double riding for children under the age of 18 unless the driver has a license."

The legislation also says that by 2005, no one under the age of 18 may operate an ATV without a safety training course certificate. In addition, municipalities or counties that are working under a county-wide comprehensive plan may enact stricter ordinances regulating road use.

"We have worked hard to pass ATV safety legislation for two years, and I am happy it will now become law," Wise said. "Nothing is more important than protecting our youth."

Our Children Are Safer

For the past two years, I have fought to make all-terrain vehicle use safer in West Virginia. Finally, that hard work has produced meaningful reforms.

The legislation I recently signed will require that young riders wear helmets whenever they operate or ride on an ATV. Tragically, dozens of children have died or been gravely injured in accidents where a helmet could have saved them. Our message to parents is now clear: If your son or daughter is on an ATV, he or she must wear a proper helmet.

All-terrain vehicles are useful tools for farmers and foresters, and they can provide a wonderful way to enjoy the natural beauty of our forests. However, they are powerful machines, and can be deadly if not operated properly. Just as we require young drivers to demonstrate their competency before they are granted a driver's license, children who wish to operate ATVs will be required to pass a training course.

Every community must be empowered to regulate ATV use to best protect the interests of its citizens. Under the provisions of this legislation, counties and municipalities are afforded the opportunity to pass stricter rules regarding ATV use on their roads. I encourage citizens to contact local leaders and express their thoughts on this important subject.

This legislation is a landmark for safety, but it must not be the final time the Legislature addresses the issue. I fully expect the momentum and consensus built this year will continue.

We have taken an important step in the most vital area of governance – protecting our youth.

Chapter 4

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Throughout his career in Congress, Bob Wise was a proponent of health care programs, particularly those that offered access to care to the most vulnerable members of society. As one of the staunchest supporters of the federally-financed State Children's Health Insurance Program, he was chagrined to learn that his own state, with tens of thousands of uninsured children, left millions of Federal dollars allocated to the state under this program unspent.

The rate of participation in the West Virginia CHIP program became an issue in the 2000 election. Wise vowed, if elected, to spend time and effort signing up every eligible child.

But insurance coverage was but one of a series of health issues that confronted the state at the start of the 21st century. Physicians were threatening to close up shop in many communities because of skyrocketing medical malpractice insurance rates. The prices of prescription drugs and health services were taking an ever-increasing toll on many citizens, especially the elderly. West Virginia's cancer mortality rates were substantially above national averages. And the state had some of the highest rates of many preventable illnesses, especially those caused by tobacco.

Wise took on all these challenges. The intense activity of his administration in the area of health brought many people into action, and had a profound impact on the health of thousands of state residents.

WEST VIRGINIA CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

West Virginians, like people everywhere, are committed to the health of their children. The state legislature has set aside funds to participate in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for several years. Yet, for reasons that were not at first apparent, many of the state's eligible children remained unenrolled at the start of 2001.

Wise was of the opinion that the program had not been successfully communicated to parents – particularly the young, low-income parents whose children could benefit most from early preventative care that would translate into improved health over the course of a lifetime. He decided to employ the campaign tactics that had won him such success in his political campaigns to a health campaign.

Wise barnstormed throughout the state in 2001, knocking on doors, visiting schools, day care centers, public swimming pools and shopping malls. He stopped mothers pushing strollers and provided them with CHIP applications in person.

His effort was the public face of a widespread, organized effort within the state's Public Employees Insurance Agency, which managed CHIP. PEIA made sure that CHIP information was available in schools, doctors' offices, state agencies and other places parents might visit. At Wise's personal invitation, Nitro native Kathy Mattea, a nationally famous singer, made a television ad that was played widely on the state's commercial stations.

The result: nearly 11,500 new CHIP enrollments in Wise's first year in office. The campaign continued throughout his term, and West Virginia was never faced with a loss of Federal CHIP funds while he was at the head of state government. In fact, in the latter years of his term, Federal officials transferred unspent CHIP funds from other states to West Virginia to cover the additional children Wise had enrolled.

A Milestone for Children's Health

Last week, I had the pleasure of announcing that 20,000 children are now covered by the West Virginia Children's Health Insurance Program. This is a 25 percent increase since January 2001. That's 4,000 more children covered in just four months.

All West Virginia children should have access to the health care they need. That's why I was so happy to personally present the 20,000th and 20,001st CHIP cards to Stephanie Guthrie of Nitro for her two children, Bretton and Morgan.

Our goal is to sign up at least 28,000 children, but we won't stop there. I believe there are many more children who need our help.

CHIP covers children whose family incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, but above the level that would qualify for Medicaid. For too long, this gap has been a stumbling block for many West Virginia families who want to get health coverage.

We are aggressively getting the word out to parents that you can get coverage for your children. The people who work in the CHIP office have been working very hard to make sure West Virginia parents know about this program. Many community health clinics are working to help parents sign up for this vital program.

CHIP also has created a television ad featuring Kathy Mattea that is being shown on several television stations. Kathy knows how important the health of our children is, and I thank her for volunteering her time.

All parents should have the peace of mind knowing their children will be taken care of if they are sick. There is no cost to apply for CHIP, and no premiums to pay. Parents should call 1-877-WVA-CHIP to see if their kids qualify.

News Release
July 11, 2001

Wise Walks West Virginia Promoting Free Children's Health Insurance

FOLLANSBEE, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise was literally walking local neighborhoods and knocking on doors to promote the Children's Health Insurance Program today in Follansbee. Wise has been walking neighborhoods, visiting city pools, and walking parades promoting the CHIP this summer.

CHIP offers free or low-cost health insurance for children of working families to get the medical care they need to grow into strong healthy adults.

"I'm going to be walking through neighborhoods, knocking on every door – doing whatever it takes to find every child and get them signed up for the CHIP," said Wise. "Every parent should have the peace of mind knowing their kids can get health care when they need it."

Wise has already visited communities in Randolph, Wayne, Raleigh, and Ohio Counties promoting CHIP.

"I'm treating this like a political campaign," Wise said. "I'll be on the road at least once a week for the rest of the summer trying to reach parents and get out the message of CHIP."

Current enrollment for West Virginia CHIP stands at 20,775. This is a 34 percent increase since January of this year.

There is no cost to apply and no premiums to pay for the CHIP program. Families interested in CHIP can call toll-free 1-877-WVA-CHIP for more information.

News Release
February 25, 2002

Wise Announces Major Increase in CHIP Enrollment

Charleston, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today announced that West Virginia has increased the number of children signed up for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by 11,485 children. The federal office of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released its annual report in February 2002 that shows CHIP increased enrollment by 53

percent in 2001.

“I made a commitment to make sure we were doing everything possible to sign up every child who needed health insurance,” Wise said. “My commitment remains strong, and I am going to continue our efforts to reach the families who need health care coverage for their kids.”

Nationally, the enrollment figures show a continued steady rise with 4.5 million children now enrolled into state CHIP plans. The West Virginia CHIP ranked 13 out of 51 with a 53 percent growth for its increased percentage of children covered. Wise attributed the increased enrollment to forming partnerships with private and public organizations and implementing an aggressive outreach effort and media campaign to schools and communities.

“I know that many of our families who work hard still can’t afford basic health care for their children,” said Wise. “This is why I’m going to continue to walk door-to-door and talk with families about the importance of CHIP.”

For more information about WV CHIP, visit the website at [HYPERLINK “http://www.wvchip.org”](http://www.wvchip.org) www.wvchip.org.

Governor’s Message

April 19, 2002

West Virginia Children Deserve the Best

A sick child is a frightening thing. A sick child without insurance is even more dismaying. All West Virginia children should have access to quality health care, and I am thankful to say we are making great strides in the battle to guarantee every child that access.

For more than a year, I have aggressively been getting the word out to parents that you can get coverage for your children. I went on walking tours in several counties last year to encourage enrollment in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which assures health care for children of families who may make too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford insurance coverage.

I will get out my walking shoes again this summer to spread the word to families about our program of health insurance for children.

During the course of a year, about 33,000 children are touched by CHIP as families come in and out of insurance coverage. And in the outreach process of determining who is eligible to enroll, we picked up 10,000 more who can be covered by Medicaid.

West Virginia gets criticized for being below the national average. But we do twice as well as the rest of the nation in providing health care for our kids.

Last week, I received a new report that provides county-specific information on children covered by Medicaid, CHIP or those who have no insurance at all. Nationally, 11.2 percent have no health insurance. In West Virginia, the figure is about half of that – 6.6 percent.

Health Insurance in West Virginia: The Children's Report by the West Virginia University Institute for Health Policy Research at the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center, reveals there are 28,300 uninsured children in West Virginia on any given day. It provides state officials with county-specific information not previously available.

We know there are least seven counties in which more than 1,000 uninsured children live. We know where they are. Now we have to find them and get them enrolled. We have to reach out to those who are eligible but haven't enrolled yet. That's why I'm hitting the pavement and will do my part for enrollment.

All parents should have the peace of mind of knowing their children will be taken care of if they are sick. There is no cost to apply for CHIP, and there are no premiums to pay. Parents should call 1-877-WVA-CHIP to see if their kids qualify.

News release
August 1, 2002

Wise Walks Neighborhood Promoting CHIP

PARKERSBURG, W.Va.—Gov. Bob Wise continued his walking tour this morning going door to door in several neighborhoods in Parkersburg promoting the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Wise walked with more than 25 volunteers to encourage families to enroll in the program, which provides health care for children of families who make too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford insurance coverage.

“We know from The Children's Report done by the WVU Institute for Health Policy and Research that more than 28,300 children are uninsured in West Virginia on any given day,” Wise said. “We also know from the report that even though there are 804 children from Wood County enrolled in the program there are still more than 1,000 uninsured children in this county.”

Wise said that while West Virginia still has too many uninsured children, during the past year an additional 10,000 children were signed up for the program. Currently there are more than 20,458 children enrolled in the CHIP program.

News Release
October 3, 2002

West Virginia Maximizes All CHIP Money for Working Families

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced as of Oct. 1, 2002, West Virginia is one of 11 states that have used all of their Children's Health Insurance Program money for the fiscal year. Any money not used would have expired on Sept. 30.

"I made a commitment to make sure we were doing everything possible to sign up every child who needed health insurance," Wise said. "Being able to use these federal dollars is a clear benefit to the children of our working families. This means we're reaching more and more families every day."

CHIP has had a steady enrollment over the past year of more than 20,000 West Virginia children. In addition, close to 25,000 children were able to access care during this period using dollars that were unspent from the federal allotment of the past two years.

CHIP and its community partners have just concluded a successful Back to School Campaign. CHIP enrollment, which was 20,209 at the end of the school year, has climbed to 20,958.

CHIP also has received a grant award of \$18.5 million in federal funds for the new fiscal year, an increase of \$1.9 million from last year.

"My commitment remains strong, and I am going to continue our efforts to reach the families who need health care coverage for their kids," Wise added.

News Release
Feb. 6, 2004

West Virginia to Receive \$12 Million In Federal Funding for Chip

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that more West Virginia children will have health insurance through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The state is receiving more than \$12 million in unused funds from other states not using their full 2001 federal fiscal year allotment; each state has up to three years to spend its allocated federal funds.

"We have done an excellent job promoting CHIP," Wise said. "We have helped insure more than 61,000 children through this program, and this funding will allow us to help even more children."

Last year, WVCHIP received an additional \$18.7 million when 14 states qualified for additional funding. This year, West Virginia will be among 22 states receiving redistributed funding.

This additional funding helps West Virginia offset a projected deficit for 2007, which increased recently because of enrollment growth.

“We continue to feel confident that the federal commitment for children’s health coverage will be there, even with continued growth and inflation,” said Executive Director Sharon Carte.

For more information on the program, visit www.wvchip.org or call 1-877-WVA-CHIP.

MEDICAL LIABILITY INSURANCE CRISIS

Maintaining an adequate number of physicians to meet West Virginia’s health care needs is crucial to public health. Yet throughout the 2000 campaign, Bob Wise heard from physicians that their practices were endangered by quickly-rising medical liability insurance costs. The causes of this crisis were in dispute, with some blaming the state’s court system, and calling for reform of the system under which medical malpractice suits were heard. Others blamed the medical liability insurance carriers for charging physicians unreasonable rates.

Regardless of the cause, the results were real. Facing the possibility of a loss of critically-needed physicians, Wise organized a Malpractice Insurance Working Group to seek solutions. Eventually, West Virginia approached the problem from two directions – creating a state-organized insurance system for physicians – later converted to a physician-owned mutual insurance company – and establishing reforms to the court system.

The effort was a success, and by the end of Wise’s term the physician supply had stabilized.

Wise to Propose Malpractice Insurance Plan

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today told his Malpractice Insurance Working Group that he will call the West Virginia Legislature into special session this fall to consider establishing a state-run malpractice insurance plan for physicians and other health care providers.

“I want to send a message to women who are pregnant, to people who need surgery, and to people who are worried that their family physician is going to leave the community. If this bill passes, no doctor will leave West Virginia because he or she cannot find malpractice insurance,” Wise said.

“This is a health care crisis, and we need to act quickly to assure physicians that they will have an affordable, dependable source of this insurance in the months and years to come,” Wise said. “I will propose legislation that authorizes the Board of Risk and Insurance Management to create a new medical malpractice insurance program for West Virginia physicians.”

The program, as proposed, will be optional for health care providers and other health care providers, including pharmacists, dentists, nurses, physical therapists, optometrists and podiatrists. The agency also will be authorized to offer malpractice insurance coverage to hospitals, clinics and other institutions providing needed care to West Virginians. Any West Virginia provider who meets the underwriting criteria for the program will be offered full malpractice coverage regardless of health care specialty, type of practice or location.

The program is intended to be self-supporting, and the Insurance Commission has carefully studied the financial implications of the state’s involvement in this insurance program. No provider will be offered coverage unless he or she is willing to provide health care, as most West Virginia doctors do, for Medicaid, Workers’ Compensation, PEIA and Children’s Health Insurance Program patients. Rates have not yet been set, but should be about 10 to 15 percent less than the coverage now provided by private insurers.

Governor's Message
November 16, 2001

Working Toward a Solution

There is a malpractice insurance crisis going on in West Virginia and around the country. This is why I called the West Virginia Legislature into session this past month and presented a bill that could deal immediately with this problem. I proposed a bill that offers all doctors malpractice insurance by the state under the Board of Risk and Insurance Management. Under this system, rates would be about 15 percent below the current private-market rates. My bill also would protect doctors from alleged frivolous lawsuits, including a separate bill that will establish a mechanism for screening many claims and resolving them expeditiously.

Members of the West Virginia Legislature also have been working on several proposals to help our doctors. They know that a proposal must pass soon to keep our doctors in our state. The legislative leadership and I agree that a plan must be passed by Dec. 1 in order for it to be up and running by the beginning of January. We have identified more than 200 physicians who have heard from their insurers that their coverage would end in the next few months. Many of these insurance companies have collected millions of dollars in premiums from doctors over the past 15 years and those doctors have raised their fees to cover the costs. Now, the insurance companies are deserting the doctors including those who never had a malpractice claim. Our efforts will ensure that none of them have to leave West Virginia because insurance is not available.

Between now and when the Legislature resumes on November 26th, help is available to doctors who are having difficulty with malpractice coverage.

I want to assure you that we will continue though this upcoming holiday to work together toward a common goal – preserving the health care system that serves all West Virginians.

Governor's Message
December 7, 2001

A Health Crisis Averted

This week, I will sign into law the compromise medical malpractice insurance plan that is the result of several months' work and debate in our State Capitol. I want to thank the members of the Legislature for their hard work and cooperation in this effort.

Many people have shared with me their concerns during this health care crisis. Physicians and their patients talked with me about how the malpractice insurance crisis threatened the health care of many communities. Hospitals and clinics expressed their fear that they would be deprived of key staff members. People who had been injured during medical care were concerned that their needs would not be met.

This bill assures that all health care providers in West Virginia have access to medical liability insurance, that patients and health care providers in West Virginia are treated fairly in disputes arising out of medical procedures. It also provides for several changes to assure that the administration of the state's medical liability insurance program is efficient and effective.

Coverage will be provided through the Board of Risk and Insurance Management. Physicians can purchase up to \$2 million in coverage per claim, with a \$4 million annual limit, and hospitals can be covered for up to \$3 million per claim. To be eligible, providers must accept PEIA, CHIP, Medicaid and West Virginia Workers' Compensation patients.

In addition to physicians and surgeons, eligible health care providers include osteopaths, podiatrists, optometrists, pharmacists, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, dentists, physical therapists and chiropractors. Group practices, clinics, hospitals, and ambulances also can be covered.

A pre-trial mediation will be required in each case. With the agreement of all parties, the case can be moved to a quicker and less expensive summary trial.

The Board also will be required to provide certified financial reports and five-year plans to the Legislature and the public to monitor the financial soundness of its operations.

Working with the Legislature, I am happy that we have developed a plan to ensure that affordable malpractice insurance continues to be available for our doctors, and West Virginia families will have access to quality health care.

News Release
December 12, 2001

Governor Signs Medical Malpractice Bill

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today signed the Medical Malpractice bill into law while surrounded by legislators, doctors, hospital administrators, Insurance Commission members and other health care professionals.

“This bill assures that all health care providers in West Virginia have access to medical

liability insurance, and that patients and health care providers in West Virginia are treated fairly in disputes arising out of medical procedures,” Wise said. “It also provides for several changes to assure that the administration of the state’s medical liability insurance program is efficient and effective.”

Coverage will be provided through the Board of Risk and Insurance Management. Physicians can purchase up to \$2 million in coverage per claim, with a \$4 million annual limit, and hospitals can be covered for up to \$3 million per claim. To be eligible, providers must accept PEIA, CHIP, Medicaid and West Virginia Workers’ Compensation patients.

“This bill is especially important today with the news that the St. Paul Companies will be getting out of the medical malpractice insurance business completely,” Wise said. “This comes as no surprise, and, with this bill, we are ready to handle the problem.”

There will be several meetings around the state for physicians to talk with the insurance experts about this new plan. Meetings are as follows:

Wednesday, December 12

6 p.m. CAMC Memorial, Charleston

Friday, December 14

12 p.m. City Hospital, Martinsburg & Davis Memorial Hospital, Elkins

Monday, December 17

12 p.m. Wheeling Hospital, Wheeling & Suburban Catering, Morgantown
6 p.m. United Health Center, Clarksburg & Princeton Community Hospital,
Princeton

Tuesday, December 18

7 a.m. Cabell General Hospital, Huntington & Raleigh General Hospital,
Beckley
12 p.m. Camden Clark Memorial, Parkersburg
6 p.m. Logan General Hospital, Logan

A Call to Health Care Providers

On December 12, 2001, I signed into law the West Virginia Healthcare Provider Professional Liability Insurance Act.

On that day, I made a promise to every West Virginia physician, hospital and healthcare provider that if they couldn't find insurance coverage, I would have a system up and running. This system would be able to offer them professional liability through the Board of Risk and Insurance Management.

I am proud to announce that we have met our deadline – our system is up and running – and it's running smoothly and effectively.

I am putting out a call to all West Virginia physicians – if you don't have insurance, let us help you.

You can purchase up to \$2 million per claim in coverage, with a \$4 million annual limit. Hospitals can be covered up to \$3 million per claim.

This plan is not only for our physicians and surgeons, but to our eligible healthcare providers, including osteopaths, podiatrists, optometrists, pharmacists, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, dentists, physical therapists and chiropractors.

Group practices, clinics, hospitals, and ambulances also can be covered by this or other BRIM programs.

To enroll, visit your insurance agent or go to the BRIM online Website at www.state.wv.us/brim to download an application. Once the application is completed, it can be mailed to the BRIM offices using the address on the form.

After receiving the application, BRIM will be able to notify physicians within 48 hours if they are eligible for the program.

As of January 4, BRIM had received 138 applications for the program. For those who have applied and were eligible, BRIM mailed conditional binders.

I want to ensure that no West Virginia physician has to leave the state because of the lack of available, affordable insurance. This state-run system will help us do that.

Fighting to Keep Doctors in the Mountain State

The issues surrounding the current medical liability crisis are complex, but the seriousness of the problem is simple: We must keep doctors in West Virginia, and we must ensure access to good quality medical care to our citizens. While a successful solution to the crisis will be multi-faceted, we must make these core values the center of our response. Last week, I presented a plan to the Legislature that contains many specific actions we can take to improve the insurance climate for health care providers. The ultimate goal of all of these proposed changes is to make certain our outstanding physicians and hospitals are able to continue their service to our communities.

Reforming the liability laws in West Virginia is an important step in making malpractice insurance affordable. However, we must also take action to address the short-term part of the crisis, which threatens to leave our state without the quantity and quality of health care providers it needs.

I want to make one thing clear: the state guarantees, currently, the availability of medical liability insurance to every eligible doctor and health care facility in West Virginia. The Board of Risk and Insurance Management now covers more than 1,000 doctors by offering medical liability coverage lost when out-of-state insurance companies abandoned West Virginia. We must allow BRIM to continue its service to these doctors and hospitals while realizing that the ultimate objective is the reestablishment of a competitive market in the Mountain State. I urge all West Virginia doctors to call BRIM toll free at 1-800-345-4669 to get more information about this program.

Our doctors did nothing to cause their premiums to skyrocket; they should not be punished for the financial problems of big, out-of-state insurance companies. Our citizens shouldn't be stripped of their rights, either, because of problems in the insurance industry.

There are a number of simple, but effective measures we must take, including limiting non-economic awards; eliminating the practice of "double-dipping" to collect the same damages from multiple sources; and tightening the requirements for expert witnesses. All of these pieces of the solution will carefully balance the rights of patients and practitioners.

I look forward to continuing to work with the members of the Legislature on this issue. I appreciate the House of Delegates under the leadership of Speaker Kiss for their willingness to address my proposals in such a timely fashion.

These are not easy reforms. They will require the Legislature to tackle tough issues, make hard decisions, and put the people of West Virginia first. However, this crisis, like so many others, is an opportunity in disguise. With decisive, aggressive action now, we can protect the health and prosperity of the Mountain State for generations to come.

Lowering Medical Malpractice Rates

Last week, I urged the West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM) to reduce malpractice insurance rates offered to West Virginia physicians. This is an important step forward; we are making coverage not only accessible, but affordable as well.

I am, and have always been, dedicated to keeping our doctors in West Virginia. Citizens deserve to feel confident that a doctor will be here to take care of them when they're sick. These new rates will give the physician community some stability, helping to ensure the health and well-being of our citizens.

HB 601, introduced last year, provides a vehicle for malpractice insurance for West Virginia's physicians and health care providers. The bill provides access to medical malpractice insurance for health care providers who were unable to obtain coverage on the private market. Additionally, the price of this coverage was to be higher than the rate charged by the private market.

However, there is a provision in the law that allows BRIM to disregard that requirement if only one carrier is providing five percent or more of the market. Because only one company, Medical Assurance, is actively offering coverage to West Virginia doctors, the law allows BRIM to provide coverage to state physicians at a price competitive with the private market.

This new coverage is vital to our physicians because virtually all of the private insurers have pulled out of West Virginia. Those that are still in West Virginia are "cherry picking" only the lowest risk/highest profit doctors to insure.

The less profitable policies are not being renewed in the private market, and there could be more than 773 doctors whose coverage may be canceled or not renewed over the next three months.

An independent actuarial study has deemed the BRIM program to be financially sound, and West Virginia taxpayers will not incur any financial burden from this program.

Currently BRIM covers 1,255 health care providers in West Virginia. The new base rate would be competitive with the rate being offered by Medical Assurance as of Sept. 14, 2002. Rates for physicians would be determined upon individual underwriting criteria.

News Release
March 11, 2003

Wise Signs Medical Liability Reform into Law

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Surrounded by health care professionals and legislators, Gov. Bob Wise signed H.B. 2122, Medical Liability Reform, into law to ensure the accessibility, affordability and stability of the health care system in West Virginia.

“My number one commitment is the health and safety of the citizens of West Virginia,” Wise said. “I introduced, and the Legislature passed, legislation that will help keep our physicians practicing medicine and will attract new doctors to our state. This bill also will preserve and strengthen our emergency medical and trauma system.”

The legislation includes reforming the laws relating to medical malpractice, establishing a statewide trauma and emergency medical system and creating an economic package to help offset the cost doctors pay for medical malpractice insurance.

“A financial package is included to help physicians deal with the rising cost of liability insurance through a provider tax credit,” Wise said. “The bill also provides state assistance for the establishment of a physician’s mutual insurance company.”

H.B. 2122 places a cap on non-economic damages of \$250,000; eliminates joint liability; sets new standards for expert witnesses; recognizes collateral source payments; provides a homestead exemption for medical providers in case of bankruptcy because of a medical liability ruling; and limits certain third-party claims.

“This new law will make West Virginia a state that has economic incentives for doctors to stay, start practices and raise families,” Wise said. “The hard work and commitment of our physicians make our state a better place to live.”

Governor’s Message
June 18, 2004

Physicians’ Mutual A Reality

Getting health care to the people of West Virginia has been one of my major goals since taking office. To ensure that providers stay in West Virginia, treat our citizens and contribute to the economy, we had to grapple with the often complicated and confusing world of insurance coverage.

To preserve the system and protect patients, we decided that doctors had to run their own insurance company. After tremendous efforts by many organizations and individuals, a West Virginia doctor-owned insurance company is now a reality. The West Virginia Physicians' Mutual Insurance Company recently received a certificate of authority from the Insurance Commissioner. This allows the company to begin operations as an insurer of West Virginia doctors.

This is a prime example of how government can work for the people. Last year, I asked the Legislature to enact sweeping reforms to address the medical malpractice crisis. It quickly responded to my request, aiding me in furthering the success of the Physicians' Mutual Insurance Company.

All physicians currently insured under the BRIM II program established in December 2001 will move to the Mutual on July 1, 2004. Currently, there are about 1,450 West Virginia physicians in BRIM, a state-run plan we successfully and innovatively used to address the malpractice crisis until the Mutual became operable.

Bringing viability to the Mutual required a \$24 million loan to the Physicians' Mutual Insurance Company from the tobacco settlement fund. This, combined with assessments on practicing physicians and insurance companies licensed in West Virginia, will provide the initial capitalization of the company.

The establishment of the West Virginia Physicians' Mutual will help the state achieve its goal of having an available, affordable and stable medical liability insurance climate. With the continuing help of the Legislature, BRIM staff, the Mutual's board of directors and many others, the West Virginia Physicians' Mutual Insurance Company will quickly meet and exceed the expectations of West Virginia and its people.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

One of the most persistent health care issues in West Virginia and across the country during Governor Wise's term in office was the high cost of prescription medications. The issue was of particular concern to the state's senior citizens, many of whom live on fixed incomes.

Wise undertook a series of efforts to reduce the impact of prescription drug costs, including establishing a prescription discount plan associated with a state-issued seniors ID card. Some 400,000 Golden Mountaineer cards were mailed to citizens in 2001 alone. Wise also organized a multi-state cooperative to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies. This move earned him the opposition of several national companies, which did not relish the prospect of negotiating prices with several state insurance plans, covering more than a million citizens, at once.

Wise also joined several other U.S. governors in demanding that the Federal government not cut off access to cheaper Canadian prescription drugs.

In 2004, working with the Legislature, Wise secured passage of legislation creating the West Virginia Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council.

Governor's Message
October 19, 2001

West Virginia Leads the Way

Last week, I had the pleasure of announcing a new seven-state effort led by West Virginia to lower the cost of prescription medicine for participants in the Public Employees Insurance Agency. This is the largest health insurance plan in the state – covering 211,000 state and local government employees, educators and retirees. Even if you are not a member, controlling PEIA costs is important to you as a taxpayer. Employee health costs have been among the fastest-rising costs in state and local government.

PEIA is not large enough to have much bargaining clout with drug manufacturers and wholesalers. So I asked PEIA Director Tom Susman to see if other states would be interested in joining with us. He and his staff were more successful than any of us could have hoped. We have persuaded six other states – Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico and South Carolina – to work together in purchasing drugs for all their state employee health plans.

These are mostly small states, like West Virginia, which alone lacked the ability to negotiate good prices with drug companies. With 1.4 million members, this alliance will become one of the largest buyers of prescription drugs in the country.

As I have learned through my years in Congress, if you have states that are willing to join together, more people will listen to what you have to say.

This is the second step we have taken in recent weeks to ratchet down health costs for West Virginians. The Golden Mountaineer Discount Card can provide savings for senior citizens who do not have prescription drug insurance – it is saving thousands of dollars for West Virginia seniors every day.

We won't stop there. It's my hope to use the PEIA plan as a springboard for efforts to cut drug costs for other West Virginians, including those in other public programs, like the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, and eventually for people with employer-funded insurance.

Governor's Message
December 21, 2001

Golden Mountaineer Card Saves Seniors Money

In today's economy, every dollar counts. If we can save a few pennies now, we can afford to buy something we need later. No one knows this better than our seniors in the Mountain State. With the rising cost of prescription drugs, taking a dollar further these days means extra money to purchase the things we need.

I am excited to report that with the implementation of the West Virginia Golden Mountaineer Discount Card, over the past three months our seniors have saved more than half a million dollars on prescription drugs. The average senior who used the card saved \$18 per month – enough to buy a holiday gift for a grandchild, or a few extra necessities at the grocery store.

This fall, the state of West Virginia mailed new Golden Mountaineer Discount Cards to nearly every citizen age 60 or over. For the first time, we have added a prescription drug benefit to the card. It also is accepted at many retail locations for other senior discounts.

The average prescription price was reduced by 17.2 percent when seniors used the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card.

I am pleased to say that more than 300 West Virginia pharmacies accept the card, including at least one in every county. These pharmacies offer seniors the lower of two

prices: the pharmacy's usual and customary price or the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card price. I'm working with more pharmacies to increase the number of those who will accept the card.

If you don't have a Golden Mountaineer Card, I urge you to get one today. All West Virginia residents age 60 and older are eligible for the card, regardless of income. To apply, please call the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services toll-free at 1-877-987-3646 or contact a local senior center. If you would like to apply for a card online, or to view the statewide list of participating pharmacies, visit the Bureau of Senior Services website at: <http://www.state.wv.us/seniorservices/>.

Increasing the benefits to our seniors has been a priority for me. Our society is judged by the way we treat our seniors. Let's do everything we can to help make their lives better.

News Release
August 12, 2002

Wise; Nation's Governors Support DHHS Lawsuit over Preferred Drug Lists

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that 23 of the nation's governors wrote a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson urging the federal government to “respond vigorously” to a lawsuit by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

The lawsuit seeks to bar states from using preferred drug lists (PDLs) as a cost-controlling measure. It also attempts to invalidate Michigan's program to lower prescription drug costs by using a PDL for Medicaid patients.

“Preferred drug lists are one of our best methods for lowering the cost of prescription drugs,” Wise said. “With pharmacy costs rising 15 - 20 percent annually – doubling every four years – this issue is reaching crisis proportions.”

A key concern to the governors was a section of the suit that seeks to enjoin the programs of “other states that are similarly situated.” Although states aren't specifically listed, the provision could affect at least 11 other states using PDLs, including West Virginia.

West Virginia has given seniors an 18 percent discount on prescriptions through the Golden Mountaineer Card, and the Public Employees Insurance Agency will save at least \$25 million over the next three years with the multi-state drug plan. In addition, West Virginia CHIP will save \$3 million over the next three years.

“States are the laboratory of democracy,” Wise said. “We must find a way to continue to lower the costs of prescription drugs.”

Governors from Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming joined Wise in signing the letter.

Governor’s Message
September 6, 2002

Fighting the Big, Brand Name Drug Companies

The high cost of brand name prescription drugs continues to be a problem for our state and our country. One of the first things I did as governor was reinstate the Golden Mountaineer Card, so senior citizens could receive a recognizable discount on their prescription drug costs.

But, we know, this is not a problem faced by West Virginians alone, so we started working with four other states to purchase drugs in bulk and to shift our market share to make negotiations easier. Big brand name companies are opposing us at every level in our endeavors.

Now these big, brand name drug companies are coming to the state to try and scare you – the customer. They’re going to be spreading lies and half-truths about steps we’re undertaking to control the outrageous prices they charge for prescription drugs.

Let me tell you something scary. It’s a story we hear often, particularly at our Bureau for Senior Services. Senior citizens cut their pills in half to extend their supply until they can afford the outrageous prices they have to pay for some of their prescription drugs. Wives and husbands often determine who needs their medicine more and the other will go without. The drug companies won’t tell you these stories.

They want to protect their turf. Last year alone, Medicaid and the Public Employees Insurance Agency paid nearly \$350 million for the cost of prescription drugs. In Medicaid next year, we estimate it will cost more to buy prescription drugs than it costs us to pay for 10,000 West Virginians to stay in nursing homes.

If we are unable to hold down the escalating price of drugs, we’ll be forced to make difficult decisions in Medicaid and in other programs about who receives what coverage. Vulnerable takes on a whole new meaning. Do we cover our seniors or our children? In trying to cope with these difficult decisions, we must now fight the half-truths being spread by drug companies.

We have repeatedly encouraged them to meet with us in partnership to attempt to solve this problem. I've held out every olive branch to the brand name companies. I've gotten lip service back, but I haven't gotten anything that deals with the problem. Instead, they have worked to plant the seeds of discontent – to spread rumors and half-truths among those who are the most vulnerable.

They've already fired the first salvo in their program to frighten the people of West Virginia. Recently, the drug interest groups held a meeting in Charleston. When representatives of Medicaid and PEIA asked to attend, they were told they weren't invited – and the big drug companies accuse us of not seeking public input.

Don't be misled by these folks. National figures show that drug companies spend three times more on advertising – those commercials you see on television – than they do on research and development. These big, brand name drug companies are lying to keep their outrageous prices higher. They're selling drugs cheaper in Canada, and they're working to frighten the people of West Virginia.

I'm sending a letter to all major drug companies, asking them to explain why their prices are so outrageous compared with what they charge elsewhere. I'll demand that they stop their scare tactics and explain to me why the people of West Virginia should be charged any more than the citizens of Canada or any other industrialized nation.

What these companies haven't figured out is that we don't scare easily. We conquer adversity, and the thing we really don't like is when people play us for stupid. The people in West Virginia will see through these actions to scare them. We'll come out of this with people getting the drugs they need at a reasonable price.

News Release
February 24, 2003

Wise Takes Fight For Lower Prescription Drug Costs To Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined three of the nation's governors in the U.S. Senate Commerce hearing room for a summit to discuss lowering prescription drug costs.

Wise and Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D), Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) and Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle (D) spoke about the efforts they have taken to lower drug costs before hearing from several U.S. Senators and Representatives and health care experts.

Wise opened his testimony by saying, "If anyone had told me two years ago that a governor would seriously be considering going to Canada to negotiate for prescription drugs, I would have laughed."

Wise pointed out that several steps already have been taken in West Virginia to lower prescription drug prices.

“We created a drug discount program for seniors through our Golden Mountaineer Card, formed the first-ever multi-state prescription drug purchasing pool and created a preferred drug list,” Wise said. “These have created some savings for our citizens, but it’s simply not enough.”

Wise also invited Canadian Internet pharmacists to meet with West Virginia officials and representatives of other states at a meeting in Atlanta to discuss how to make their services available to our citizens.

“We’ve been exploring the possibility of importing prescription drugs from Canada,” Wise added. “The federal government has been tying our hands and making it difficult to negotiate for lower prices by trying to cut us off from re-importing prescription drugs. State programs should be able to purchase medicines at the lower prices available to the federal government.

“Canada is a great ally,” Wise added. “We share trade and commerce and exchange tourists, but we should not have to go to Canada to find low cost prescription drugs for our citizens. It’s unforgivable that our seniors often have to choose between buying food and buying medicine.”

Following their testimony, the governors formed a panel to listen to U.S. Senate and House members. Participants included: Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.); Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.); Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.); Rep. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.); Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.); and Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

News Release
January 20, 2004

Wise Supports Bill to Lower Prescription Drug Prices

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced his support for legislation that aims to force prescription drug companies to offer significantly lower drug prices to the state’s insurance programs.

Wise and legislative leaders are calling for prescription drug companies to use Federal Supply Schedule price guidelines for the West Virginia’s Public Employee Insurance Agency, Medicaid, Workers’ Compensation and Children’s Health Insurance Program.

“My administration has begun addressing the issue of lowering the cost of

prescription drugs. We've taken some important steps, such as pioneering a drug discount program for seniors through the Golden Mountaineer Card and by building the first-ever multi-state prescription drug purchasing pool. We've been exploring the possibility of importing prescription drugs from Canada," Wise said.

"We want fairness. The United States government is able to negotiate lower prices for its veterans' homes, prisons and other programs through the Federal Supply Schedule. We believe state programs should be able to purchase at the lower prices."

Federal Supply Schedule prices on average are about 18 cents per pill lower than what the West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency pays and 35 cents per pill lower than what Medicaid pays. On average, The Federal Supply Schedule prices are about 42 percent of retail, Wise said.

"Our seniors should not be forced to choose between buying groceries or buying necessary medication," Wise said. "Sometimes there just isn't enough money to go around."

Wise and legislative leaders also encouraged other states and private insurers to join West Virginia in this effort.

Wise also said that although he is concerned about containing costs, he is even more concerned about ensuring that West Virginians receive clinically appropriate prescription drugs.

"We want to be sure our residents are getting the right prescription drugs," Wise said.

The legislation also calls for the formation of a state commission that would be empowered to waive the price requirement in cases where a prescription drug company can prove the costs associated with making and distributing the drugs are too high to incur a reasonable profit under the Federal Supply Schedule. But in making that determination, the commission will not consider the cost of marketing and advertising prescription drugs.

The commission would consist of the secretaries of Administration, Health and Human Services, the executive director of Workers' Compensation, the commissioner of the Bureau for Senior Services and three members of the public who have experience in the financing, developing or management of a health insurance company that provides pharmaceutical coverage.

News Release
April 19, 2004

Wise Establishes Pharmaceutical Council to Control Prescription Drug Costs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that in accordance with H.B. 4084, he has established the West Virginia Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council. The council is scheduled to meet tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Governor’s Press Conference Room.

“This is a monumental step in the right direction,” Wise said. “The pharmacy window now is open for negotiations. This council will provide the flexibility to help alleviate some of the high costs of prescription drugs and allow us to negotiate not only for the state of West Virginia, but for the entire population.”

H.B. 4084 allows for the adoption of a federal discount prescription drug price list for state programs and residents. The bill creates a council to establish a pricing schedule using either the federal supply schedule, Canadian drug prices or other appropriate standards and to submit the schedule and implementation plan to the Legislature by Sept. 15, 2004. The schedule and plan will take effect if the Legislature approves it.

Members of the council include: Nancy Atkins, commissioner of the Bureau for Medical Services; Charles Burdette, Fruth Pharmacy; Heather Bresch, vice president of government and public relations for Mylan Laboratories; Gregory A. Burton, executive director of the Workers’ Compensation Commission; Felice Joseph, pharmacy benefits administrator at PEIA; Steve Neal, Health Plan of the Upper Ohio Valley; Paul Nusbaum, cabinet secretary for the Department of Health and Human Resources; Kevin Outtersen, associate professor of law at West Virginia University College of Law; Wayne Spiggle, M.D.; Ann Stottlemeyer, commissioner of the Bureau of Senior Services; and Tom Susman, acting cabinet secretary/director of PEIA.

Governor’s Message
May 14, 2004

Our Citizens Deserve Fair Treatment

West Virginia and America are blessed by the best health care providers in the world. We have modern hospitals, access to the latest in medical research and effective treatments.

Unfortunately, too many of our citizens cannot afford the high cost of the prescription drugs that are a vital component of modern medicine. The big brand-name drug companies refuse to give West Virginians access to the deeply discounted prices paid by Canadians, the federal government and other consumers around the world.

For many years, as the prices of prescription drugs have skyrocketed, senior citizens and others have turned to Canadian suppliers to fill their needs. These are the very same drugs sold in West Virginia pharmacies, from the same manufacturers and subject to the same strict production regulations.

The federal government has attempted to make criminals out of these health care consumers who have no choice but to turn to a reliable, affordable source for their prescription drugs. It's time for that to change.

I implore the Bush administration to expedite the release of a U. S. Department of Health and Human Resources report that will present recommendations on the importation of prescription drugs.

My friend and colleague, Gov. Jim Doyle of Wisconsin, put it well when he stated that we expect to fight the big drug companies on this issue, but we shouldn't have to fight the federal government. Instead of protecting the interests of pharmaceutical companies, leaders in Washington should stand with our seniors and the millions of Americans who have no insurance or no prescription drug coverage.

We've made many strides in providing access to these vital medicines: creating the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card, encouraging the use of generic drugs and taking the lead in forming a multi-state drug purchasing pool. I recently signed legislation requiring drug companies to provide access to fair prices, the same prices the companies charge the federal government and other large customers. Our Medicaid program has been made more cost-efficient with the implementation of a Preferred Drug List.

However, without the cooperation of all branches of the federal government, our efforts will be hampered. I encourage all West Virginians to join me in demanding timely, decisive action by the Bush administration on this issue that affects every West Virginia family.

Addressing the Costs of Prescription Drugs

In West Virginia and in other states, policymakers have joined with health professionals, senior advocates and community groups to address the rising costs of health care, including prescription drugs. In West Virginia, we have made many needed reforms, but today we face even greater challenges.

This week and next I am giving every citizen in West Virginia the opportunity to participate in a discussion about the rising costs of prescription drugs and the recent progress made in this battle. I encourage all those interested to attend; I want to hear your stories, concerns and suggestions on possible resolutions. Town Hall meetings allow you to be heard and make our state seem more like a small community. They bring viewpoints from across the state and unite them into one voice for the good of all West Virginians.

The high cost of prescription drugs is one of the most serious issues with which we can deal. We've taken advantage of every opportunity to make prescription drugs affordable for all our citizens. We created a Preferred Drug List at Medicaid; we led the efforts to form a multi-state drug purchasing pool; we prompted the use of generics; and we expanded the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card for seniors.

Unfortunately these programs are not enough; we still have too many children going without needed medications and too many seniors being forced to choose between food and medicine.

We are lucky to have the support of so many other state leaders as we find solutions to this serious problem. I shared with my fellow governors the actions taken by the West Virginia Legislature to establish a Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council, and many other states have developed a council as well. This group has proven effective, and they are ready to share their findings and recommendations. It is my hope that in the near future, drug companies, the federal government and others will join us in standing up for America's seniors, children and working families.

What these companies haven't figured out is that West Virginians don't scare easily. We work hard and fight for what we believe to be fair. We conquer adversity; we will let everyone know that West Virginia laid the foundation for lower prescription drug prices across the nation. Working together, we can make prescription drugs affordable for all West Virginians.

You are invited to participate at a meeting in your area. There are two meetings Thursday, October 7, the first at 10 a.m. at the Mountain State University in Beckley and the other at 3:15 p.m. at the Wheeling Hospital Auditorium in Wheeling. The third meeting will be at 10 a.m., Friday, October 8 at the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center Auditorium at CAMC Memorial in Charleston.

**State Of West Virginia
Executive Department
Charleston
Executive Order No. 18-04
November 29, 2004**

By the Governor

WHEREAS, the rising cost of prescription drugs is one of the most critical issues facing the current health care system in the State of West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the rising cost of prescription drugs has imposed a significant hardship on individuals who have limited budgets, are uninsured, or who have prescription drug coverage through sources that cannot control costs successfully due to cost shifting and disparate pricing policies; and

WHEREAS, the annual cost of prescription drugs to the Medicaid Program in West Virginia is \$320 million, the Program's single largest expenditure and more than its annual cost to maintain 10,000 State citizens in nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, annual prescription drug costs for the State Public Employees Insurance Agency are currently predicted to be approximately \$113 million; and

WHEREAS, rising prescription drug costs make it difficult, if not impossible, for some companies to provide employee health insurance, which in turn can affect efforts by the State to recruit and retain businesses; and

WHEREAS, many factors can contribute to the high cost of prescription drugs, most of which can be attributed to dysfunction in the market, including little price competition between primary drug companies with unlimited resources to feed demand and bolster profits, and isolated purchasers, including individuals, institutions and State agencies, which lack the bargaining power to negotiate fair prices; and

WHEREAS, State Government agencies could achieve significant savings through the coordinated purchase of prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Legislature has enacted legislation, known as the Pharmaceutical Availability and Affordability Act of 2004, to address the problem of rising prescription costs; and

WHEREAS, such legislation created the West Virginia Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council, comprised of certain Executive Branch officials and also members of the public appointed by the Governor, and that body has made recommendations to further the efforts of lowering prescription drug costs; and

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Legislature was recently called into Extraordinary Session

by Proclamation of the Governor and passed a Concurrent Resolution recognizing the importance of implementing certain recommendations of the West Virginia Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council and authorized implementation of the Council's strategic plan, including the creation of the Office of Pharmaceutical Advocate; and

WHEREAS, in order to promote healthy communities and protect the public health and welfare, every effort must continue to be made to provide affordable prescription drugs for all residents of West Virginia.

NOW THEREFORE I, BOB WISE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. The Office of Pharmaceutical Advocate is hereby established as recommended by the West Virginia Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council. A Pharmaceutical Advocate shall be appointed by the Governor by the first day of March, 2005.
2. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Order, and subject to the direction of the Governor, the Pharmaceutical Advocate is authorized to make decisions for the various Executive agencies of government with respect to the purchase of prescription drugs and coordinate all State Government Executive Branch entities' activities, practices and policies relating to prescription drugs. The Pharmaceutical Advocate shall develop a comprehensive plan and exercise his or her authority to achieve the lowest feasible cost of prescription drugs for the State of West Virginia and its citizens.
3. The Pharmaceutical Advocate shall be a Cabinet-level position with the power and authority to:
 - (a) Purchase or enter into contracts as necessary to achieve the purposes of this Order.
 - (b) File suit.
 - (c) Evaluate existing contracts for State purchase of prescription drugs for cost savings.
 - (d) Negotiate and execute pharmacy benefit management contracts for the purpose of managing rising drug costs for this State and all parties which have executed prescription drug purchasing agreements with the Office of Pharmaceutical Advocate.
 - (e) Provide discount prices or rebate programs as prudent for seniors and persons without adequate prescription drug insurance.
 - (f) Work to achieve disclosure of the amount spent by prescription drug manufacturers with regard to expenditures for advertising, marketing, and promotion, as well as for provider incentives and research and development efforts.
 - (g) Establish programs aimed at educating health care practitioners authorized to prescribe prescription drugs about the relative costs and benefits of various prescription drugs, with an emphasis on generic substitution for brand name drugs when available and appropriate; prescribing established, less-costly drugs instead of newer and more expensive drugs when appropriate; and prescribing lower dosages of prescription drugs when appropriate.
 - (h) Establish disease management programs aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of treating certain diseases identified as prevalent among this

State's population with prescription drugs.

(i) Facilitate the establishment of voluntary private buying clubs, cooperatives, or purchasing alliances comprised of small businesses and/or individuals for the purpose of purchasing prescription drugs at optimal prices.

(j) Develop and implement a program to maximize savings to the State and its citizens from Section 340B of the Federal Public Health Service Act and 42 U.S.C. 256b, as applicable.

(k) Develop and implement a program under which the State of West Virginia purchases, then resells, prescription drugs at cost, plus operating expenses, to West Virginia consumers.

(l) Develop and implement other programs, projects and initiatives to achieve the purposes of this Order, including initiating, evaluating, and promoting other strategies that result in reduced costs of prescription drugs for the citizens of West Virginia, including, but not limited to:

- i. A common preferred drug list for the Public Employees Insurance Agency, the Medicaid Program, and the Workers' Compensation Commission;
- ii. A streamlined prior authorization process for State insurers; and
- iii. Patient assistance programs in their current forms, as well as new programs, such as central fill pharmacy/bulk replenishment models.

4. The Pharmaceutical Advocate may employ the personnel necessary to achieve the provisions and purposes of this Order and may draw upon staff of other agencies for advice and assistance in the formulation, implementation and execution of administrative and operational plans and policies.

5. Existing cooperative purchasing agreements entered into by the Executive Director of the Public Employees Insurance Agency shall be henceforth administered by the Pharmaceutical Advocate.

6. All State Executive agencies which purchase prescription drugs for West Virginians, including, but not limited to, the Division of Corrections and the Regional Jail Authority within the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, the State psychiatric hospitals and the Bureau of Public Health within the Department of Health and Human Resources, and other agencies named throughout this Order, shall immediately review and evaluate their existing prescription drug purchasing contracts for opportunities for savings, and report the same to the Office of Pharmaceutical Advocate.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Twenty-ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Four, and in the One Hundred Forty-Second year of the State.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

As a part of his first package of legislation in 2001, Governor Wise proposed a Patients' Bill of Rights. It was passed by the Legislature and went into effect only six months into his term.

Governor's Message
June 29, 2001

Your Rights as a Patient

West Virginia's Patients' Bill of Rights was one of the first bills I introduced as governor. It goes into effect in mid-July.

This law puts health care decisions back into the hands of patients and their doctors. It guarantees that HMOs won't have the final word on what lifesaving treatments you or your family members can have.

If you and your HMO have a dispute over whether a treatment you need is covered:

- You have the right to appeal to the HMO's internal review program.
- You have the right to appeal the HMO's decision to the West Virginia Insurance Commission.
- You have the right to appeal any decision of the commission in court if there is a dispute between you and your HMO over the necessity of a treatment or whether a treatment you need is experimental.
- You have the right to appeal to the HMO's internal review program.
- You have the right to a review by an independent, external review by three health care providers.
- You have a right to a decision within seven days in urgent cases.
- You have the right to appeal these decisions in court.

Under this new law, you have the right to recover damages in court if you have been injured by the actions of your HMO. There are no dollar limits on injury claims. But the process is designed to avoid injury by creating a system for quick settlement of disputes rather than to encourage lawsuits.

It's important to note that these provisions apply to people whose insurance coverage is regulated by West Virginia law. Unfortunately, we do not have the power to regulate health insurance plans that are under federal jurisdiction. That's why it is so important to support what Sen. Jay Rockefeller and other Democrats in Congress are doing on this issue – passing a national Patients' Bill of Rights with real protections for all of us.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses create many of the jobs in West Virginia's economy. Yet they face special issues when recruiting workers. Not the least of these is the high cost of health insurance.

Governor Wise worked with a private foundation to develop a self-supporting insurance pool for these businesses.

Governor's Message
October 10, 2003

Health Insurance for Small Business Employees

A top priority of my administration is finding ways to allow every West Virginian to have adequate and affordable health care. One terrific example of a successful program is the Children's Health Insurance Program. Through CHIP, our children can see a doctor when they are sick. Since I took office in 2001, CHIP has been transformed from a little-known, underutilized program to a national model that covers more than 20,000 young West Virginians.

I'm also concerned about adult West Virginians who do not have health insurance. Nearly 20 percent of West Virginians ages 19-64 do not have health insurance. Most of these people are employed. A typical uninsured person is married, a high school graduate, working for a small business and living in a household with an annual income between \$10,000-\$30,000.

More than 80 percent of West Virginia's businesses employ 50 or fewer workers. Of those businesses, only 41 percent offer health insurance to their employees. It's not for lack of concern on the part of small employers; they care for their employees, and know that healthy workers are productive workers. But in many cases, finding affordable coverage for small numbers of workers is impossible.

Through the Public Employees Insurance Agency, a project is under way to create an affordable, full-coverage health insurance plan for small business. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided a \$1.3 million grant for the project, and the state is providing almost \$1 million of support through in-kind services.

My goal is to offer health care coverage at rates 20 to 25 percent below the current private market to defined small businesses. The lower rates will be achieved through the

buying power of PEIA and the efficiency of its management. This program must be self-supporting, though; it will not be subsidized by the state.

At this point, PEIA is exploring two different ways to support the small business health policy pool. One way will be to form a partnership with the established private insurance carriers. The second way would be to create a sub-pool under PEIA. Very active discussions are under way right now to choose the most viable option.

This policy question, and many others, will be studied by the project's Policy Advisory Council. The Council is a voluntary group composed of state residents, health policy experts and state officials. They will work with PEIA and the small business community to find real solutions and make West Virginia a better place to work and a healthier place to live.

The input of small business owners and employees is vital to this project's success. You can contact PEIA at (304) 558-6244, or on the web at www.wv.gov.

INSURANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH EXISTING HEALTH ISSUES

Among Governor Wise's many efforts to increase the number of citizens covered by health insurance was the creation of a high-risk pool for individuals who could not obtain commercial insurance.

News Release
June 25, 2004

Wise Announces Federal Grant for the Implementation of the West Virginia Health Insurance Plan

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the West Virginia Insurance Commission has been approved for a \$500,000 grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The federal grant, entitled "Seed Grants to States to Create Qualified High Risk Pools," will be used exclusively for the creation and initial operation of the West Virginia Health Insurance Plan.

Wise proposed legislation establishing the West Virginia Health Insurance Plan earlier this year. The plan will provide insurance to West Virginians who cannot obtain insurance because of health conditions.

"Providing access to health care coverage to all citizens of West Virginia is vitally important," Wise said. "The West Virginia Health Insurance Plan addresses the access problems for many people who are not eligible for low income programs, such as Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Programs."

Eligibility is based on rejection as an insured in the commercial individual accident and sickness market. The plan also will qualify for federal health care tax credits and will serve as an alternative to continuation coverage required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

"We are pleased to have met the criteria to receive this grant, and join the other 31 states that have created special state health insurance programs," said Insurance Commissioner Jane L. Cline. "The establishment of the West Virginia Health Insurance Plan will not only improve the quality of life for West Virginia citizens, but also will help stabilize the state's individual health insurance market."

The West Virginia Health Insurance Plan will be funded by premiums as well as an increase in hospital assessments by the West Virginia Health Care Authority.

TOBACCO ISSUES

During his first year in office, Governor Wise was able to organize a successful coalition of legislators to impose the first-ever state tax on smokeless tobacco – addressing a major health issue, particularly among young people. In 2003, he submitted, and the Legislature passed, an increase in the per-pack cigarette tax from 17 cents to 55 cents. The \$60 million increase in revenue was directed to the state Medicaid program.

Both tobacco tax increases were designed to decrease the rate of tobacco use, especially among youth, saving both dollars and lives. The money directed to Medicaid allowed West Virginia to continue important programs that contribute to the public health.

Governor's Message
March 14, 2003

Progress Made and Work to be Done

Each year the West Virginia Legislature is faced with tasks great in number, variety and seriousness. The recently concluded session was no exception as lawmakers tackled issues as diverse as medical malpractice reform, the Workers' Compensation crisis and the first increase in the cigarette tax since 1978. Through hard work, spirited debate, long hours and rational compromise, the members of the Senate and House of Delegates were able to make great progress in several important areas.

I made health care the centerpiece of my legislative agenda in my State of the State address. I submitted, and am very pleased that the Legislature passed, an increase in the per-pack cigarette tax from 17 cents to 55 cents. The \$60 million increase in revenue will be directed in its entirety to the state Medicaid program, where we receive three federal matching dollars for every state dollar spent.

The tobacco tax increase does three important things: first, it will decrease the rate of smoking, especially among youth, saving both dollars and lives. Second, the money directed to Medicaid will allow us to continue important programs that contribute to the public health. Finally, the funding of Medicaid programs will ensure the security of thousands of health care jobs.

I commend the Legislature for meeting the challenge I set for them by proposing the first cigarette tax increase in 25 years. I also am grateful that the members worked with me to pass important medical liability reform. The bill I signed this week will keep doctors in West Virginia, improve communities' access to quality care and encourage practitioners

to open new or expanded facilities in our state. The bill was the result of much hard work and many hours of constructive meetings on the part of the Legislature, my administration and all interested parties.

CANCER PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Early in his career as a Congressman, Bob Wise was an advocate for cancer research, and for the funding of health efforts to treat people struck by cancer. Later, just a few years before his election as Governor, he had a personal experience with this disease.

As a cancer survivor, he took a particular interest in the efforts of the state's health and educational institutions in the fight against cancer.

News Release
June 18, 2003

Wise Honored for Fight with Cancer at Mountains of Hope Ceremony

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today received the Distinguished Survivor Award of the Mountains of Hope: West Virginia Comprehensive Cancer Coalition. Wise joined 53 other cancer survivors in celebration of personal and community-wide successes in the fight against cancer.

“As honored as I am to receive the Distinguished Survivor Award, I am even more honored to be here with the other cancer survivors who are representing the thousands of West Virginians who have – and will – overcome cancer,” Wise said.

Mountains of Hope Coalition solicits Centers for Disease Control funding to support comprehensive cancer control planning and implementation in West Virginia. The Coalition also authored and will implement the West Virginia Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan. Wise publicly introduced the plan at the ceremony today.

“West Virginia’s cancer control plan addresses the full scope of cancer, from primary prevention to early detection and treatment to survivorship and end-of-life issues.

West Virginia's leadership in comprehensive cancer control planning owes much to the dedication of the state's health care providers and health educators and the tireless service of Mountains of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition members," Wise said of the plan.

Wise was presented with the award by Dr. James Frame, medical director of the David Lee Outpatient Cancer Clinic and founding chair of the Mountains of Hope Coalition.

State Cancer Plans Team meeting
Remarks by Governor Bob Wise
August 23, 2004, Charleston, West Virginia

I want thank you all for attending this meeting here in Charleston, West Virginia, and hope that you will find some time to explore our beautiful state and enjoy the cultural and recreational resources we offer. Special thanks to Pat Nolan, Leslie Given and Bruce Black for all of their very hard work in organizing and supporting both the State Cancer Plans Team and this meeting.

I'd like to begin the meeting by telling you about cancer control efforts in West Virginia and how our plan was developed and is being implemented.

West Virginia has a cancer problem. Our cancer incidence is higher than that of the U.S. and our mortality is also higher – exceeding U.S. mortality rates by more than 10 percent.

The reasons for our higher incidence will be of no surprise to you: Our tobacco use rates, whether cigarettes or smokeless, are among the highest in the U.S., and our rates of other cancer risk factors, such as obesity and lack of physical exercise, are also high.

Our spectacular geography creates challenges in access to high quality cancer care, with residents of a substantial number of counties – which include about 17 percent of West Virginia's total population – an hour or more away from the nearest Commission on Cancer-approved program.

Socio-economic challenges may be associated with the relatively late stage of diagnosis for cancers that can be detected early with recommended screenings because there may not be programs that will cover the costs of screening. For example, in West Virginia counties with lower median household incomes, colorectal cancer is less likely to be diagnosed at an early stage. Moreover, the difference between the lowest income quintile and the highest income quintile is greater among blacks than among whites.

Even with these challenges, West Virginia has important cancer control successes: Racial disparities in stage at diagnosis, which exist in West Virginia and in the U.S. as a

whole, have decreased in recent years. Invasive cervical cancer rates have decreased among women less than 45 years of age. Women with breast cancer are increasingly likely to be diagnosed very early, when the cancer is more treatable and survival is more likely.

Central to West Virginia's cancer control efforts is our Bureau for Public Health's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the associated coalition, Mountains of Hope.

Along with its partners – West Virginia's Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, the West Virginia Cancer Registry, the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center at West Virginia University and the American Cancer Society – West Virginia's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program was one of 13 states funded for implementation in 2001.

Also central to comprehensive cancer control in West Virginia is the recognition that, in order to maximize scarce resources, we must work together and include both traditional and non-traditional cancer control partners. Mountains of Hope is now nearly 200 members strong and includes members from most West Virginia counties.

We're working actively to grow the coalition.

Lance Armstrong Foundation funding provides travel assistance to cancer survivors and community advocates so they can fully participate in all aspects of the coalition. This is absolutely vital assistance for people whose financial resources are already strained by cancer-associated expenses.

Mountains of Hope meetings are held throughout the state. West Virginia's mountains provide stunning scenery and exciting recreation, but they also make travel time consuming and, in harsh weather, difficult. By having meetings throughout the state, participation by those distant from population centers is encouraged.

Our annual Agents of Hope celebration brings together community members who are active in cancer control, thus recognizing them and ensuring their input at the state level. These are, after all, the people who carry out the front line activities of cancer control.

New member recruitment is ongoing and attention is paid to retention of active members. We fully appreciate that a coalition is an ever-changing organism that must be carefully tended and nurtured.

We recognize that West Virginia has some gaps with respect to care, information and resources and we're working to bridge those gaps:

We've developed and distribute low literacy materials. The National Institute for Literacy estimates that 20 percent of adult West Virginians have difficulty with everyday reading tasks. These low literacy materials are thus vital to bridging the information gap and ultimately to reducing cancer disparities.

Education of the cancer control community about key issues is also important. Continuing education is always a challenge and all the more so in a field like cancer control, which is changing on so many fronts. Getting information out to the broad range of the cancer control community is therefore an important part of cancer control activities in West Virginia. To that end, we recently received a substantial grant from Pfizer to fund speakers at the April survivor meeting.

The resource guide for persons newly diagnosed with cancer was very successfully piloted and is now being distributed to thousands of West Virginians, providing them with information about cancer terminology, financial resources, where to

find information about cancer including treatment options and questions to ask their health care providers.

Because we're so proud of our Cancer Patient Resource Guide, I'd like to tell you a bit more about it and about patient responses to it:

Patient responses were overwhelmingly positive, with more than 90 percent reporting that it was easy to use, easy to read and something that they would recommend to friends; more than 80 percent reported learning new information.

Specific sections were also very well received, with more than 90 percent reporting the sections on cancer terms, cancer treatment, where to find cancer information, the Cancer Information Service and questions to ask the doctor were helpful or very helpful, and more than 80 percent reporting the remaining sections on the American Cancer Society, financial resources and the treatment log were helpful or very helpful.

The section on cancer terms was most often reported as liked the best, with 22 mentions.

Getting physicians involved in using the guide appears to be a bit more challenging, with slightly less than half reporting their doctors or doctors' staff used the guide with them and only about 40 percent reporting they took the guide with them to subsequent appointments.

The coalition is working to directly reduce the burden of cancer.

Through the colorectal cancer task force, we're working to increase the utilization of colorectal cancer screening and will increase public knowledge of colorectal cancer screening by jointly hosting with Wheeling Hospital the Colossal Colon, a 40-foot-long colon replica that visitors can crawl through or view via ports in the colon wall

Our ovarian cancer initiative is educating women about ovarian cancer through community meetings built around enjoyable social or recreational activities

We're also seeking to increase appropriate utilization of breast and cervical cancer screening. Our Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program screens over 16,000 women per year.

We're trying to better understand West Virginia's disproportionate burden of invasive cervical cancer. A study of human papilloma virus, a major contributor to cervical cancer, in women seen by Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program clinics has recently been completed.

CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Control Framework forms the basis of West Virginia's comprehensive cancer control efforts and provides a useful way to think about the toolkit for implementation of state cancer plans, the development of which is one of the activities scheduled for this meeting.

Central to the framework is knowledge for decision making. West Virginia's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program has sought out and made good use of knowledge – knowledge of the burden of cancer from our outstanding West Virginia Cancer Registry, knowledge of community-based interventions from our nationally-recognized partners at our state's universities, and importantly, knowledge of the realities of cancer from our many partners, including persons living with cancer and the survivors of those who died with cancer.

We've also seen a need for additional knowledge and expertise, including resources for managing and revitalizing the coalition as it matures, a continuing need for the collection of high-quality cancer incidence data and, as survival increases, the ability to collect follow-up information, and, importantly in this day of performance-based funding, evaluation methodologies.

The Manifesto of the Lance Armstrong Foundation includes the following:

- You need information. Fast.
- Information is power.
- Knowledge is strength.

It is my belief that this is true for persons living with cancer and for those seeking to reduce the burden of cancer. The proposed toolkit has the potential to increase our power and strength as we combat this disease.

NURSES' WORKING CONDITIONS

The financial pressures on hospitals continued throughout Governor Wise's term. Most of the direct-care employees of hospitals are nurses, and their working conditions have a direct impact on the quality of care patients receive.

At the urging of many individual nurses and the West Virginia Nurses Association – and with the cooperation of the West Virginia Hospital Association – Wise supported a bill that led to the establishment of the first state law regulating nurses' overtime hours.

News Release
February 25, 2004

Wise Signs Nurses Overtime Bill

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today signed S.B. 251, the Nurses Overtime Bill.

“Nurses are the largest group of licensed health care providers in the state. They are called upon to evaluate patients and make life altering decisions in split seconds,” Wise said. “To preserve the high quality of care we require, hospitals must rely on registered professional nurses to manage patient care. We cannot ask nurses to work hours on end, jeopardizing patient and employee lives.”

This legislation provides that a hospital cannot compel a nurse to work overtime if the nurse believes it would jeopardize the safety of patients and employees. The prohibition does not apply to: voluntary overtime; when a nurse needs to complete a patient’s care procedure already in progress; when a collective bargaining agreement is in place incorporating a procedure for the hospital to require overtime; or when an unforeseen emergency arises.

A nurse who works more than 12 consecutive permitted hours must be allowed at least eight consecutive hours off-duty.

“This legislation provides enhanced patient safety, while improving the working conditions of our nursing work force – covering more than 10,000 nurses at 60 hospitals statewide,” Wise said.

Wise also praised the work and dedication of the Nurses Association and the Hospital Association for their efforts in the passage of this bill.

The new law goes into effect May 17, 2004.

Chapter 5

ECONOMY AND JOBS

Advancing West Virginia's economy – particularly through the encouragement of private investment in job-producing enterprises – was a key priority of Governor Wise's administration throughout his four years in office.

West Virginia's traditional energy and manufacturing industries required much of his attention. A worldwide restructuring of the steel industry required repeated action to save jobs in the Ohio Valley and to encourage investment in the new technology required for the mills to regain their competitive edge. The state's vast reserves of coal, gas and oil attracted new attention during his term, and Wise worked to balance the needs of an energy-hungry nation with the state's responsibility to protect other precious resources, including clean water and air.

Wise also worked to nurture new economic opportunities, including those in the advancing area of biometrics, in tourism, and in the service industries.

It is traditional in West Virginia for Governors to address the annual business summit organized by the state Chamber of Commerce. Each year during his term, Governor Wise took that opportunity to spell out, in some detail, what his Administration had accomplished in the area of economic development and his plans for the following year. Each of those Business Summit addresses is included below.

BUSINESS SUMMIT ADDRESSES

Keynote speech

West Virginia Business Summit

The Greenbrier

August 29, 2001

Thank you very much for inviting me to the West Virginia Business Summit. It's great to be back with the men and women who put West Virginia to work.

When I came here last year as a candidate, I promised to bring West Virginia an aggressive, nimble and entrepreneurial government – a government that serves all of its citizens – including its business citizens – better.

Our administration has taken action in this direction. As the states around us retrench and scale back their efforts, we are moving forward:

We took immediate action on the state government's precarious financial situation and imposed a three percent rollback in spending – resulting in a \$31 million surplus in the past fiscal year and avoiding the kinds of deficits that have crippled other states.

We're putting into place \$1 billion to improve public facilities and infrastructure.

We're asking state agencies to do more for the public – including staying open until at least 5 p.m. every business day.

We're aggressively seeking a better deal for West Virginians on prescription drugs, so that our senior citizens and others have more dollars left to spend on the necessities of life and for the products and services that many of you provide.

We're working closely with the new leaders of the West Virginia Council for Community and Economic Development, including new appointees from large and small businesses and working people.

I'd like to talk for a moment about the search we are conducting with the Development Council for a new director for the Development Office – a post crucial to achieving some of our common goals for changing West Virginia's economy. I view the position the way many of my friends in business tell me they approach hiring a manager for a key enterprise. We need someone who will be dynamic and energetic – and inspire those who work in that office to be dynamic and energetic. We need an innovator – because we have seen that the old ways don't work anymore. We need a great salesman—who will tell the world that West Virginia is open for business. We need someone with experience in bringing people together – because we can and we must put the disputes of the past behind us and work as a team.

I really appreciate the work that Ralph Bean, the chair of the council, and the other members are putting into this search.

I am sure that we will find a person for this post who will light a fire under everyone involved in business development on the state level.

The business people of West Virginia – including many of you in this room – have taken the lead in developing a nonpartisan and inclusive process of assessing the state’s current economic condition and charting action that can improve its future. I am eager to work with you. Many of the proposals that I put forward in my campaign, under the Wise Investments to Strengthen Our Economy, were echoed by the Market Street study that was commissioned under the past administration.

Both these documents reflect a vision of a future West Virginia that all of us can aspire to – an economically healthy state, generating new jobs and businesses and attracting and retaining families and young people. It was no accident that one of my first public appearances after the election – and before taking office – was to join with Governor Underwood and many of you in the announcement of the Market Street study’s results and its suggestions.

This is not an administration that lets good ideas gather dust. Many of the proposals outlined in these two documents – including the most significant of the first-year recommendations of the Market Street group – were included in the package of legislation that I proposed in January.

Out of 21 major initiatives I presented to the Legislature, 19 have become reality:

We funded the PROMISE Scholarship

We created a P-20 Council that coordinates education from preschool through graduate school

We passed the reform of the Capital Companies Act.

We developed a larger CHIP program to support families of working people.

We increased investments in infrastructure.

We increased coordination between the education community and the business community.

Other activities are in process:

We’re creating a more stable and cost-effective Public Employees Insurance Agency.

We’re going to make the Governor’s Workforce Investment Office a more effective tool for meeting the workforce needs of business and for creating positive changes in the lives of individuals. There are many good people involved in this office, but they have been hampered by a dysfunctional organizational system. It will be closely tied to our economic development structure, so that investors will be assured of a qualified workforce at the earliest stages of discussion of a new project. For the first time ever, we’re analyzing the tax incentive programs that West Virginia offers as part of its economic development efforts – and we will ask for changes based on this analysis.

We have reached agreement with the coal industry on reclamation bonding, and will be presenting legislation to implement this agreement.

We settled a longstanding battle over stream quality and antidegradation standards – which removes uncertainty for businesses about what can be developed and where.

We are improving the speed of the permit process and adding more flexibility to the process.

We put together an energy task force to take advantage of historic opportunities in the energy market – and to develop a long-term state energy plan.

Our state economic plan encourages a specific focus on technology. It urges the integration of technology at all levels of business, government, and education. Technology is key to diversification of the state's economy. We must recognize that the New Economy is here, and the New Economy needs new ways of thinking. The skills of the nation's work force will determine its ability to compete in the new, global, and technology-based economy. We must help to ensure that higher education systems maximize their resources to expand learning opportunities and teach the skills needed in the new economy.

Education is at the heart of our strategy to move West Virginia's economy to a higher level. It is no accident that both the Market Street study and my economic plan insist that stepping up educational opportunities at all levels is the first requirement for progress.

When I talk to business people in West Virginia – and those who are thinking about investing in West Virginia – they have many concerns – and they're not shy about sharing them. But the one that cuts across all industries and all geographic barriers is the concern I hear about the level of education of our workforce.

We need higher standards of achievement. We need to assure business people and investors of a steady supply of young people with real job skills. We need to develop and nurture the attitude that performance is what counts, on and off the job.

We took a giant step forward this spring when, for the first time, the state provided funds for the PROMISE Scholarship program. For years, we have lagged behind our competitors in getting students into programs beyond high school and keeping them there until graduation. Now we have a new tool in our toolbox – an incentive that will not just put dollars in students' pockets, but fundamentally change the conversation in families, in classrooms, and elsewhere. I want parents to tell their children – you have to get better grades and earn a PROMISE Scholarship. I want teachers to say – this work is good, but if you try a little harder, you can get your grade up and stay eligible for the PROMISE Scholarship.

I will continue to press for change, and for quality, in all of our schools – from preschool through graduate school.

The same fundamental principle that underlies the PROMISE Scholarship is what I bring into discussions of funding for schools and colleges. I want our funding system to be performance based. No longer will we fund based solely on activity or student number – but we will demand hard information on outcomes from each educational institution.

That's how I hope business will evaluate my administration. We will be working on issues important to investment and job creation, and I will expect to be judged on performance.

One issue that many of you have raised is the differential in Workers Compensation

costs between our state and our competitors. I have been working with Bob Smith on this issue since day one of this administration. Later in this conference, he will present you with the details of what we intend to do. But let me give you an outline:

Despite the changes enacted into law several years ago, we will be paying for the next several decades for injuries suffered by workers in the last half of the twentieth century. **What we have control of is our future.**

The goal of this administration is to make our premiums competitive:

Most importantly, we're working hard to protect our current workforce from on-the-job injury, which is the root cause of our premium increases.

– Insurance companies know that the best way to avoid losses is to reduce risk – and it is high time that modern practices of risk management are applied to West Virginia's Workers Compensation system.

– We need to create a safety culture in our workplaces, both private and public. Bob Smith tells me other states have cut losses by 20 to 35 percent in just a few years. **If we save 20 percent we can cut claims costs by \$66 million.**

– We are going to actively work to assist employers in evaluating and improving safety in the workplace – at least doubling the number of prevention specialists in the Workers Compensation Division.

We will be taking a new look at how we structure our deficit payments – and perhaps change the timeline for paying them to **save up to \$10 million a year.**

We may use annuities or bonds to better manage the assets we use to make payments on our claims and liabilities. **We have a billion dollars in assets set aside to pay future claims. These need to be managed aggressively to save employers money.**

We're looking at making the rates we charge tied more closely to the risks inherent in a particular job or workplace and implementing a set of alternative rating plans for businesses. **We want to reward safe employers and not transfer costs from unsafe businesses to safe ones.**

The savings estimates that I have used in describing these changes are conservative ones, based on real experience in other states. I think we can do better. But our success will depend in large part on the willingness of all parties – business, labor and state government – to agree upon our goals and work together toward a solution. I hope to have your support.

One unfinished item I would like to discuss with you – the only major part of my Legislative agenda that did not fare well this year – is the Sunny Day Fund. Both the Market Street report and my economic plan called for an investment of at least \$10 million in such a fund – to be tapped when an opportunity presented itself to bring significant new jobs and investment to West Virginia.

A Sunny Day Fund would give us a flexible source of funds to invest in infrastructure, training, or other so that when a company is at the point of making an investment decision to create jobs in West Virginia, the state can immediately come in and put some financial muscle into the negotiating process.

We're in a race with other states for each dollar of new business investment – and

in today's tight markets, those dollars are even more precious. This is a tool I would like to place in the hands of the new development director and the Council – but I won't get it unless you in the business community join with me in making it a priority in the next session of the Legislature.

I'd like to invite you to join forces with me on this. It is an opportunity for us to work together for something that will benefit business in West Virginia for decades to come.

There will be other economic development initiatives at next year's session as well.

I will hold a series of meetings around the state over the next several months to ask citizens what we can do to help them be more successful in business, to lower barriers to entering the work force or becoming an entrepreneur, to spur investment in their communities. I urge you to participate in this process. Out of these meetings – and out of what I hear from you today – we will select the most important initiatives to pursue.

Some of them, I am sure, will be among the years two through five proposals of the Market Street report. We have already taken action on some of these suggestions:

- moving to reduce and eventually eliminate the health care provider tax
- investing in the rails-to-trails system that has resulted in both an increase in health and a flurry of economic activity in several communities
- working toward a workable solution to the perennial problem of medical malpractice insurance coverage for our doctors.

I need your help in developing a set of priorities that can take advantage of the momentum that we already are developing toward a more economically healthy West Virginia.

There are a number of other initiatives underway in state government that we hope will make life better for business people.

We are devising ways to shorten the process for permitting mines and industrial plants – particularly in issuing renewals of permits for existing facilities – to reduce uncertainty and make investing in West Virginia more attractive.

We are developing a better link between economic development and tourism. I believe that many of our visitors are potential residents, investors or entrepreneurs.

We are developing a plan to integrate technology at all levels of business, government, and education. We're going to look aggressively to make sure that our marketing approach focuses on the new technology-based economy.

We are developing, and will soon begin testing, a strategically based program to improve the processes of state government. We will be driven by the goal of exceeding our customers' expectations and improving the quality of our work.

Finally, I want to talk to you about West Virginia: Our people, our values, our grit and determination in the face of adversity.

Never was that more evident than when we faced the challenges of the floods that

devastated all or parts of 24 of the 55 counties of the state this summer.

Looking around this room, I see the faces of many people who stepped up in the hours and days following this flooding and showed their true West Virginia spirit. Business people in West Virginia were and are in the forefront of the recovery effort. The financial contributions of the individuals and businesses in this room today have made a difference in people's lives.

On behalf of each of the flood victims who have benefited from your generosity, I thank you. I want to offer a special word of thanks to the employers who showed enormous patience as key members of your organization were pulled out for several weeks' service in the National Guard. I know that this can be a hardship for a business – but I want you to know how deeply the people of West Virginia appreciate the work that these men and women did for all of us.

The recovery effort from this flood will stretch into years. One thing that became clear early – even as homeowners were still piling their ruined belongings beside the road for the National Guard to haul away – is that this is a disaster that hit businesses just as hard as it did individuals.

We have made business recovery a priority, because we realize that having a vibrant business community is crucial to the recovery of each community in the flooded area.

As part of this initiative, we are offering a package of business assistance on top of that awarded by FEMA and the SBA. These include:

- Up to \$20,000 per business in a five-year forgivable loan – a loan that turns into a grant if the business stays in the community for five years
- Up to \$15,000 per business in microloans at 1 percent interest

This recovery effort is being spearheaded by Brian Kastick, our secretary of tax and revenue.

He's the first tax secretary in West Virginia's history who is getting to be better known for passing out money than collecting it.

Brian and the others who have thrown themselves into this recovery effort are finding a real spirit of determination out in the communities that were affected.

It's that spirit, that dedication that we need to get our economy moving.

I look forward to working with the business leaders of West Virginia over the next three and a half years to bring our state forward. We are at a crucial moment in West Virginia history – a time of decision. Will we remain mired in the conflicts that defined our past – or work together to determine our own future?

For me, the choice is clear. I challenge you to become a part of the effort to shape our future. The people of West Virginia deserve no less.

Keynote Speech
West Virginia Business Summit
The Greenbrier
August 29, 2002

This year, West Virginia has taken charge of its economic future.

With support from partners across all sectors – business, labor and government – this state has enacted important economic development legislation.

We have been averaging at least one economic development announcement a month while many areas of the country are facing mounting unemployment in one of the worst markets since the 1970s.

We have continued to reap the benefits of an active, thriving international recruitment strategy that promises even more results in the near future.

And our work force – world-renowned, loyal and dedicated – has won awards and accolades for West Virginia's existing businesses.

I recently had the pleasure of working with PWP Industries to announce the company's decision to locate its newest manufacturing facility in Parkersburg, which will create 130 new jobs. PWP produces PET plastic packaging for the food industry with a full line of products and the ability to manufacture innovative designs to meet customers' needs.

The company purchased the 120,000-square-foot Parkersburg/Wood County Area Development Corporation shell building. With the addition of this facility, PWP management expects the company will become the largest producer of PET packaging for the bakery and fresh-cut produce industries in the U.S. That announcement took place this month.

In July, Guardian Industries Corporation announced the formation of a second fiberglass insulation production line at the company's Inwood facility. The \$15 to \$20 million investment will result in the creation of 100 jobs. Guardian Fiberglass operates in a \$35 million, 700,000-square-foot facility, which provides a strong complement to Guardian's four other fiberglass facilities.

Guardian is a leading worldwide manufacturer of float glass and fabricated glass products for the commercial and residential construction industries and is the world's largest producer of mirrors.

In June, we announced that AT&T would move to Patrick Street Plaza and retain 360 jobs. The 35,000-square-foot facility will house AT&T customer contact associates and clerical support, providing U.S. customers with information about billing and service. AT&T is among the world's premier voice, video and data communications companies serving consumers, businesses and government.

Also in June, because of my SWAT Team's efforts, SNE Enterprises, manufacturer of Crestline Windows and Doors, announced an expansion and the addition of as many as 150 jobs at the company's Huntington manufacturing facility. The company's plant will grow to more than 400,000 square feet from its current 290,000 square feet. Crestline is a brand of SNE Enterprises Inc. Its products include a wide variety of wood and vinyl windows and patio doors sold nationwide.

In April, BB&T announced the addition of 200 jobs at the company's Charleston Operations Center. The company's plans call for 100 jobs to be added in processing, which is necessary as a result of its recent acquisitions in Kentucky. The remaining 100 jobs will be added within the next two years and will be in customer service. BB&T has spent about \$13 million in refurbishing the Charleston facilities.

BB&T Corp. is a fast-growing, highly profitable financial holding company with \$74.9 billion in assets. Its bank subsidiaries operate more than 1,100 branch offices in the Carolinas, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, Maryland, Tennessee, Alabama, Indiana and Washington, D.C.

Also this spring, EXCEL Homes announced the grand opening of a new 92,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Ghent, which will create 200-300 jobs. EXCEL Homes is the largest residential off-site construction builder in the eastern United States and the nation's fastest growing. EXCEL Homes reported \$86 million in sales for 2001.

In addition to these announcements of new and retained jobs, other exciting things have happened in West Virginia this year. These developments focused attention on our work force, our state and our preparedness for a new economy and a new day in West Virginia.

Bombardier Services announced that it will provide exclusive service to Northwest Airlines' regional fleet in a five-year contract awarded in April of this year. Bombardier will offer on-site maintenance every 4,000 flying hours and structural inspections every two years.

Representatives from the West Virginia Development Office biometrics team participated in several industry events during Fiscal Year 2002, including The Biometric Consortium Conference in Crystal City, Virginia.

The Development Office co-sponsored the event with the Department of Defense, the National Security Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the GSA Federal Technology Service Center for Smart Card Solutions. This is a component of our efforts to market the state to the technology and biometrics industry.

As a part of this trip, contact was initiated with the Wall Street Journal, and one of its writers came to the state and followed his trip with an article titled: "West Virginia Seeks New Place on the Map." After the article ran, John E. Siedlarz, chairman of the International Biometric Industry Association, wrote that "no state other than West Virginia can claim a focused strategy and real progress in developing a biometrics cluster and friendly incubation environment for the technology going forward."

West Virginia is located at the very core of the nation, cloistered in the mountains, but within easy access of the nation's capital by highway, air or rail. A state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure makes it possible to receive and send voice, video and data

simultaneously. We are grateful to Senator Robert Byrd for his foresight in the placement of the FBI fingerprint identification center along the I-79 corridor, nearly a decade ago, positioning the state as an ideal location for the biometrics industry.

The selection of Marshall University and West Virginia University as two of the four U.S. locations for the Center for Identification Technology Research (CITeR) Program and WVU's distinction as the first university offering a bachelors' degree in forensic identification and biometrics have further positioned West Virginia as a leader in the industry.

Currently we are working closely with a leading provider in biometric solutions throughout the world. I had hoped to make an announcement here at the Summit, but we are still working out the final details of the company's financing. When in place, the company will create a national center of excellence that will attract leading edge biometric technology companies.

Progress continues at the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute where a diagnostic tool for Alzheimer's was developed and is undergoing clinical trials. I want to thank Senator Jay Rockefeller for providing this opportunity to our state.

Forbes magazine and the Milken Institute ranked two West Virginia metropolitan areas among the nation's top 200 best places to do business and advance a career. The Charleston metro ranked 128th, up from 144th in 2001. The Huntington-Ashland, W.Va.-Ky.-Ohio area was 178th, up from 197th last year. Four smaller metro areas are rated on a companion list.

Among these areas are:

- Wheeling, W.Va.-Ohio which earned the 57th slot this year up from 90th last year.
- Steubenville-Weirton, Ohio-W.Va. was 71st, up from 91st last year.
- Parkersburg-Marietta, W.Va.-Ohio rose to 62nd from 80th last year.
- Cumberland, Md.-W.Va. rose to 74th from 79th last year.

Earlier this year, Charleston ranked 83 in the Ladies' Home Journal list of the best 143 cities with fewer than 300,000 people in terms of categories that matter to women.

Something we have always known was confirmed this year by statistical data collected by independent sources. That is: West Virginia workers are the best in the nation.

The Harbor Report North America 2002 named Toyota Motor Manufacturing, West Virginia Inc., as the No. 1 four-cylinder engine manufacturing plant in North America.

West Virginia workers are innovative, creative and resourceful.

Proof positive came when Weyerhaeuser announced that more than 25 percent of the innovations instituted worldwide at Trus Joist, a Weyerhaeuser business, were submitted by the Trus Joist Buckhannon plant for 2001.

West Virginia workers are productive and quality-driven.

This was acclaimed when AT&T named its Charleston call center the most

productive of all 15 call centers in the U.S.

We know that our skilled, loyal and conscientious workers need and deserve a good wage rate, and I am pleased to share with you another piece of good news. West Virginia is closing the gap in per capita income. In 2001, our per capita income growth was the fifth-highest in the nation with a 4.5 percent increase.

Our 2002 legislative session was one of the most productive in recent history in terms of economic development initiatives.

The Legislature created a Sunny Day Fund to provide me with a Contingency Fund for economic development projects.

This past session, the Legislature passed my Strategic R&D Credit strengthening West Virginia's focus on attracting technology companies – particularly those connected with the biometrics industry. One of the most aggressive research credits in the country, it offsets up to 100 percent of taxes for R&D projects with unlimited carry-forwards for 10 years. Direct expenses in research and development are now eligible for sales tax exemptions.

The Manufacturing Investment Credit passed this year allows a company a 50 percent corporate net income tax and franchise tax credit based on its investment with no job creation required.

Sweeping changes in the Capital Company Act and a new Venture Capital Act have dramatically improved the climate for risk capital. The need to improve venture capital opportunities for businesses was a primary concern and the Legislature responded. The West Virginia Economic Development Authority may now solicit and invest private and public resources with professional risk capital managers who will strive to fund new business development in West Virginia and subsequently create jobs.

Up to \$25 million in state resources will be provided to a group of certified venture capital companies. These funds will allow small business investment corporations to leverage additional federal monies, generating up to \$100 million in venture capital for West Virginia.

The Economic Development Grant Committee, created by House Bill 4005, has the opportunity to simultaneously accelerate our traditional economy and take our state in exciting new directions such as biometrics and genetic research. The committee's charge is to select the best basket of projects possible and to act as responsible stewards of our scarce resources.

The committee started with 195 applications with requests of more than \$1.1 billion and after hearing more than 75 hours of testimony narrowed the list of projects down to 67. The next step in the process is a set of public hearings on September 4 and 5 where citizens will have the opportunity to provide feedback on projects in their region.

This process has been time consuming, but I'm confident that when the final projects are selected, all of West Virginia will benefit from the jobs, investment in our state and from the progress made.

I have directed my Development Office to work with projects that did not make the final cut. There were fantastic ideas within several projects, and I have asked Dave

Satterfield to help find funding to bring these ideas to fruition.

Let me be clear. None of this good news is an accident. The Vision Shared strategy is the only strategy in West Virginia, and I appreciate everyone's efforts.

It is a well-thought-out plan to bring our economic development team together to work for the prosperity and success of West Virginia. It is part of the Vision Shared initiative that identified a course of action to fast-forward West Virginia's progress to bring in new industry and retain existing businesses.

Members of our Legislature now serve on the West Virginia Council for Community and Economic Development. They are working hand-in-hand with business leaders to move our state forward. Members of the council are involved in the Vision Shared implementation plan.

The Stakeholders Implementation team is chaired by Mike Basile and co-chaired by Kenny Perdue. I am proud to tell you that the cooperation between business and labor has never been stronger than it is today.

Many of the things I have talked about today are initiatives first brought to light by the Market Street study. Many, I dare say, most, of you participated in that process. Teams have been formed to implement the initiatives carried forward by a Vision Shared.

Lloyd Jackson has agreed to chair the Intellectual Infrastructure in the 21st Century Task Force. That team is tackling issues such as improving GED and educational attainment; improving communications between educators, students and business; and ensuring rigorous and demanding assessment standards for state schools. They also are dealing with issues related to training, research and development.

Gale Given heads the New Economy: New Challenges and New Solutions Task Force. On Gale's Top 10 list is diversifying the economy and capital formation. This is where the Legislature's improvements to the Capital Company Act have already had an impact. They also are dealing with increasing entrepreneurship.

Tom Heywood heads up Results-Based Government: Planning for the Future. Issues the group are undertaking include Workers' Compensation and infrastructure development, which has been greatly improved by the passage of House Bill 4005 providing \$200 million in bond money to be used for economic development projects, capital improvement and infrastructure. And health care reforms are on the agenda, including the reorganization and stabilizing of PEIA.

Joe Barker chairs Building Bridges and Empowering Citizens. Building regional cooperation and image improvement top the group's list of concerns.

Another important component of this cooperative effort was the hiring of David Satterfield as executive director of the West Virginia Development Office.

The council and I easily agreed that if we were going to move the state forward (as David is fond of saying, "In dog years") we needed a visionary such as David Satterfield at the helm. Our belief in him has been well-founded as we will soon announce several new companies that have signed agreements to come to West Virginia.

It is important that we inform West Virginians living in-state and out-of-state of the good things that are happening here.

That is why I wrote to Catherine Blair, president of the West Virginia Alumni Directors' Association, to request that she ask the alumni directors from all of West Virginia's colleges and universities to provide my office with e-mail addresses from their data bases. We are setting up a "good-news" web site. It is my intention to send brief pieces of good news to these individuals with a direct link to this web site. This is a very inexpensive and highly effective means of reaching West Virginians.

We talk a lot about people finding or getting jobs. But we seldom recognize the tremendous opportunities available for young people as entrepreneurs.

The Development Office is working with The Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and Development (CESD) to create an on-line entrepreneurial course for selected high school students beginning in January 2003. Each West Virginia high school will select two students to participate.

John Chambers will provide an introduction, and business mentors will be selected to assist the students in taking the course and understanding the entrepreneur's commitment. The lesson outline is comprised of nine areas of study, including: the basics of becoming an entrepreneur, where entrepreneur's ideas come from, assessing markets, developing a business plan, raising capital and the challenges of business start-up.

International business continues to be an important part of our development strategy. During the past few months, I have traveled to Germany, Italy, the U.K., Canada and Japan to further develop trade, investment and tourism opportunities for West Virginia. Also, in early October, I will visit Spain to meet with several companies that are planning projects for North America.

As a result of my recent trips, companies from Italy and Japan have visited West Virginia to more closely consider our state as the location for projects they are developing. I am pleased that one of the European companies has selected West Virginia for its project. We are working out the details and expect to have an announcement very shortly. Also, we are in ongoing negotiations with several other European and Japanese companies.

In addition to promoting West Virginia as an investment location, we have enhanced our efforts to promote the export of West Virginia products. Recognizing that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, we are continuing to encourage our companies to pursue international market opportunities.

I was pleased to join eight West Virginia companies that participated in a mining equipment trade show in Vancouver in May. The Development Office is continuing to sponsor similar trade missions with a schedule of events that includes missions to Eastern Europe in October and Mexico in December.

In order to recognize the success of our small- and medium-sized exporters, we recently created a unique program, "The Governor's Commendation for International Market Entry." In the tradition of a small store displaying their "first dollar" earned, we now award successful exporters with a plaque and an actual bill representing their "First Italian Lire," their "First South African Rand" among many others. This is an ongoing program and already this year we have presented 59 awards to 22 companies.

Last week, I was proud to stand beside members of my Energy Task Force and unveil what I believe is a groundbreaking energy action plan for our state. West Virginia has a rich tradition as a leader in our nation's energy supply.

The power woes of California and the nation, the events of September 11 and the crisis in the Middle East have reinforced the need to find comprehensive energy solutions for our country - solutions that not only address our energy needs, but also our economic and environmental goals.

The task force I created – comprised of business, industry leaders, scientific researchers, academics, labor, environmental leaders and governmental officials – developed a comprehensive roadmap for West Virginia's energy leadership. The report, "West Virginia's Energy Roadmap: Our Approach to the New Energy Economy," is an action plan complete with policy recommendations. This report not only addresses our energy needs, but also helps protect our environment while creating jobs.

The possibilities that exist for West Virginia's contribution to the national energy needs, not only in traditional fossil fuels but also in renewable energy resources, are some of the most exciting opportunities that have been presented to us.

I am pleased to report that in accordance with the Market Street Report recommendation, this administration has hired a workers' compensation insurance industry professional to manage the Workers' Compensation Division. Mr. Dale Newell has more than 25 years' experience at managerial and executive levels in the workers' compensation insurance business. He has been on board for a month and Commissioner Smith and I are very encouraged with the talents he brings to a difficult task.

Last year, I talked about accident prevention as the best way to reduce Workers' Compensation costs. The Workers' Compensation Division has moved forward in accordance with my directions to make certain we have the personnel and the processes to assist employers in making accident prevention an important aspect of the business environment. Additional professional staff have been added to the safety and loss control department, and we have commenced a pilot program focusing on accident prevention in state government.

In addition, Workers' Compensation safety experts have worked with hundreds of West Virginia employers assisting them in establishing safety programs that enable them to qualify for lower workers' compensation premiums. In order for prospective claims costs to be controlled and reduced, it is imperative that the claims handling process focus on appropriate early return to work. Early return to work programs reduce claims costs dramatically and, at the same time, help assure that workers retain jobs.

The division is moving aggressively toward true claims management. A pilot program has been implemented to assure that claims are reported in a timely fashion. Timely reporting claims is essential to make early return to work a reality, not simply a cliché.

In the pilot program, the time from date of injury to the date the claim is reported to the division is five days. Historically, the average has been nearly 40 days. We will do better than five days.

Throughout the past year, I witnessed the toll the medical liability insurance crisis

has taken on our state and its physicians. Members of my administration, along with the West Virginia Legislature and the State Insurance Commission, spent countless hours studying the issue, meeting with affected parties and conferring with state representatives from around the country.

It is through these efforts that the West Virginia Healthcare Provider Professional Liability Act was created. The Act was created to make coverage available for physicians under the state's Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM), who are unable to obtain coverage through the commercial market.

The BRIM plan was designed not to compete with commercial carriers, but to provide an available, financially sound option until a stable and competitive market or acceptable alternative is available to health care providers practicing in West Virginia.

To date, 479 physicians are enrolled in the BRIM plan. Those are doctors that without the BRIM option may not have continued practicing in the state. While the Act was drafted out of urgent need for relief for state physicians, it is an issue that will continue to be studied.

This is an incredibly complex issue that involves everything from experience ratings to Wall Street's performance. I assure you, we are working hard on the situation; unfortunately, there are no quick fixes.

In just a few months, there will be a tremendous opportunity available to every citizen, every business and every local government in the state of West Virginia to create high-quality jobs, build needed infrastructure, expand existing businesses, bring new businesses to our communities and help restore blighted urban areas.

This opportunity will come in the November General Election. It's called Amendment One, the Local Option Economic Development Act. This Act will allow West Virginia to join 46 other states and thousands of local governments around the nation to gain needed economic development projects.

- Amendment One will give our counties and municipalities the ability to help finance economic development projects through the issuance of revenue bonds paid for by the increased value of property tax collected from new development sites.
- Amendment One simply allows the project developer to take the difference between what a piece of property is worth today and what it would be worth in the future, if fully developed, and use the difference in property taxes paid to help finance all or part of the project costs.
- Amendment One recognizes good ideas for economic development and can come from the public or private sector.
- Amendment One also allows for local control and is designed to allow for maximum flexibility for economic development projects because what's right for Charleston is different from what's needed in Martinsburg and what's possible in Beckley.
- Amendment One allows for public input and has strong accountability requirements. And most important, the taxpayers are protected if a project fails because the bonds issued are revenue bonds and are in no way a general or moral obligation of any city or county government or the state of West Virginia.

In my State of the State Address, I asked Paul Arbogast, of the Business Roundtable, and Jim Bowen, president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, to start a dialogue on issues important to West Virginia. Today, these two leaders are the honorary co-chairs of the All For One Committee, which is working to build a grass roots coalition and educate the voters of West Virginia on the importance of this issue.

West Virginia needs to be able to offer its citizens the same economic prospects here as they would have elsewhere and, to make that happen, we need to have every tool possible in our toolbox.

- So when Brenda Nichols Harper from the State Chamber of Commerce asks you to tell your employees about Amendment One – say Yes;
- When Dana Waldo, president of the Business Roundtable and Working Co-Chair of the All For One Committee, asks for your leadership on this important issue – say Yes;
- When Ralph Bean, chairman of the Council for Community and Economic Development and finance chair of the All For One Committee, calls you for assistance – say Yes; and
- When Jack Rossi, managing member of Arnett & Foster and treasurer of the All For One Committee, asks you to participate – say Yes.

Keynote Speech

West Virginia Business Summit

The Greenbrier

August 28, 2003

West Virginia – like much of the country – is going through a financial crisis. The national unemployment rate is going up – and budget surpluses for all states have disappeared.

The success of the upcoming session is going to hinge on one thing – the budget.

In the last three legislative sessions, we have dealt with our budget shortfalls – without a general tax increase – by restructuring state government so it runs more efficiently and effectively. We have taken on the tough issues to make West Virginia the place where people want to invest, raise a family and start a career.

With every investment we make in our communities, we make West Virginia a better place to live. Even in our tough times, we have a responsibility to maintain our vision for a stronger West Virginia.

As Proverbs tells us, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

I believe that’s true. In reality, we have a strong vision for the future.

“West Virginia: A Vision Shared” has given the state a clear economic development

strategy to follow for improving our position. Many of the successes I'll outline today came about through the hard work and collaborative efforts of the men and women who helped prepare the strategy, keeping in mind the vision of a stronger, more successful West Virginia.

That vision is paying off. Let me share with you some encouraging news about how our vision is changing the face of West Virginia.

Standard & Poor's just released the findings of its comprehensive assessment of West Virginia. Because of our state's sound financial management, West Virginia's bond rating remains stable. The report stated that West Virginia is one of the few states that has weathered the national recession and maintained solid financial position.

It also cited our responsive action to revenue shortfalls as a key factor in the state's ability to preserve budgetary balance and sound financial standing. West Virginia was one of few states to end the fiscal year with a surplus.

The report said our state has benefited from its unique demographics along with aggressive economic development marketing and pro-business tax-incentives.

In addition, Standard & Poor's recognized our improvements in education, especially the PROMISE Scholarship, as important efforts to meet our economic challenges.

Southern Business & Development reported that West Virginia earned honorable mention on its list of the top 100 job-generating and corporate investment deals in 2002. On a per capita basis, West Virginia placed second in the South.

The announcement of Cabela's decision to locate a distribution center and retail store in Ohio County gave West Virginia the No. 2 spot on the magazine's list of the American South's 10 largest new and expanded manufacturing and selected non-manufacturing announcements for spring 2003. Cabela's promises to be the state's largest tourist attraction, drawing a potential 4 million visitors a year. The company plans as many as 1,200 jobs and an \$80 million investment in West Virginia by 2007.

Business Facilities magazine, which has 43,500 corporate executive readers nationwide, ranked West Virginia as the best location among five Mid-Atlantic States – and No. 10 nationwide – in terms of the overall costs of doing business. The magazine weighed nine factors including annual pay and workers' compensation costs in assessing the state-by-state business environment. For the nation as a whole, West Virginia was the lone mid-Atlantic or northeastern state to crack the top 10.

From 2000-2002, West Virginia had the 8th lowest rate of manufacturing job loss. This means our job loss was lower than more than four-fifths of the states, including our closest competing states.

We were one of only 10 states and the District of Columbia to ADD jobs in business and professional services employment and we ranked 9th in percentage of change in these services.

Good things are happening all across the state:

In addition to the Cabela's project in the Northern Panhandle, ebSource LLC, a high-technology company, relocated its Pittsburgh office to Wheeling, announcing as many as 50 jobs with average salaries of \$60,000 over the next three to four years. AES Industries Inc. also announced the location of its facility in Wheeling with plans

to employ as many as 30 people.

Polyurethane product manufacturer Stockmeier Kunststoffe will employ as many as 25 people at its first U.S. manufacturing site in Clarksburg. This is the first German investment in West Virginia since the opening of the state's European trade office in Munich in 1999.

In Putnam County, Toyota West Virginia was named the nation's engine-building leader according to the Harbour Report 2003, a major automotive report issued this summer. Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia was named the benchmark for both four-cylinder and six-cylinder engine production. This is the second consecutive year Toyota West Virginia has been the number one four-cylinder engine plant in the nation.

Nippon Thermostat of America Corp., which manufactures thermostats for about one-quarter of the world's vehicles, located in the Putnam County Industrial Park and expects to employ 50-60 people.

And, Italian auto components manufacturer Sogefi, which produces suspension parts for Ford, announced 148 jobs and a \$27 million investment in Wayne County.

Wood County saw the location of Sequelle Communications Alliance Inc., which offers wireless broadband communications. The company brings jobs with salaries of at least \$45,000 annually.

PWP Industries also chose to locate its newest manufacturing facility in Wood County, investing \$10 million and creating as many as 130 jobs. PWP produces PET plastic packaging for the food industry.

Global Contact Services (GCS) announced more than 200 jobs with an annual payroll exceeding \$4 million in the company's newest insurance center in Summersville adding to the more than 600 jobs the company already has in Fayette County.

And our SWAT Team is effectively helping West Virginia companies. We, along with the state of Ohio and others, worked with the leadership at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel to secure financing for the company before it entered reorganization and as it made plans to return to viability. As one of West Virginia's largest taxpayers and employers, the company's economic health is important to the entire state.

In addition to the companies we've worked so hard to attract and retain, we've also made great strides in the passage of new legislation that will make West Virginia more competitive in attracting and retaining economic development projects. We've secured the passage of a landmark medical malpractice bill and the state's first cigarette tax increase since 1978.

The legislation I signed took bold steps to address the numerous and complicated issues surrounding the medical liability crisis. Not only did we address tort reform, but we provided a financial package to address the short-term affordability issues facing health care providers.

I'm proud to say, we're already seeing results. Recruiting efforts are working better than ever now. Many out-of-state doctors are saying they want to take a look at practicing in West Virginia. We've made a real difference, and West Virginia families will be healthier because of it.

Our families also will be healthier because of the increase in the cigarette tax. We raised the tax to 55 cents; this increased revenue will be directed solely to the state Medicaid program, where we receive a three-to-one federal match on each dollar invested. These

dollars will help us avoid a \$300 million shortfall in the Medicaid budget this year alone and keeps costs from being shifted to businesses.

Healthcare – or lack of insurance – is one of the most important issues facing West Virginians. In America, more than 41 million people have no health care insurance and that number is growing as we meet today.

This isn't just a problem for individuals; it affects all of us. Businesses need to know that their employees will have access to quality healthcare.

Fortunately, West Virginia has been one of the most successful states in the nation as far as the expansion of health insurance to children is concerned. I announced earlier this week that our CHIP program was awarded an additional \$18 million for the outstanding manner in which we have implemented the program in West Virginia.

But, we need to achieve the same success at insuring working-age adults.

One in five adults between the ages of 19 and 64 are without health insurance.

More often than not, the uninsured are young . . . and married . . . and working full time, frequently more than one job.

More often than not, the owners of small businesses want to provide insurance for their employees, but they just can't afford it.

More often than not, the people who don't have health insurance put off visits to the doctor until illness requires them to visit an emergency room instead . . . and that's where the cost of health care affects every business and every taxpayer in West Virginia:

Health care providers such as doctors and hospitals can't afford to provide a service when they are not getting paid – so they have to raise their rates for everyone else who has insurance.

Insurance companies then pass those costs on to their employers and employees in higher premiums.

West Virginia businesses then have to decide whether they can eat the extra cost, pass it on to their workers or stop providing health insurance altogether. It is a vicious cycle.

We need to close the gap. We need to cut the number of uninsured by half in five years. I'm committing myself to that goal, and I will be asking for your input.

This year, we also passed a Workers' Compensation Reform Bill that represents a true bipartisan effort to find real solutions to a very complicated problem.

The legislation identifies funding sources to eliminate the projected \$225 million shortfall. It includes changes in the organizational structure of workers' compensation, improves and strengthens operations and modifies the benefit structure.

We also made several administrative changes designed to save workers' compensation \$60 million over the next three years. The plan included changing the claims process to work better for the employer and the claimant and developing a more efficient way to conduct individual medical exams. We also are cutting pharmacy expenses and saving more than a million dollars by not filling vacant positions.

This is the first step to solving a problem that has plagued the system for nearly a generation. Our concern has always been ensuring that truly injured workers can continue receiving checks, businesses can continue to grow and create jobs, and taxpayers are not unfairly burdened.

While the Workers' Compensation bill will help retain West Virginia jobs, the Economic Development Grant Committee will help create hundreds of good paying jobs through the distribution of great funds.

This is the largest economic stimulus package ever envisioned in West Virginia. It's about \$220 million of public investment combined with nearly \$900 million in private investment. That's more than \$1.1 billion invested in West Virginia's economy. Last week, the committee approved 48 projects. This is true economic development.

We've taken other positive economic development steps in the past few years:

More of our young people are staying in West Virginia to continue their education with the PROMISE Scholarship. In fact, the Higher Education Policy Commission recently published a report on West Virginia's college-going rate that shows last fall as the first time since 1998 that the percentage of students enrolling in out-of-state schools has declined.

We are keeping our best and brightest right here at home . . . and statistics show that 75 percent of college graduates stay and work in the state where they attend college. That's positive news.

Not only are we keeping more of our students in West Virginia, but they are exceeding the retention rates (of their scholarship) at extraordinary levels. The statewide retention rate is 73 percent. That means that 73 percent of our PROMISE Scholars earned a 2.75 GPA and completed 30 credit hours in a 12-month period in their first year of college.

Reports from the college campuses indicate that we are keeping our best and brightest in the state. WVU's College of Engineering and Mineral Sciences reports that students that would have otherwise left the state are choosing to remain right here. These are the students that West Virginia must keep within our borders if we are to compete in the new economy and help our state grow.

Our second class of PROMISE recipients brings excellent credentials with them to college. The second class has an overall GPA of 3.71 and an average ACT score of 23. These are students that colleges around the country would love to have in their classrooms. I know this because colleges in North Carolina are offering to match our PROMISE with a tuition subsidy in order to lure our PROMISE Scholars to North Carolina.

We've completely rewritten our tax laws. We simplified our tax credit forms from 16 pages to one. We lowered the threshold for tax credits, expanded the use of investment tax credit and developed the most generous use of tax credits for Research and Development in the country.

We have tax increment financing that gives local governments a powerful tool to assist both new and existing businesses by letting them invest in themselves and their future.

We placed up to \$25 million in a state venture capital fund, to be matched with \$75 million in federal funding. This three to one match from SBA means up to \$100 million invested in small West Virginia businesses.

And, since the enactment of Legislation dealing with the proliferation of gray machines

in our state, the Lottery has transferred nearly \$330 million to Infrastructure, Education, Parks and Tourism. PROMISE, Higher Education and SBA account for nearly \$77 million, while infrastructure projects account for \$59 million.

We must continue to create jobs and economic opportunity for West Virginia. He who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully.

Where we have the greatest adversities, I believe we can find some of the best opportunities. Facing our challenges together, we can continue moving West Virginia – forward.

Keynote Speech
West Virginia Business Summit
The Greenbrier
September 1, 2004

In the past four years, West Virginians have been changing the way we do business for the better. We've acknowledged our challenges and recognized our potential. We have many assets; it is now time to promote them.

In today's competitive environment, if we don't promote the positives, no one else will. To do this, we all must make a concerted effort to tell others what we've done – and where we are going.

We are growing in several areas:

Our per capita income increased by 11.3 percent – leaving the nation to play catch-up. In the past 10 years, the number of second homes in West Virginia has grown, making us the sixth fastest-growing state in vacation home ownership – behind Florida, Wisconsin, California, Michigan and North Carolina. West Virginians have a quality of life that is second to none, and more people are discovering it.

Our total tourist visits between 2001 and 2002 grew by more than 8.6 percent, compared to 1.3 percent for the U.S.

And, while the national and regional GSP growth rates dropped to near zero, state GSP rose 2 percentage points, ranking West Virginia 17th in the percent of change. Additionally, we expanded our export efforts:

The state's total exports exceeded \$2.3 billion in 2003, surpassing the U.S. export growth rate – only 22 states had higher growth in export figures.

Even more impressive export numbers have recently been released. West Virginia exported \$1.75 billion in products during the first six months of 2004 compared to \$1.2 billion during the first half of 2003. Only four other states experienced a higher growth rate. These statistics demonstrate once again that West Virginia companies can meet the quality standards demanded in the global marketplace.

Recently, several outside sources have recognized the dramatic improvements we are making:

The Milken Institute's State Technology and Sales Index moved West Virginia up 18 positions from its previous ranking in the category of Risk Capital and Entrepreneurial Assets – the second largest gain among all states. This is important because capable entrepreneurs, and the risk capital infrastructure to support them, are ingredients for long-term success in a knowledge-based economy.

The plastics industry, which accounts for more than \$330 billion in annual shipments, considers West Virginia the nation's second most attractive location, and *Money* magazine ranked the Charleston area as one of the top five areas in the country to attract energetic, educated entrepreneurial people responsible for economic success in the next 10 years.

In 2003, *Business Facilities* magazine ranked West Virginia as the best location among 5 mid-Atlantic States and No. 10 nationwide in terms of the overall costs of doing business.

West Virginia also is leading the way for others:

For the third year in a row, Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia set the standard for engine production, according to the Harbour Report, a major automotive study. West Virginia's workforce consistently raises the bar for the U.S. auto industry and shows the world how it's done.

The West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation won official accreditation to provide evaluations for the National Information Assurance Partnership, making them one of only eight such evaluation labs in the entire United States.

West Virginia offers businesses the nation's sixth-lowest cost of industrial electricity, well below the national average.

During fiscal year 2004, Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia announced an expansion at its Buffalo plant and an additional investment of \$80 million.

Diamond Electric's Manufacturing Corp. announced a \$21 million expansion of its ignition coil plant in Eleanor.

American Woodmark announced its third manufacturing facility in West Virginia. The establishment of 300 additional jobs proves the company's confidence in West Virginia as a place for business growth and success.

While we're focusing on new businesses, we certainly aren't forgetting our oldest industries:

As part of Pechiney's proposed merger with Alcan, the Pechiney Rolled Products plant in Ravenswood was to be sold. After my intervention, the U.S. Department of Justice ruled that the divestiture, which would have affected 1,000 workers, may not be required.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. was ready to close its doors. Hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women and their families faced an end to life as they knew it. Thanks to an unprecedented loan from the state of West Virginia, the company turned tragedy into success because we took a risk that no other governor would have considered doing. The company emerged from bankruptcy and broke ground this fiscal year on a new electric arc furnace.

In May, International Steel Group purchased Weirton Steel, becoming North America's largest integrated steel producer. The purchase, which brought the company out of bankruptcy, led to the plant's continued operation and the employment of many

West Virginians.

And, through my assistance, West Virginia's oldest manufacturer, Halltown Paperboard in Jefferson County, will stay in business and successfully compete in the markets of the future.

Bombardier Aerospace in Harrison County and Homer Laughlin China Co. in Hancock County each benefited from state retention efforts in the past four years.

The likelihood of these companies surviving in the fashion they are now without intervention from the state – through the purchase of the 145,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at Harrison-Marion Regional Airport for lease to Bombardier Services and a \$10 million loan to Homer Laughlin – was zero.

We've received additional good news over the past year:

The state's roughly \$860 million in general obligation debt received high grade investment ratings from major financial services groups such as Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's:

Just this month, Moody's upgraded the bond rating for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission because of the new combined structure of the state's higher education system and positive enrollment trends at the state's colleges and universities.

In July 2004, Fitch Ratings outlined the fiscal conditions that support the AA rating it gave to West Virginia's general obligation bonds. These include our pursuit through the past decade of broadly based policies of improvement in several areas; West Virginia's 2002-03 general fund undesignated balance and rainy day reserve; and revenue collections on a cash basis in fiscal 2004 that were \$41.5 million above estimates and 5.6 percent above fiscal 2003 collections.

Standard & Poor's noted West Virginia's responsive actions to reduce expenditures when faced with revenue shortfalls, that West Virginia was one of the few states to log a surplus in fiscal 2002; and that West Virginia successfully closed a \$226 million budget gap, in part through a tobacco tax increase and a base budget reduction.

There are several things we can attribute many of these successes to. We now have new tools that we never had before.

Four years ago, Vision Shared was just a report and a list of recommendations. In a constantly evolving process designed to respond to the demands of today's businesses, West Virginia has made important changes to its development assistance program, streamlined the application process for the program, and improved access to the state's already impressive workforce training programs and its Small Business Development Centers.

Four years ago, tax increment financing failed to pass. In 2002, with business and labor working together, voters approved tax increment financing, a flexible financing method for units of local government that allows them to establish where and how economic development will occur. To date, seven TIF districts have been established across the state.

Four years ago, we effectively had no R&D tax incentive. Now, we have one of the most sweeping in the nation that can be carried forward 10 years. Our Strategic Research & Development Tax Credit is now refundable, an attribute that helps startup and emerging

R&D companies.

Other positive tax changes include:

The High Growth Business Investment Tax Credit, which is equal to 50 percent of the qualified investment made in companies that have been certified by the tax commissioner as eligible for the Strategic R&D Tax Credit.

The Economic Opportunity Credit is available to businesses that make a qualified investment in a new or expanded business. The credit is also available for qualified small businesses.

Manufacturers that make qualified capital investments in an industrial facility may be eligible for the Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit.

Purchases of tangible personal property and services for direct use in research and development are exempt from West Virginia's consumer sales and service tax and use tax. Certain computer-related sales of tangible personal property and services are exempt from the consumer sales and services tax.

Certified West Virginia capital companies are exempt from the business franchise tax on that portion of capital used for state businesses.

The West Virginia Capital Company Credit entitles investors in qualified West Virginia capital companies to a state tax credit.

Four years ago, there were no incentives for destination tourism. The powerful Tourism Development Incentive allows eligible companies to recoup up to 25 percent of their approved development costs by retaining the consumers sales and service tax they collect over a 10-year period; up to 50 percent may be recouped from development on mined land.

Four years ago, we had no venture capital fund. Today, legislation provides \$25 million to leverage federal funds, providing up to \$100 million in venture capital to help jump-start new businesses in our high-technology sectors, and we established a Sunny Day fund to invest in companies that have chosen to invest in West Virginia.

Four years ago, we had no large state economic stimulus measure. Today, we created the largest economic stimulus package the state has ever seen with the creation of the Economic Development Grant Committee.

This committee authorized bonds for qualified economic development projects, generating \$700 million in West Virginia's economy. When you employ people, they put money back into our economy. That, combined with the investment money, will generate in excess of \$1 billion in economic activity across our state.

The Cabela's project perfectly illustrates the successful combination of funding from this committee and other sources.

With \$35 million from grant committee; \$80 million from bonds issued by Cabela's (which will be paid back using tax increment financing); \$2 million from the county commission and money that had already been set aside for an interchange, West Virginia has a new retail store and distribution center that brings 1200 jobs and 1000 spin off jobs from activity associated with other activities on the site.

West Virginia also is becoming the Silicon Valley of the nation in the biometrics industry. In June, representatives of 12 European biometrics companies traveled to

Morgantown for a three-day conference aimed at creating partnerships with West Virginia's biometrics industry.

West Virginia University in Morgantown has a specialization in biometrics. The Morgantown region includes, among many others, the FBI Criminal Justice Identification Services Division; the Biometrics Fusion Center; and the previously mentioned National Information Assurance Partnership certification lab with special expertise in biometrics products.

Marshall University in Huntington focuses on biotechnology, with expertise in forensics, environmental science and medical research. With MU as an anchor, the Charleston to Huntington corridor's concentration of chemical companies serves as a foundation for the development of biomanufacturing and industrial biotechnology.

West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle, within easy commuting distance of Washington, D.C., is attractive to bioscience firms in the metro area. In general, the state is investigating opportunities for geriatric pharmaceutical clinical trials given its demographics.

West Virginia has identified biotechnology as one of several key industries for development. In three targeted corridors, components for clusters already exist with the most comprehensive development in the north-central part of the state:

The Morgantown-based Protea was started to commercialize a technology from West Virginia University's Health Sciences Center.

The Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council provided \$3 million to the West Virginia Research Park, whose tenants most likely will be tied into the biotechnology industry.

And this year, BioPharmance Inc., a biotechnology research firm established through a partnership between the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation and Dominion Pharmakine Ltd. of Bizkaia, Spain, announced its location at Fairmont's I-79 Technology Park. BioPharmance will design, develop and commercialize products, technologies and services for biomedical and biodefense research.

We also announced funding of \$125,000 for Energy Village to coordinate West Virginia's emerging energy and environmental technology cluster of businesses. The U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory is located in Morgantown and is leading research and development of fossil-fuel technologies. In addition, the state is a leader in the production of coal and other natural resources.

Several of these projects also benefited from West Virginia's Economic Development Grant program. They include:

- \$12.5 million for a biotechnology development center at Marshall University;
- \$10 million for a medical research facility at West Virginia University's Blanchette Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute;
- \$2.3 million for the National Biometrics Security Project; and
- \$1.5 million for the creation of a biotechnology incubator in South Charleston.

In a separate initiative, we are offering \$4 million in competitive research grants with the stated understanding that research is a critical component of its strategic plan for

economic development.

Four years ago, workers' compensation was lurching from crisis to crisis. In 2003, I appointed a task force to take a hard look at Workers' Compensation – to determine whether the system could return to fiscal solvency or whether it should be placed into bankruptcy and receivership. Working with key legislators, we crafted a comprehensive reform package that allowed for up to a 15 percent premium increase, froze rates for three years, trimmed benefits and gave accountability and credibility to a floundering program.

Under new leadership, a workers' compensation system that was expected to be flat broke by July 1, 2006 now expects to have \$757 million in the bank in two years. While we still must find a way to address a \$3.3 billion long-term liability, this improved cash flow position gives us reason for optimism.

Four years ago, we had no coal truck safety legislation. Now, we have some of the most stringent safety enforcement in the nation. Today, just over 1,200 trucks have been properly permitted to haul coal on the Coal Resource Transportation System, and soon the agency will have more than 100 uniformed officers performing both weight and safety functions across the state.

Four years ago, mining permits were slow to be issued. The DEP's permit issuance process was retooled, increasing the number of permit staff from nine to 21 and setting deadlines for permit issuance. In just the last year alone, the number of pending permits has decreased from 98 in 2003 to just 58 this year. We have sped up the permitting process without detracting from our environmental protection efforts or hurting the economy by keeping coal at a stalemate.

In the last four years, the number of acres mined has more than doubled, from just over 10,000 in 2000, to 22,000 acres last year. The industry is continuing the trend in 2004, and DEP is keeping up the pace by issuing scientifically defensible, timely permits.

Four years ago, doctors were leaving the state. Today, a doctor-owned insurance company is a reality, insuring nearly 1500 physicians. Last year, I asked the Legislature to enact sweeping reforms to address the medical malpractice crisis. The Legislature responded with the formation of the Physicians' Mutual Insurance Co., which is a major step toward stabilizing the health care delivery system in our state.

As I've often said: economic development and education go hand-in-hand.

In West Virginia, we know that our graduates with associate's or bachelor's degrees earn \$35,000 to \$52,000 a year. Those with only a high school diploma earn \$28,000. We want more students to attain a higher education.

We want to keep our best and brightest students right here in West Virginia. That's why we funded – for the first time in 2001 – the PROMISE Scholarship Program. Last year, nearly 6,300 PROMISE scholars attended our colleges and universities. This year, we awarded more than 4,072 scholarships to entering freshman. We expect about 3,500 will accept and use their scholarship on our campuses this fall for a total of 9,400 PROMISE scholars statewide.

It's important to note that even with increased standards, an equal number of students have attained the PROMISE this year as did in the first year of the scholarship.

This is the best investment we can make for the future of our state – keeping students in the Mountain State where they will hopefully stay to start their careers. The best problem we can have is that so many of our hardworking students want to stay in West Virginia.

And, so far, it's working:

Each year – since 2001 – we have kept an additional 500 students in West Virginia, and almost 50 percent of the full-time college freshmen in 2002 were recipients of the PROMISE Scholarship.

Our ACT and SAT test scores are continuing to improve. This is in part because of the expectations of the PROMISE Scholarship. In fact, our sub scores on the English section of the ACT have surpassed the national average since the inception of the PROMISE Scholarship.

For the first time, our high school students are entering college at the same rate as the rest of the nation. High school graduates are enrolling in post-secondary education at a 56.5 percent rate, up from about 46 percent in 1996, and our cumulative grade in accountability and standards, teacher quality and school climate leads the nation. And, 80.5 percent of West Virginia students entering public colleges as freshman in the fall of 2002 returned as sophomores for the 2003 fall semester – a three percent increase in our retention rates.

Each of us must begin to promote these positive aspects of West Virginia. We're looking to promote the Mountain State in a way that will build a positive image, attract and retain new businesses and residents and correct stereotypes and wrong impressions.

Just this summer, the rest of the world got an up-close look at the beauty we West Virginians live with every day. Television viewers watched the Pete Dye West Virginia Classic at the Pete Dye Golf Club in Bridgeport.

Months of planning and an \$800,000 state investment yielded raves from players, their families and the crowds attending the event. We could not have purchased the kind of concentrated advertising we received from 11 hours on The Golf Channel with that kind of money.

Stats on the tourism impact are still uncertain, but the lasting impression topped the charts.

West Virginia's image should match its accomplishments. I often tell economic development prospects: "If you have a book about West Virginia that is more than two years old, throw it out. It's obsolete."

The positive image we will promote is one of a state that gets things done, leads the way, makes positive changes and constantly seeks ways to improve. In West Virginia, we live well, work hard and raise strong families. Together, we will tell the world how wonderful it is.

ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT FOR JOB CREATION

Throughout his term, Governor Wise demanded that state investment in economic development be targeted at job creation. He ordered a close review of ongoing efforts, including tax credits and other incentives, and eliminated several unproductive efforts. He also successfully proposed legislation to create new methods of stimulating employment, including the state's first venture capital fund.

News Release
September 26, 2001

Wise Announces \$3 Million for Venture Capital Investment

Charleston, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust, the state's venture capital fund, has recently secured the first round of funding for the New Millennium Fund with the assistance of Verizon West Virginia and Virginia Electric and Power Company, a Dominion Resources subsidiary.

“Both Verizon and VEPCO/Dominion want to help create a vibrant, diverse West Virginia economy,” Wise said. “Participation in the JIT program with the state of West Virginia helps us make strategic investments in state companies in need of start-up or expansion financing. These pledges will help to meet the economic development goals I have set for the state.”

Under the New Millennium Fund program, the West Virginia State Legislature permitted JIT to sell up to \$6 million in prospective non-incentive tax credits each year for five consecutive years. The sale of these tax credits allows JIT to capitalize the New Millennium Fund through loans obtained from private banking entities. With the sale of these tax credits to corporations with strong credit ratings, JIT can leverage \$3 million per year, which is an amount equal to the present value of a 10-year zero coupon note based on the amount pledged by the creditworthy entity of proceeds to support West Virginia businesses with debt or equity participation.

For the first round of funding, Verizon and VEPCO/Dominion each pledged to purchase the tax credits if JIT cannot repay the loans through internally generated funds derived from its investments in West Virginia companies. “JIT now has \$3 million in the bank to support start-up and home-grown businesses in West Virginia,” said Richard Ross, executive director of JIT. “I’m proud of this plan, and I’m especially gratified that Verizon and VEPCO/Dominion are lending their good names to the plan.”

Entrepreneurs who may be interested in receiving investment from JIT under the New Millennium Fund program may contact Richard Ross with the West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust by telephone at (304) 345-6200.

Job Creation Legislation Successful

Last weekend, our lawmakers passed HB 4005, and it was a victory for flexible economic development in West Virginia. Its passage promotes tax incentives and venture capital, while recognizing that additional money is needed for capital improvements and infrastructure improvements to help retain the jobs we have and attract new ones.

HB 4005 includes legislation to replace a dozen outdated or ineffective tax credits with programs that are more closely associated with today's industries and jobs. This bill accomplishes two goals: It provides real incentives to businesses to expand or locate in West Virginia and simplifies the process for taxpayers. We have replaced these unproductive incentives with four new tax credits for economic opportunity, manufacturing, electric generation and research and development.

This week, I will appoint the nine-member board required by HB 4005. It will include my designee, the secretary of the Department of Tax and Revenue, the executive director of the state Development Office and three members each from a list of nominees submitted by the Senate President and House Speaker. This panel will work together to make a difference in our future.

The board will meet in early April to determine the criteria for evaluating projects and the processes the board will use. This meeting will occur prior to April 7.

We also must draw in venture capital to encourage entrepreneurship and create jobs. This bill authorizes placing \$25 million in a state venture capital fund, to be matched with \$75 million in federal funding. This three-to-one match from the Small Business Administration's Small Business Investment Corporation means \$100 million invested in small West Virginia businesses specializing in bio-technology, biometrics and infrastructure.

I want to thank our legislators for passing HB 4005.

Economic Development System Produces Results

West Virginia's work force is second to none. The working men and women of this state prove their loyalty, dedication and willingness time and time again. And they have a work ethic known and respected by corporate executives from such well-known companies as Toyota, Acordia National and Lockheed Martin.

West Virginia's business climate improves constantly. Recent tax incentives include the Economic Opportunity Credit, which offsets 80 percent of taxes for up to 13 years with a minimum job requirement of 20. The state's incredibly aggressive Strategic R&D Credit allows for up to 100 percent tax offset for R&D projects. (R&D expenses are exempt from sales tax too.)

The climate for venture capital companies has never been better.

The past few weeks have proven that our foundations are solid and our recent improvements are working. It's been an exciting time for economic development in the Mountain State.

In the past two weeks, we've announced three economic development projects bringing 798 jobs and \$68 million in investment to West Virginia.

Sequelle Communications Alliance Inc., which offers competitively priced, wireless broadband communications, joined our economic family on Oct. 30. This company's \$5 million local investment will bring as many as 50 jobs with salaries of at least \$45,000 annually to Wood County.

Just last week, Sogefi, an Italian automobile components manufacturer, decided to locate in Wayne County. This company will produce automotive suspension parts, bringing 148 jobs and a \$27 million investment.

Finally, frozen entrée manufacturer Luigino's Inc., broke ground on a new 250,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Parkersburg, announcing 600 jobs and a \$36 million investment.

Leaders of each of the three companies had different reasons for choosing West Virginia. They ranged from location concerns to respect for the state's work force.

Cooperation from economic development representatives at the state and local level impressed each company and that made all the difference. West Virginia offers a personal touch that's simply not possible from some of our larger competitive states.

Our solid economic development system produces results for our people. This is good news for West Virginia, particularly gratifying considering the uneven national economy.

Our newly revamped incentives, in addition to our work force's reputation and our team effort at recruiting the world's best companies, bring us the caliber of jobs we've announced recently.

News Release
December 9, 2003

Wise Announces New Business, Up To 100 Jobs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and officials from beBetter Networks Inc., today announced the company will locate in Charleston and create up to 100 jobs averaging \$45,000 in yearly salaries.

“West Virginia targets business service companies as an important component of the state's economy,” said Wise. “It is especially gratifying to know that business expertise, in this case, comes from a returning West Virginian.”

John W. McClaugherty, originally of Charleston, is chief executive officer and co-founder of beBetter Networks. A native West Virginian and graduate of WVU College of Law, McClaugherty has, for the past 15 years, been associated with healthcare and technology business interests in the Atlanta area. He is the co-founder of A.D.A.M., a successful, publicly traded publisher of online medical information.

beBetter Networks will combine McClaugherty's experience in these healthcare delivery system areas. The company provides behavior management employee assistance services as well as coaching for managers and employees to a variety of organizations utilizing high-tech delivery systems. Employees and individuals will be able to receive professional guidance over the telephone and the Internet at their convenience from anywhere in the world.

“West Virginia continues to offer great opportunities for entrepreneurs,” McClaugherty said. “We look forward to augmenting the state's business climate.”

A \$500,000 economic development grant through the Business and Industrial Development Corp. (BIDCO); a loan totaling \$453,870 from the West Virginia Economic Development Authority; and \$75,000 from the Sunny Day Fund will support the project. beBetter Networks also is eligible for training assistance from the Governor's Workforce Investment Division of the West Virginia Development Office.

“Returning to my home state makes this business venture even more meaningful,” McClaugherty said. McClaugherty is the son of the late John McClaugherty, former managing partner of Jackson Kelly, PLLC, and a driving force for the creation of the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences.

“Companies that use technology to improve business make the Charleston area better,” said Tom Potter, chairman of BIDCO. “It is even better when bringing a company here means bringing somebody home.”

SUNNY DAY FUND

West Virginia has long maintained a “Rainy Day Fund.” It is a special account – funded through investment of state tax surpluses – that is held in reserve for difficult economic times, when state revenue estimates fall short of budgeted expenditures, or when a natural disaster or other crisis requires an immediate expenditure that has not been anticipated by the state’s budget.

Governor Wise, early in his term, also pushed for the creation of a new fund – a “Sunny Day Fund” – that would give the Governor the resources to act when a positive opportunity arose to invest in a job-creating venture. The proposal was one of the few items he proposed in his first State of the State speech which failed to make it through the Legislature in 2001. He returned to the concept in 2002, and was successful in convincing legislators to approve it.

Governor’s Message
February 15, 2002

The Future’s So Bright

This past week, I spent time traveling the state talking to people about a brighter economic future for West Virginia.

On Wednesday, Peter Berner, vice president for Dow’s West Virginia Operations,

and Jerry Ring, Dow's director of global contributions and community programs, were made honorary and distinguished West Virginians, respectively, for their efforts in creating and maintaining 400 to 650 jobs in the Kanawha Valley.

Peter has experienced 14 transfers in his career. He and his wife are seriously considering West Virginia as their home when they retire. The generous welcome they've experienced in every West Virginia community is a large factor in their decision.

Jerry emotionally expressed what it's like to go from his Fairmont roots to a long and varied career – including a stint in Hong Kong – to being named a distinguished West Virginian.

I also attended the Morgantown Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet where members shared my view that economic development at the local level is a vital piece of my economic development strategy.

Equally important is updating and streamlining West Virginia's incentive package. That's why I have proposed an aggressive economic development legislative agenda, which includes replacing unproductive tax incentives with four new tax credits and creating a Sunny Day Fund.

Paying increased attention to rewarding research and development also will help West Virginia companies develop technology that will improve the condition of our state, nation and larger world. West Virginia has a critical role to play.

This is why I also have proposed to match a \$9 million grant from the National Science Foundation to support biomolecular science and information technology research efforts at West Virginia University and Marshall University.

Research is of prime importance to quality of life in West Virginia and can be a real catalyst to economic development.

In Morgantown, I took the opportunity to praise Threewide.com, a software company run by West Virginia natives who have returned home, and Protea, a new biotechnology company established to take advantage of West Virginia University researchers. Companies such as these will put West Virginia at the forefront of the technology industry.

Helping West Virginia families make every dollar count allows them the chance to spend or save their income, strengthening the state's economy. This week, I had the opportunity to make more West Virginia families aware of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Families with two or more children can receive up to \$4,008 with the EITC and an additional \$600 per child with the Child Tax Credit.

For more information, you can call 1-866-WVA-EITC or visit the state Tax Department Website at www.state.wv.us/taxrev/eitc.htm.

Because of the efforts of the people I've mentioned in this column and those who

have helped design and maintain the programs I've outlined here, West Virginia's economic future is brighter than ever.

News Release
September 19, 2002

Governor Hands Out First Sunny Day Funds; Awards \$225,000 to Cabell and Mingo Counties

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today awarded the first Sunny Day Fund checks totaling \$225,000 to the Huntington Area Development Council and the Mine Cable Co. in Mingo County.

“The creation of the Sunny Day Fund provides West Virginia with an important economic development tool,” Wise said. “This fund allows the flexibility to finance a variety of projects that will create new jobs for West Virginians.”

The \$200,000 award to HADCO supports a previously announced expansion at SNE Enterprises, manufacturer of Crestline windows and doors, and the addition of as many as 150 jobs at the company's Huntington manufacturing facilities.

“This expansion is an example of how West Virginia is moving forward,” Wise said. “I've said before, if you have a book on West Virginia that is more than four months old, throw it out; it's already old. This is a new West Virginia.”

Construction has begun at the plant, which will grow to more than 400,000 square feet from its current 290,000 square feet.

“The Crestline expansion will take the majority of the remaining space at the Huntington Industrial Center,” said Gerald McDonald, president of the Huntington Area Development Council.

Crestline is a brand of SNE Enterprises Inc. based in Mosinee, Wis. Crestline products include a wide variety of wood and vinyl windows and patio doors sold nationwide. For more information about Crestline's complete product line, visit www.crestlinewindows.com or call 1-800-552-4111.

The \$25,000 to the Mine Cable Co. supports the establishment of 17 jobs as the company moves to the James H. “Buck” Harless Wood Products Industrial Park.

Mine Cable Co. provides services to mining companies throughout the region.

Wise introduced legislation for the Sunny Day Fund in the last two legislative sessions. The Legislature created the fund in 2002.

News Release
June 13, 2003

Wise Announces Relocation of High-Tech Company Headquarters

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Gov. Bob Wise and representatives from Limbic Systems Inc. announced today that the company, which applies digital imaging technology to the branches of forensic analysis and verification, plans to move its corporate headquarters to Morgantown from Bellingham, Wash. and create as many as 35 jobs.

“West Virginia has the power to attract today’s most innovative companies,” Wise said. “We have the technological infrastructure, the best minds and the brightest future. This is the type of company that will move us forward.”

The Monongalia County Development Authority presented Steve Brinn, Limbic Systems president and CEO, with \$70,000 from West Virginia’s Sunny Day Fund to further the company’s efforts to enhance its technology in West Virginia. The Sunny Day Fund helps consummate economic development projects.

“West Virginia is already a player in the exciting biometrics arena,” Brinn said. “We welcome the opportunity to continue our mission in a state that welcomes and rewards creative thinking.”

Limbic Systems Inc. is the pioneer of a new generation of software: visualization enhancement technology. Its technology aids the analysis of all digital images.

Limbic Systems Inc. works with West Virginia’s FBI Fingerprint Identification Center, the West Virginia State Police Crime Lab and the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center. Its clients include the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Treasury Department, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department, the San Diego Sheriff’s Department and Fisher Forensic Document Laboratory Inc.

News Release
December 11, 2003

Wise Tours Jefferson County Aerospace Company

BARDANE, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today toured PROSystems, an optical systems company in the Bardane Industrial Park with plans to expand to a new facility and increase its work force. Wise also presented the company with a \$100,000 check from the Sunny Day Fund to assist with the expansion.

“West Virginia has the power to attract and develop today’s high-technology companies,” said Wise. “The state provides the best resources in terms of sites, business climate and skilled employees.”

PROSystems, which manufactures retroreflectors used in space science, target and alignment systems, laser tracking and satellite communications, relocated from Maryland to West Virginia earlier this year. In a \$500,000 investment, the company plans to move to a 1.3-acre site in the adjacent Burr Industrial Park and grow from 14 employees to 30 by 2005.

“Watching the business grow is exciting, but we knew we came to the right place for great opportunities,” said Pat Lyons, PROSystems’ vice president.

“As a descendant of West Virginians, I am especially pleased to do business in my family’s home state,” said Jim Lyons, Pat’s husband and PROSystems’ president. “I know firsthand the quality work produced by the people of West Virginia.”

ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE GLOBAL SUPPORT CENTER

The advent of the Internet allowed for the global distribution of intellectual work. Many saw this as a threat – others looked to it as the opportunity to create new economic models that would result in jobs that were physically located far from their customers. In West Virginia, one such development took place early in Governor Wise’s term – the result of cooperation among his economic development team, local leaders in the Northern Panhandle, and a San Francisco-based law firm with a strong connection to the state.

Governor Wise participated in the announcement of plans for the Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe global support center in Wheeling in 2001, and spoke at its opening the next year.

News Release
Sept. 20, 2001

Major Law Firm Brings Global Support Center to Wheeling

WHEELING, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and officials from Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, an international law firm with 600 lawyers, today announced the location of a Global Operations Center in Wheeling’s Celeron Plaza.

The \$10 million investment will result in a minimum of 250 jobs with an average salary of \$37,000 plus benefits in such areas as finance and information technology. Applicants may email resumes to resumes@orrick.com or fax them to (415) 773-5759.

“We welcome Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe to West Virginia,” said Wise, who began discussions with the company before he took office in January. “This is an example of how West Virginia will be a part of the new economy – providing services to a world market and taking advantage of new technology to create jobs and opportunities that did not exist in the past century.”

The firm will refurbish the 88,000-square-foot Wheeling Stamping Building as part of an ongoing revitalization effort in downtown. Work on the plant has begun and the center’s completion is expected by spring of 2002.

“West Virginia’s low cost of business, its reliable work force and the extraordinary cooperation we received from Governor Bob Wise, Development Office officials and economic development representatives at the local level convinced us to locate this vital

part of our operation in the state,” said Ralph H. Baxter, Jr., chairman and CEO.

Orrick has offices in San Francisco, New York, the Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Sacramento, London, Singapore and Tokyo. The firm’s practice areas include bankruptcy and debt restructuring; corporate and technology; compensation and benefits; employment law; global energy, communications and infrastructure; intellectual property; litigation; market regulation; private finance; public finance; real estate; structured finance; and tax law.

For more information about Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, [visit www.orrick.com](http://www.orrick.com).

Remarks by Governor Bob Wise
June 28, 2002

Grand Opening of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

Mr. Baxter, Bishop Schmitt, Reverend Seitz, members of the Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe family of professionals, distinguished guests from across the nation and around the world, . civic leaders from the Wheeling area and West Virginia, ladies and gentlemen:

For a governor, this is celebrating the 4th of July six days early.

I look out here and see probably the greatest gathering of leaders to assemble in Wheeling since folks from 27 counties of western Virginia first met here in Custom House in constitutional convention exactly 141 years ago this week to begin charting the course for a new State in a new union.

And in a remarkable coincidence of history, two years later in 1863, two great institutions – a great state and a great company – the State of West Virginia and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe – were founded.

Abraham Lincoln was our lawyer, you’ll recall. But for both to have survived so long and so well, and to come together today is not serendipity as much as it is a marriage of ideas and opportunities and potential.

Today, we assemble in Wheeling to chart the course for West Virginia in a new century. It is a red-letter day for West Virginia.

Today, it is our generation that makes history.

This ceremony, in this community, on this street, in front of this building, in partnership with such an extraordinary company consisting of such outstanding people

exemplifies all that is possible when we work together to build the West Virginia of the 21st Century.

We are thrilled and we deem ourselves privileged that the capable men and women of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe have chosen to become part of our West Virginia family.

To their network of offices in San Francisco, New York, the Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Washington, Seattle, Sacramento, London, Singapore, and Tokyo is now added Wheeling.

And if that isn't cause for celebrating the "Wheeling Feeling" I don't know what is.

And I am particularly grateful that Ralph Baxter had the foresight and imagination – and grit and determination – to envision what is possible here, and to commit to working with us to build this new economic climate that stresses jobs, education and a quality of life.

As chairman and CEO of his company, Ralph searched the country for an appropriate site, and he found it in his native state of West Virginia. What he found in West Virginia was the ideal combination of hard-working, skilled people and resources to accomplish his mission.

His company is investing \$10 million to create 250 high-paying jobs.

Please join me in welcoming home a native son and his wife Cheryl, and I thank him for believing in West Virginia's future.

I might also mention Ralph has agreed to head a new group called the Governor's Ambassador Council, made up of business leaders like Ralph from across the nation who have strong connections to West Virginia. This council will advise the state on strategic issues, make sure that our strengths are known to business decision makers and give us objective external reviews of our business policies.

This celebration today proves that when we ratchet up the effort, and go full-time and full-throttle, West Virginia will bring quality companies and quality jobs to West Virginia.

I've said a hundred times, and I say it the 101st:

If we keep doing things the way we've always done them, we'll keep getting the results we always got. And that won't be good enough.

The members of the Legislature who are here will tell you that in the last session, working together, we produced sweeping accomplishments and new initiatives in economic development legislation this year – probably the most historic initiatives relating to economic development passed in decades.

And you'll have an opportunity to do your part in November when Amendment One is on the ballot to give you – and people like you all over the state – the new tool of tax

increment financing, which 46 other states have, and which West Virginia needs to have.

This has been our year of the PROMISE scholarships – opening the doors to college for more and more young West Virginians who will study here, and we hope build careers here.

And this is the state where tourism is a \$4 billion-a-year industry . . . a time in which Forbes-Milliken is giving us – Wheeling, specifically – high marks of livability and a place for building careers.

So here we have the marriage of new economic development initiatives, visionary leadership, real achievements, a magnificent building, and a new partner.

This is what happens when creativity meshes with imagination and the State of West Virginia works hard to be a partner that delivers on what we promise.

This is an anchor project for the revitalization of downtown Wheeling.

This is an enterprise that ties us more closely to the technological age.

This is an investment – \$10 million – that will lead the men and women in the work force of West Virginia in new areas of legal practice with a worldwide firm of 1,400 employees accompanied by commitment on our part to provide customized training for the work force.

Last September, when Ralph made his announcement, he said “the synergies and focus of the Wheeling Center will enable us to achieve an unparalleled new level of service.”

That’s the type of thinking we all need to be doing, to build on all that is good and right in West Virginia and to plant the flag ahead to aim toward higher levels of excellence as we build in this new century.

I want us all to work so hard that, when all is said and done, our generation can make the boast: “We changed West Virginia.”

So let us celebrate today.

“This is a day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

HIGHWAYS

Building and maintaining a quality highway system has been the responsibility of every West Virginia Governor since the state's founding. Governor Wise, with a background in transportation issues at the national level and a keen interest in the economic benefits of road-building made this a high priority. One of his first acts in office was to cancel a number of ongoing engineering contracts that had been let for roads that were far down the list for federal or state funding, redirecting the money appropriated to those planning efforts toward more construction in the near term.

Throughout his administration he moved dozens of projects toward completion in all parts of the state, from small road improvements to the announcement, at the end of 2004, that the log-awaited Blennerhasset Bridge over the Ohio River would be let out for bids.

Governor's Message
March 2, 2001

Moving Dirt Instead of Shuffling Paper

If there's one thing I learned in 18 years in Congress, it's how to get roads built. I was a member of the Transportation Committee for most of that time, and I believe I know the ins and outs of federal highway funding as well as anyone.

So why, many have asked, did my administration cancel so many road engineering contracts around the state? The answer is simple: we want to build highways today, not waste money on planning roads that simply cannot be built in the next decade or two.

We will continue to build important roads that can spur economic development. Some, like Corridor H, are well along in construction. Others, such as the Coalfields Expressway, have just begun. Not one of the ongoing projects has been slowed – let alone stopped – by shelving some long-term engineering projects.

The need for roads in West Virginia is great. In fact, if we were to build all of the roads that these planning projects represent, we could easily spend as much as \$9 billion. Unfortunately, we will be eligible for only about \$1.5 billion in road building funds from the federal government over the course of the current six-year funding cycle, which ends in 2003.

Choosing which roads to build, and where to locate them, is always a difficult

process. It will be made more difficult if we squander our limited highway funds on symbolic acts – like planning a road we know we can't build for a generation – simply to make political points.

West Virginia drivers contribute to our roadbuilding program through state and federal gas taxes. They deserve better roads in exchange for these taxes.

I'm in favor of redirecting as much as we can of that money into construction. We already have plans ready and waiting. I intend to be out there with a shovel and a hard hat as this spring construction season begins, making sure that our Division of Highways is moving dirt, not just shuffling paper.

News Release
May 3, 2001

Wise Announces \$1.8 million in Wyoming County Road Projects

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced two new road projects during a visit to Wyoming County Thursday.

“The two most important priorities of this administration are education and economic development,” Wise said. “By constructing an access road to the new Westside High School, and a new road and bridge into the Clear Fork Coatings industrial site, the Division of Highways is supporting both these activities in Wyoming County.”

The access road to the school, located on WV 971, will include turning lanes and other features to allow safe entry and exit for school buses and other traffic. The estimated cost is \$484,000; construction will start this fall.

The DOH will spend \$1.3 million to improve access to the Clear Fork Coatings site, where the company plans to create new jobs cleaning, shaping and coating marine steel products.

“This is a new industry for this area, and one with a great potential for growth,” Wise said. “I'm glad that the state is able to provide some of the infrastructure required to capture these jobs for Wyoming County.”

News Release
April 11, 2002

Governor Joins Others in Opening High-Tech Welcome Center Modern Preston County Facility Greeters Travelers Heading West on I-68

BRUCETON MILLS, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined Transportation Secretary Fred VanKirk, Commerce Commissioner Alisa Bailey and Congressional Medal of Honor winner Hershel “Woody” Williams to officially open the I-68 Welcome Center in Preston County.

“Tourism is one of West Virginia’s growth industries, and this new welcome center will cater to travelers who are such an important part of our economy,” Wise said. “We will now be able to give I-68 drivers a true West Virginia welcome.”

The West Virginia Medal of Honor Recipients Memorial Plaza is the first welcome center built in the state in 20 years. The high-tech center is designed to promote the state’s tourism attractions through advanced electronic features, including an 8-foot-wide by 6-foot-high video display for short movies on state destinations and a touch-screen digital videodisc system that allows visitors to view West Virginia travel topics ranging from outdoor recreation and dining to weather and higher education opportunities. Glass display cases hold West Virginia-made crafts and glass, while racks contain hundreds of maps and brochures from West Virginia attractions and tourist facilities.

Travel counselors will be on hand to answer questions and to assist with lodging reservations from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from May through October and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from November through April.

“We’re really excited to have this terrific facility that showcases so many fabulous aspects of West Virginia,” said Bailey. “People traveling west through the northern part of our state can now easily get maps and visitor information and make free reservations for lodging as soon as they reach our border. It’s an impressive welcome to West Virginia.”

The West Virginia Medal of Honor Recipients Memorial Plaza was named as a result of 2001 Senate Concurrent Resolution 23, which pays special tribute to West Virginia’s 72 recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in action against an enemy.

City Window & Construction Co. of Clarksburg built the \$5.8 million structure, which features a cut-stone exterior and areas for vending, as well as diaper-changing areas in the men’s, women’s and family restrooms.

The center’s nearly 25-acre site, constructed by Fairfax Trucking Co. of Elkins under a \$2 million contract, features the Division of Highways’ first use of reinforced soil slope technology, a new advance that could save money in West Virginia by reducing the amount of property required to build stable slopes along highway projects. The contract

included on- and off-ramps, a sewage treatment plant and a dumping station.

The Division of Tourism's welcome centers counted 3.7 million visitors last year. "Tourism is increasingly more important to West Virginia's future," Wise said. "This new Welcome Center will help meet the needs of I-68 travelers who haven't had a convenient place to get state travel information and, we hope, will encourage even more tourists to explore the magnificent tourist destinations West Virginia offers."

News Release
August 5, 2002

Welcome Center Awarded by DOH

CHARLESTON. W.Va. - Gov. Bob Wise today announced the award of a new I-77 welcome center by the Division of Highways.

"With tourism being one of our greatest assets, this center will provide visitors from Ohio and other western-border areas with a high-tech introduction to the many scenic and cultural attractions of West Virginia," Wise said.

Awarded to G.A. Brown & Son Inc. of Fairmont, a \$4,875,237 Wood County contract calls for construction of a welcome center on I-77 near the Ohio border at Williamstown. The 74 by 141-foot building with a cut-stone exterior will feature an octagonal display area promoting the artistry of state glass-blowers and a theater area for movies on state tourism destinations.

In addition to a vending area, a map display area and an information desk manned by state tourism personnel, visitors will find a touch-activated computer screen for information about West Virginia. Both men's and women's rest rooms will include diaper-changing areas. Work includes paving the 7.5-acre site off Interstate 77 at the junction of W.Va. 14 and 31.

News Release
September 6, 2002

DOH Advertises Two More Corridor D Contracts

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the Division of Highways will open bids in October on two more segments of Appalachian Corridor D in the Parkersburg area.

“By July, the Division of Highways had awarded 12 projects since the beginning of 2001, totaling nearly \$137 million, to extend four-lane U.S. 50 from the Interstate 77 interchange through Parkersburg to Ohio,” Wise said. “These two contracts leave just one construction project and one paving project to bring us to the Ohio River bridge that will complete the route.”

An 0.72-mile segment east of Meadow Drive (Wood County 9/27) to the intersection of existing U.S. 50 with W.Va. 68 and 892 will be bid Oct. 1. About 600,000 cubic yards of excavation will be necessary for the project, which calls for grading, draining, paving, signing, roadway lighting and pavement marking.

Work includes water and sewer relocation as well as installation of signals at W.Va. 892’s intersections with W.Va. 95 and two Corridor D ramps. Two prestressed girder bridges will be constructed – a single-span structure carrying the mainline of the route over Meadow Drive and a two-span structure carrying W.Va. 892 over Corridor D at the interchange.

The second contract, to be bid October 16, will extend the route 0.78 mile to Wood County 30/1 at Greenland Addition. Work calls for grading involving nearly 400,000 cubic yards, draining, paving, signing and waterline relocation.

News Release
December 17, 2002

Wise Announces First East Beckley Bypass Contract Awarded

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced the first contract on the East Beckley Bypass will soon be under construction, following the award of a \$7,856,932 contract by the Division of Highways.

“This is the beginning of a safer and more convenient route for area motorists on

the eastern side of Beckley from I-64's interchange with Eisenhower Drive northward to a connection with Corridor L," Wise said.

A joint venture of Vecellio & Grogan Inc. of Beckley and Ranger Construction Industries Inc. of West Palm Beach, Florida, was awarded the state-financed project for construction of 1.2 miles of new four-lane U.S. 19 from north of the Piney Creek Bridge to Grey Flats Road. Work includes more than a quarter-million cubic yards of excavation, along with drainage, paving, signing and pavement marking.

Providing two access roads to Eisenhower Drive and connections to New Jersey Avenue East, Pinecrest Industrial Park, Beckley-Stratton Junior High and YMCA Drive, the project also calls for installation of a traffic signal and a small retaining wall near the New Jersey Avenue/Eisenhower Drive intersection.

News Release
December 19, 2002

DOH Awards I-81 Bridge Widening

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that work will soon be under way to widen an I-81 bridge, following award of a \$7,178,550 Berkeley County contract by the Division of Highways.

"This project is another step in the six-lane widening of I-81, one of our state's most heavily traveled interstate highways," Wise said. "The award brings to over \$47 million the total of work now under way on the road."

The Velotta Company of Sharon Center, Ohio, was successful bidder for the contract, which calls for use of 325 tons of structural steel to widen the single-span fabricated steel girder bridge carrying I-81 over W.Va. 45 south of County 15.

News Release
April 15, 2003

Wise Breaks Ground for Rt. 2 Project

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today broke ground for the four-lane upgrading of the Follansbee-Weirton Road on W.Va. Rt. 2 in Brooke County.

“This groundbreaking signals the official beginning of this four-lane upgrading,” Wise said. “This is one step to upgrading our westernmost major highway for the safety and convenience of motorists.”

Mashuda Corporation of Cranberry Township, Pa., was recently awarded a \$19,831,052 contract, which calls for nearly 3.5 million cubic yards of excavation to construct 1.27 miles of the route from slightly south of Archer Heights Road (Brooke County 8) northward. The project includes additional turn lanes at the County 8 intersection and at the Market Street Bridge, where an existing traffic signal will be upgraded.

To minimize disruption during the 18-month construction period, the heavily traveled road and Market Street Bridge will only be shut down until August 1 for removal of the most dangerous part of the mountain overhanging W.Va. 2, with an 11-mile detour via US 22, County 1 and 12 and Alternate W.Va. 27.

News Release
April 18, 2003

Governor Wise, Senator Byrd to Open More Corridor H Mileage in Hardy County

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise will join U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd and Transportation Secretary Fred VanKirk Thursday, April 24, to open an additional 5.35 miles of Appalachian Corridor H east of Moorefield. The roadway extends from a three-mile segment opened August 19, 2002, and completes more than \$75 million of construction in Hardy County.

The 2 p.m. ceremony, to be held at Baker Volunteer Fire Hall on W.Va. 55, will mark official completion of more than \$51 million in construction of the four-lane expressway from Luxemburg Road (Hardy County 23/4) to south of the Baker interchange.

Under an \$11.1 million contract, Elmo Greer & Sons, LLC of London, Ky., excavated nearly 2 million cubic yards of earth to construct 1.09 miles of the route from north of

County 23/4 to south of County 8. The project's slight relocation of Luxemburg Road to provide an at-grade intersection with the expressway and tie into W.Va. 55 resulted in a unique feature, designed as part of West Virginia's environmental protection efforts. To maintain the integrity of a small feeder stream in the Skaggs Run-Baker Run area, highway engineers designed an open-bottom pipe arch to carry the road over the stream without damaging the stream's natural shape.

A joint venture of Vecellio & Grogan Inc. of Beckley and Ranger Construction Industries Inc. of West Palm Beach, Fla., constructed the next 2.13 miles under a \$25.3 million contract requiring more than 2.8 million cubic yards of excavation. Providing three access roads to area farms, the project included 96- and 120-inch drainpipes, in addition to a six-span prestressed concrete beam bridge over Long Lick Run and County 8.

Polino Contracting Inc. of Elkins was awarded a \$15 million contract extending the route 2.13 miles to south of the Baker interchange. Providing another farm access road and two of the ramps for the interchange, the job required nearly 2 million cubic yards of excavation and included 72- and 108-inch drainpipes.

News Release
May 27, 2003

Wise Awards I-70 Fort Henry Exchange Contract

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced work will soon be under way to construct the Fort Henry Interchange on I-70, following the award of an \$11,079,462 contract by the Division of Highways.

“This project is vital to the movement of goods and vehicles expected after completion of a Cabela's retail store and warehouse in the Fort Henry Business and Industrial Centre,” Wise said. Wise noted that highway officials will likely name new Exit 10 Cabela Drive.

Awarded to Beaver Excavating Co. of Canton, Ohio, the contract provides new access to I-70 a mile west of the Dallas Pike interchange. The project involves construction of a 280-foot-long, five-lane fabricated steel girder bridge over the interstate, using more than 290 tons of structural steel, with a diamond configuration on the westbound side of the interchange and a partial cloverleaf eastbound.

Work also includes upgrading of 1.61 miles of connecting roadways, from a five-lane segment into the centre on the northwest corner tapering into existing two-lane Ohio County 41/1, McCutcheon-Buchannon Road, leading eastward to the Dallas Pike interchange.

News Release
May 27, 2003

Wise, DOH Award Rumsey Bridge Contract

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that replacement of Jefferson County’s James Rumsey Bridge will soon be under way, following the award of a \$15,638,794 contract by the Division of Highways.

“This project is the result of an agreement with the National Park Service that will enhance the adjacent C&O Canal Park in the Maryland area,” Wise said.

Awarded to Brayman Construction Corp. of Saxonburg, Pa., the Jefferson County contract calls for 1,996 tons of structural steel to construct a three-span haunched steel girder bridge just upstream of the existing bridge carrying W.Va. 480 to Maryland over the Potomac River and C&O Canal.

Nearly 1100 feet in length, the bridge will provide two 12-foot lanes with four-foot shoulders and an eight-foot sidewalk on the downstream side that will extend an additional 1200 feet to the intersection of Campus Drive, the main entrance to Shepherd College. On the Maryland side, work includes canal restoration and landscaping, as well as building an access trail to the existing parking lot of the C&O Canal Park, a new parking area along the canal and a footbridge across the parking lot.

News Release
September 9, 2003

Wise Announces I-68 Extension Now Eligible for Federal Funding

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the Federal Highway Administration has approved West Virginia’s request to add an extension of I-68 from I-79 at Morgantown to W.Va. 2 at Moundsville to the National Highway System.

“This approval means that the section way between Moundsville and Morgantown has been reclassified as part of the State Principal Arterial System, including Monongalia County 19/24, U.S. 19, W.Va. 7 and U.S. 250,” Wise said. “This 73 miles of roadway will be added to the existing 1749-mile National Highway System and will become eligible for federal funding, if and when such monies become available.”

The Division of Highways held public meetings in Marion, Marshall, Monongalia

and Wetzel counties in 2000 and 2001 to present information and gain input on potential routes for the extension.

The current I-68 in West Virginia, Appalachian Corridor E, was built for \$113 million between 1970 and 1976 and stretches 31.8 miles from an interchange with I-79 at Exit 148 to the Maryland border. In October 1989, FHWA approved redesignating the 112-mile link from I-79 to I-70 in Maryland as an interstate when Maryland completed construction projects upgrading its final segments of the National Road east of Cumberland.

News Release
October 27, 2003

Wise Announces DOH to Bid More Work on Coalfields, King Coal Routes

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced bids will soon open on four additional contracts for the Coalfields Expressway and King Coal Highway.

Wise, who spent the day in Wyoming and McDowell counties meeting with local leaders, cited the efforts of Senator Robert C. Byrd and Congressman Nick Rahall in providing funding for the projects and noted one of the projects would provide paving that will complete work on a three-mile segment of an upgraded highway in the Sophia area of Raleigh County.

“Each of these contracts is part of an ultimate goal – to provide a new economic lifeline for the people of southern West Virginia.” Wise said.

One contract on each route will be bid Nov. 18, with another on Dec. 9. Bidding on the Coalfields Expressway project scheduled for Nov. 18 calls for excavation to grade and drain 1.2 miles of new W.Va. 121 from Slab Fork to Big Ridge in Raleigh County.

The King Coal Highway contract, the second one for four-lane upgrading of U.S. 52, is for grading and drainage on .22 miles from the recently completed \$27 million interchange with Appalachian Corridor Q (U.S. 460) east of Bluefield to U.S. 19. Including demolition of six buildings, the Mercer County project is the first of those necessary to extend the route to Airport Road.

The second Coalfields Expressway contract is for construction of 1.37 miles of W.Va. 121 from Surveyor Creek Road to Slab Fork Road. The Raleigh County contract includes guardrail, pavement marking and signing and the paving necessary to complete four other Sophia-area projects totaling \$32 million since 2000.

The second King Coal Highway project calls for excavation to grade and drain

.18 miles of four-lane U.S. 52 from Mercer County 25 to south of the old Raleigh Grayson Turnpike, along with demolition of 36 structures. The segment is near the one to be bid Nov. 18, on the opposite side of U.S. 19, over which a bridge will be built under a future contract.

News Release
December 19, 2003

Wise Announces Another Coalfields Expressway Project

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that work would soon begin on an additional segment of the Coalfields Expressway, following award of a \$12,217,154 contract by the Division of Highways.

“This highway is vital to the economic development of southern West Virginia,” Wise said. “The contracts we’ve recently awarded will ensure completion of this important expressway.”

Elmo Greer & Sons, LLC of London, Kentucky, was awarded the project, which calls for construction of 1.37 miles of new W.Va. 121 in Raleigh County from Surveyor Creek Road to Slab Fork Road. Requiring nearly 2.5 million cubic yards of excavation, drainage and waterline relocation, the contract includes paving, guardrail, pavement marking and signing. The paving will complete work on a three-mile segment of upgraded four-lane highway in the Sophia area.

The firm was also successful bidder on a project for over 2.3 million cubic yards of excavation to grade and drain 1.2 miles of new W.Va. 121 from Slab Fork to Big Ridge in Raleigh County, awarded earlier this month.

News Release
February 4, 2004

DOH Awards Additional Contracts on Corridor H, W.Va. 10

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that upgrading will soon begin on additional segments of Appalachian Corridor H and W.Va. 10, following an award of more than \$27 million in contracts by the Division of Highways.

“One project extends a 20-mile segment of four-lane highway nearing completion in West Virginia’s scenic Potomac Highlands while the other will ultimately provide a safer route for motorists between Man and Logan,” Wise said.

Kanawha Stone Company Inc. of Nitro was successful bidder on both projects.

The \$12,444,316 Hardy County contract calls for 2.2 million cubic yards of excavation to grade, drain and pave 1.5 miles of four-lane Corridor H from Fort Run, 1.5 miles east of U.S. 220, to a diamond interchange with W.Va. 55 on which two ramps have already been completed. The contract includes construction of the remaining two ramps as well as access roads to the proposed Hardy County Industrial Park and local farms and residences.

The \$14,571,408 Logan County contract calls for 2.8 million cubic yards of excavation to grade and drain 2.01 miles of new four-lane W.Va. 10 from Taplin to Earling, with paving to be included in a later contract. The project on the opposite side of the Guyandotte River from existing W.Va. 10 ties in with the new Man Bridge and includes construction of a 106-foot, single-span, prestressed girder bridge over a ravine. Also included are five cast-in-place concrete and modular retained earth walls ranging in length from 41 to 225 feet.

News Release
March 2, 2004

Wise Announces Work to Begin on Gateway Connector

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that work would soon begin on another part of Fairmont’s “Gateway” Connector, following the award of two contracts totaling more than \$15.2 million by the Division of Highways.

“These contracts will develop the other half of the new interchange with Interstate 79,” Wise said, noting that a separate contract would be bid at a later date to pave the entire interchange, located between existing ones for Pleasant Valley Road and W.Va. 310.

Wise cited the efforts of Congressman Alan Mollohan to obtain funding for the 1.5-mile connector, currently designated Marion County 19/80, which will have four lanes and is anticipated to revitalize the existing infrastructure of downtown Fairmont.

Mountaineer Grading Co. of Elkview was awarded a \$6,571,707 contract calling for nearly a million cubic yards of excavation to grade and drain the area on the northwest side of I-79, including construction of three ramps between the connector and the interstate.

Ahern & Associates Inc. of South Charleston was awarded an \$8,698,000 contract for construction of a 10-span fabricated steel girder bridge utilizing more than 945 tons of structural steel to carry the connector over I-79.

News Release
March 8, 2004

Wise Announces DOH to Bid Additional Segment of Corridor H

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the Division of Highways will open bids April 6 on an additional segment of Appalachian Corridor H in Hardy County.

“By the end of next year, motorists will be able to drive nearly 23 miles through some of West Virginia’s most breathtaking scenery on a four-lane highway from Moorefield to Wardensville,” Wise said.

Calling for more than 1.7 million cubic yards of excavation to grade, drain and pave 1.41 miles of the route from Fort Run to a diamond interchange with the future Moorefield Bypass, the project includes three-lane upgrading of U.S. 220 at the interchange, with right of way for future expansion to five lanes. The contract includes construction of three fabricated steel girder bridges: a single span using 180 tons of structural steel to carry the Moorefield Bypass over the Corridor H mainline, a single span using 119 tons of structural steel to carry the mainline over Fort Run and a four-span bridge using 709 tons of structural steel to carry the connector ramp over Dumpling Run and Ray Road.

The project adjoins a 1.5-mile segment on which a \$14.2 million contract was awarded in February. Two bridges carrying the expressway over Lost River are all that remain to complete the additional mileage to Wardensville, built at a cost of more than \$266 million.

News Release
April 8, 2004

Wise Says DOH Proceeding with Design for Garrison Avenue Wall

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that Division of Highways engineers are proceeding with plans to replace a concrete wall that collapsed during 2003 flooding on Garrison Avenue near its intersection with Westmoreland Road. The wall is part of an open channel box carrying water into a pipe under Interstate 77.

“We anticipate being able to advertise the contract for bids within a month,” Wise said. “With the cooperation of the city of Charleston, the work could be under construction by mid-May and completed by July 1.”

Highways will build the structure on the city street, the governor said, with Charleston bearing responsibility for repairs to the roadway.

Officials hope to hasten construction on the project by adapting plans from the original structure, built as part of development of I-77 during the early 1970s on which DOH still maintains a drainage easement.

“As soon as Governor Wise learned of the delay in reconstructing the flood-damaged wall, he took immediate action to correct the situation,” said Charleston Mayor Danny Jones. “Citizens of Charleston are well served by his responsiveness to our concern and the kind of cooperation his administration brings to the relationship between the city of Charleston and the state of West Virginia.”

News Release
June 17, 2004

Wise Breaks Ground for Brooke County Access Road

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined several state and local officials to break ground for a new Brooke County industrial access road in the Follansbee area.

“This access road will be a major asset to the highway system in the northern part of our state,” Wise said. “Reaping the benefits of investment in this access road will not only benefit the city of Follansbee but also the operators of both commercial and private vehicles. Moving goods and services without delays promotes economic growth.”

The groundbreaking marks the official start of a \$709,469 contract, recently awarded to Savage Construction Co. Inc. of Wheeling. The contract is to construct the 0.42-mile access road from W.Va. 2 to the Mark Avenue area of Follansbee. New County 2/20 will provide two 11-foot lanes with four-foot shoulders.

“I look forward to the completion of this road,” Wise added. “Although short in mileage, it will have a long and positive affect on this area of the state.”

News Release
October 29, 2004

Additional Paving to Complete Coalfields Segment

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that work will soon be under way on an \$11.5 million Raleigh County contract that will complete a nearly 3.5-mile segment of the Coalfields Expressway, following award by the Division of Highways.

“This four-lane highway is anticipated to renew the economic life of southern West Virginia,” the governor said, expressing thanks to Senator Robert C. Byrd and Congressman Nick Rahall for their efforts to provide funding for the Sophia-area projects.

West Virginia Paving Inc. of Dunbar was awarded the contract, which calls for paving, guardrail and signing on 3.24 miles of the Coalfields Expressway from Surveyor Creek Road to the W.Va. 16 interchange, where lighting will also be installed.

Two contracts totaling \$22.2 million are currently under construction, involving nearly five million cubic yards of excavation to grade and drain 2.57 miles of new W.Va. 121 from Big Ridge to Surveyor Creek Road. Four additional contracts totaling \$32 million, built since 2000, included three that required more than six million cubic yards of excavation to grade and drain 2.97 miles of the route. The fourth built two bridges, one ramping over W.Va. 16 and the other carrying the mainline over W.Va. 54 at the diamond interchange that ties the four-lane highway from Surveyor Creek Road into five-lane W.Va. 16 near the Lester Mall shopping center.

News Release
December 3, 2004

Wise Opens Merritts Creek Connector

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today officially opened the Merritts Creek Connector to traffic.

The ceremony marked the completion of a \$10.4 million contract for the third and final segments of the 3.5 mile route that connects W.Va. 2 with U.S. 60. Total cost for the five year project was \$38 million.

“This project will enhance this area’s economic potential and provide direct access to I-64 for future traffic needs,” Wise said. “The route already has stirred economic

development in the area of the new interchange with I-64.”

Bizzack Inc. of Lexington, Ky. was awarded the three contracts involved in construction, including a 1999 contract for the creation of the six-lane I-64 interchange.

News Release
December 13, 2004

DOH to Bid Blennerhassett Bridge

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the Division of Highways will open bids March 1, 2005, for construction of the Blennerhassett Bridge.

“West Virginia motorists have long envisioned driving on a four-lane highway from I-79 at Clarksburg into Ohio and, now, with the extraordinary funding efforts of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd and the cooperation of many state and federal agencies, that dream will be realized in little more than two and a half years,” Wise said.

“The Blennerhassett Bridge carrying Corridor D from West Virginia to Ohio fulfills a promise made by the federal government to the people of Wood County more than 39 years ago when the Corridor Highway system was first approved,” said Senator Byrd, who has obtained more than \$402 million in federal funding for the Corridor.

“In West Virginia, we understand the importance of modern roads. They make for safe travel to school and to work. New highways create new job opportunities. Throughout the state, residents understand a simple truth; namely, modern roads make for a better quality of life. The Blennerhassett Bridge will be the largest project ever undertaken by the DOH, and it will serve as a shining example of the progress and innovation that has taken root in the Mid-Ohio Valley.”

A joint venture with the Ohio Department of Transportation, the estimated \$100 million bridge will be a tied arch, a structure chosen from four design alternatives as most economical and least intrusive on the environment of historic Blennerhassett Island. West Virginia’s \$65 million share of the cost will come from regular 80 percent - 20 percent Appalachian Corridor highway funding, the accumulation of funds left in various appropriation bills and extra money provided by Senator Byrd.

The weathering steel bridge will pass over the western end of the island and cross both the main navigational and secondary channel of the Ohio River on concrete piers about 69 feet above the river. The bridge will total about 4,009 feet from abutment to abutment and provide four travel lanes with shoulders wide enough to serve traffic during emergencies or future maintenance work.

The contract calls for more than 14,705 tons of structural steel. A continuous girder bridge of eight spans, ranging from 200 to 400 feet comprising the 2,629-foot approach from the W.Va. 892 interchange, will use 16.3 million pounds of plate girder steel; nearly 1.6 million pounds will be used in the bridge of three spans ranging from 140 to 179 feet comprising the 494-foot approach from Ohio Route 618. More than 11.5 million pounds of a different class of structural steel will be used for the 880-foot tied arch over the main channel.

Corridor D, one of the original 23 Appalachian Development Highway System routes designated in 1965, includes 82 miles in West Virginia. The state's first four-lane upgrading was completed in 1967 in Doddridge County. A Clarksburg Expressway segment completed in 1978 brought the total to 72 miles. Although Senator Byrd obtained additional construction funding in 1991, design of the final 10-mile segment from I-77 to the Ohio River crossing could not proceed until a Record of Decision was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in 1999. Since that time, 18 contracts have been awarded, including relocation of Parkersburg athletic fields and mitigation for wetland affected by construction.

Once before, in 1973, DOH exhausted a major portion of a year's Appalachian funding on a single bridge. With a cost under \$37 million, the New River Gorge Bridge on Corridor L was then the most expensive single project undertaken by both the West Virginia DOH and the Appalachian Development Highway program.

Comparative costs of other contracts that completed long-term state projects include \$34.8 million for the cut replacing the Standard Tunnel on the upgraded West Virginia Turnpike; \$96 million for the total original turnpike; \$51.6 million for the Admiral T.J. Lopez Bridge at Chelyan; \$60 million for four bridges on Appalachian Corridor G; \$70 million for upgraded U.S. 22's monolithic cable-stayed Weirton-Steubenville Bridge; and \$66 million in paving and \$55 million for three major bridges on the 36-mile segment of I-64 near Beckley that finished West Virginia's interstate system.

AIRPORTS, AVIATION, AND AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES

Governor Wise determined early in his term that the development of more modern airports, and encouragement of the aviation and aerospace industries, was important to the state's economic future. He embarked early on an effort to resolve a long-standing issue in the Charleston-Huntington area – the future of the region's airports. Although Wise supported a plan to build a single airport to serve the two cities, the proposal was not funded during his term.

Wise's administration also supported upgrades to other state airports and aid to developing aerospace industries.

News Release
January 14, 2002

Wise Announces Support for Regional Airport

CHARLESTON, W.Va.—As promised, after one year into his administration, Gov. Bob Wise announced this morning that he will support building a regional airport. Wise said that the time has come for state government to act one way or the other and to set a policy for future planning.

“I am directing all state agencies in my administration to coordinate their efforts to move forward on the planning and development of a major economic development engine for our region--by advancing the regional airport,” said Wise. “We do not approach this just as an airport--it is only justified if it significantly improves job creation for Kanawha and all the other counties in the service area.

“In the past, the emphasis has been on ‘whether to build’ the regional airport,” Wise said. “Now we will move to ‘how to build’ it.”

Wise also said that under his direction, the Economic Development Office, the Division of Tourism, the Department of Transportation and others agencies will work together to guarantee that this airport creates the maximum economic development benefits. Wise added that the state will not attempt to mandate the elimination of air service at the existing airports. Air carriers who switch their service to the new airport will do so because they get a better deal.

Wise also has directed that as much of the cost as possible be obtained through private investment and public-private partnerships so that the taxpayers bear as little cost

as possible. Wise will ask all affected counties, whether their leaders support the regional airport or not, to meet to discuss how revenues and governing could be shared if the regional airport is built.

Wise added that he believes we can no longer be satisfied with practices of the past that only continue to study the situation.. “I’ll repeat my main message: If we keep on doing what we have been doing; we will keep on getting what we ‘got.’”

“This isn’t about how you feel about your airport today. This is about where we want to be in the next 20 years – and to get there, we have to start now.”

Governor’s Message
January 25, 2002

An Airport for the Future

For years, the population of our state’s largest metropolitan area, the Huntington-Charleston region, has been stagnant or declining. It’s time to take some bold action to inject new life into this region’s economy. Recently, I announced my support for a new regional airport to be built between these two cities.

Each region of West Virginia has its own particular economic issues and must develop its own solutions. People in the Eastern Panhandle are coping with the effects of population growth and the strain it puts on infrastructure. In the Northern Panhandle, we’re fighting for the steel industry and developing new economic opportunities in downtown Wheeling. In the south, we’re moving from flood recovery toward long-term development. In the Allegheny Highlands we’re strengthening the road system and attracting tens of thousands of tourists.

Building West Virginia’s first hub airport is important to all of us.

The regional airport’s cost is projected to be \$330 million. West Virginia would likely invest about \$40 million, spread over a period of years. We’ll actively seek private investment in airport facilities and services. Studies have indicated that the new airport is expected to bring thousands of jobs to the state by the year 2020.

A new Charleston/Huntington regional airport will be an economic engine for the tax base and economy of the state as a whole.

This is not the only exciting aviation project happening in West Virginia. In Harrison County, Benedum Airport has created well-paid jobs in aviation maintenance. Raleigh County Memorial Airport in Beckley has succeeded at developing an office park.

Martinsburg plans to become an inland port and has already attracted clothing distributors and aircraft manufacturers. And airports in Parkersburg and Lewisburg are looking to new ways to expand their facilities to meet America's growing aviation needs.

The new Charleston/Huntington regional airport will join these facilities in a progressive new era for our state's aviation facilities.

News Release
March 25, 2002

Governor Stresses Importance of Aerospace Industry

BRIDGEPORT, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that FMW Composite Systems is working with the West Virginia Development Office to add another division that will enhance the growth of the aerospace industry in Harrison County.

“We’ve seen tremendous growth in the aerospace industry throughout this area,” Wise said. “The most important thing we can do is create jobs for our citizens. These initiatives will do that.”

Aero Corp., the parent company of FMW, will create up to 125 jobs and invest between \$10 and \$12 million.

“This is a testimony of the hard work and dedication of Sen. Byrd and Congressman Mollohan and of the work the Robert C. Byrd Institute has done on the use of composite material in the aerospace industry,” Wise said.

In addition, the Benedum Airport Authority is in the process of transferring the excess acreage to the Mid Atlantic Aerospace Complex, which will allow that land to be used primarily to build the aerospace industry.

Wise also noted that the state is dropping the appeal at the Supreme Court regarding the legislation that recodifies the board.

Governor Wise Announces Italian Aerospace Companies' Visit

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that five Italian aerospace companies will visit West Virginia's aerospace industry centers: the Eastern Panhandle and the Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex from Tuesday, Oct. 8, to Saturday, Oct. 12.

"This visit is part of West Virginia's continuing relationship with European companies," Wise said. "In the past few months, I have visited Italy, Spain, Germany and Great Britain telling people about West Virginia's incredible work force, its quality of life and its welcoming business climate. This week's visit will familiarize Italian companies with West Virginia's vibrant aerospace industry."

Company officials will begin their visit in Washington, D.C., at the Embassy of Italy in the U.S. hosted by First Counselor Dr. Massimo Marotti.

On day two of the tour, Wednesday, Oct. 9, participants will tour the National Transportation Safety Board and the National Air and Space Museum. Susan Chernenko, the director of the West Virginia Aeronautics Commission, will provide an introduction to West Virginia aviation. Sam Whitehorn, senior Democratic counsel of the U.S. Department of Commerce, subcommittee on aviation, will speak about U.S. aviation.

U.S. Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV, D-W.Va., will host dinner on Wednesday. The senator is acting in his role as the founder of the Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation, formed in 1988 to promote West Virginia as a viable business environment, nationally and internationally.

Thursday, Oct. 10, the group visits the Eastern Panhandle, touring Shepherd College, the John D. Rockefeller Science and Technology Center, and Tiger Aircraft and Sino Swearingen in Martinsburg.

That afternoon, participants will depart for Morgantown, where West Virginia University President David Hardesty and the Morgantown Chamber of Commerce will host them for dinner.

Friday, Oct. 11, the group tours aerospace company FCX Systems Inc., in Morgantown. After lunch at the Robert C. Byrd Fairmont State College National Aerospace Education Center, participants begin their tour of the Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex.

About 1,200 employees earn \$50 million annually at the Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex. MAAC companies include the Harrison Marion Regional Airport (formerly Benedum Airport), KCI Aviation, Pratt & Whitney Engine Services, Lockheed Martin, Bombardier, Aurora Flight Sciences of West Virginia, FMW Composite Systems, the

Robert C. Byrd Fairmont State College National Aerospace Education Center, the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing and the United States Army National Guard's Fixed-Wing Aviation Training Site.

The aerospace industry's output in West Virginia is slightly more than \$376 million annually. Add the output of indirect and induced employment and the figure rises to \$584 million.

Friday's events conclude with a dinner hosted by Wise at the Pete Dye Golf Club in Bridgeport.

The Italian firms involved in the trade mission include:

Finmeccanica, a high-technology group active in the design and manufacture of aircraft, helicopters, satellites, missile systems, radars, components for power generation, trains and information technology services

Leat, which designs, manufactures, repairs, maintains and installs avionic systems

Marconi Mobile, which specializes in building secure communications solutions for the defense, naval, security and emergency services industries

Aerea, which designs and produces defense equipment for fixed or rotary wing aircraft

AIAD, the Italian Industries Association of Aerospace, Systems and Defense Industries

News Release
June 30, 2003

Wise, Bombardier Aerospace Officials Celebrate Partnership

BRIDGEPORT, W.Va. — Gov. Bob Wise and Bombardier Aerospace General Manager Troy Jonas today celebrated the partnership between West Virginia and Bombardier Services Corp. of Bombardier Aerospace, which employs 350 people at its aircraft maintenance and repair facility at the Harrison-Marion Regional Airport.

“Bombardier Aerospace is a valued member of West Virginia’s economic family,” said Wise. “The aerospace industry itself contributes greatly to the state’s economy; its output in West Virginia is slightly more than \$376 million annually. Aerospace jobs require highly skilled, dedicated and flexible employees, exactly what we have right here in West Virginia.”

The state, through the West Virginia Economic Development Authority, bought

the 145,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at the airport earlier this year and leases it to Bombardier Services Corp. The arrangement provided the company with a stable lease rate and kept it as a long-term employer in Harrison County.

“West Virginia has been an excellent partner through every aspect of our company’s development here,” Jonas said. “We’ve received outstanding cooperation at all levels.”

Bombardier Aerospace, which has been in West Virginia since 1994, provides maintenance, modification and overhaul for regional airlines as well as Bombardier Flexjet’s fleet of business aircraft at the Bombardier Services Corp. facility.

News Release
June 30, 2003

Wise Announces Expansion, Jobs at Aurora Flight Sciences

BRIDGEPORT, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and Aurora Flight Sciences President John Langford announced today that the company will increase the number of jobs at its Harrison County facility as it expands to produce unmanned aerial vehicle components for the U.S. military.

“The aerospace industry continues to grow in West Virginia,” Wise said. “Jobs in the industry require specialized skills that our qualified pool of workers can easily provide. West Virginia is an excellent location for top flight companies.”

The total cost of the project is \$2.3 million, which will result in the addition of as many as 120 jobs within three years. The company currently employs 110 people in its Harrison County facility.

A West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council loan of \$1.45 million to the Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex will finance the construction of a 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at the Harrison-Marion Regional Airport. A \$550,000 loan from the West Virginia Economic Development Authority will assist the MAAC in construction of the new facility, which will be specially designed to house Aurora’s expanding composite production business. MAAC markets and promotes the airport, its members, and their capabilities in aviation and aerospace to government and industrial clients and prospects throughout the world.

“The U.S. Air Force, Northrop Grumman, and Aurora are working together to deliver the world’s best unmanned reconnaissance aircraft,” said John S. Langford, chairman and president. “In partnership with MAAC, the West Virginia Development Office, and the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Flexible Manufacturing, it has been very satisfying to translate this into new jobs for the outstanding workers in West Virginia.”

Aurora Flight Sciences is a leading supplier of unmanned air vehicle designs, components, and flight services for government, industry, and academic clients. Aurora operates facilities in West Virginia, Virginia and California; specializes in the design and production of high-altitude UAVs; and is a major supplier of composite structures for the Global Hawk and related air vehicles.

News Release
October 1, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to Martinsburg

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented the Eastern West Virginia Airport Authority with \$1.266 million from the Economic Development Grant Committee.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

This funding will help with the construction of a two-story terminal and administration building adjacent to the existing building. It also will help fund construction of additional replacement parking for the displaced aircraft during other construction.

The grant was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

STEEL AND ALUMINUM MANUFACTURING

West Virginia's steel and aluminum producers – and the many manufacturers whose businesses depend on these companies for raw materials – are crucial to the economy of the state, particularly in the Ohio Valley. These crucial industries operate in a world economy, and were hit hard by the changes in the metals market, the opening of the U.S. market to unrestricted imports, and changes in technology.

Governor Wise worked tirelessly during his term to protect steel and aluminum industry jobs, both by pressing for added investment in modern manufacturing technology and demanding fair international trade regulations.

News Release
January 16, 2001

Precision Coil Announces Expansion

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined officials from Precision Coil Inc., to announce the expansion of the company's existing facility in Clarksburg.

The \$4.5 million expansion will include the addition of 12,000 square feet of space and the recall and hiring of 45 employees over the next three years.

"Precision Coil is an established and valued member of West Virginia's economic family," Wise said. "I am proud to be a part of the celebration today."

Established in 1988, Precision Coil has 108 employees. The company manufactures customized aluminum coils and flat products.

"This expansion includes a scrap baler that will allow PCI to sell or ship scrap for processing in a more commercial form and a roll grinder to reduce costs and expand product offering," said Jim Smith, president. "The other equipment, including a new annealing furnace and heavy gauge tension leveler will generate valuable added capacity."

A \$3,158,832 loan through the West Virginia Economic Development Authority made the expansion possible. The WVEDA is a division of the West Virginia Development Office.

Gov. Wise also toured GlassWorks WV, LLC, in Weston, the largest mouth-blown, handmade glass manufacturing production facility remaining in operation in the United

States.

“The year 2000/2001 was one of the most difficult years in the company’s 75 years of continuous operation,” said Robert Gonze, president and CEO. “The governor’s support of working people and of a company’s struggle is an important economic aid to the state.”

GlassWorks employs more than 200 people and is the fourth-largest employer in Lewis County.

News Release
February 26, 2001

Wise Urges Commerce Secretary to Fight Unfair Steel Imports

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Gov. Bob Wise today urged U. S. Commerce Secretary Donald Evans to take immediate action to protect WV steel workers against unfair imports.

“I explained today that numerous steel companies are in bankruptcy, Wise said. “Weirton Steel and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel are struggling hard. Last year, imports were almost as high as two years ago in what was considered a crisis year,” Wise said.

Wise met with the commerce secretary while in Washington attending the National Governors’ Association winter meeting. Gov. Wise said getting strong action against unfair imports is critical to the future of economic development in West Virginia.

“I was encouraged to hear the secretary say he would be willing to look at using section 201. I discussed with the secretary that nothing discourages an American worker more than feeling that they are not being treated fairly versus other countries,” Wise said.

Under Federal Trade laws Section 201 permits the Federal Government to file actions against nations that unfairly hurts American workers.

“I was pleased that Secretary Evans said he wanted to make sure the U.S steel industry would be competitive. I assured him that steel workers along the Ohio River will compete with anybody as long as they can play on a level playing field,” said Wise.

News Release
March 18, 2001

Wise Signs Steel Bill

FOLLANSBEE, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has signed into law the West Virginia American Steel Act of 2001.

The law, which takes effect in 90 days, requires the use of U.S.-made steel in projects funded by the state. It covers all types of steel products used in buildings, highway construction, and other state projects.

“Our steel industry deserves a level playing field,” Wise said. “We are being battered in the marketplace by unfair and illegal imports. This bill will take a step toward alleviating that situation – but we are still fighting for a fair steel policy on the national level.”

Wise asked Northern Panhandle legislators to join him on a plane from Charleston to the signing ceremony at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Co.’s Beech Bottom plant in Follansbee. Also present were members of the United Steelworkers and Independent Steelworkers unions, and officials of Wheeling-Pitt and Weirton Steel.

The passage of the steel preference bill was the first item in the governor’s priority list when the Legislature convened in mid-February. During his State of the State address, Wise requested that both houses of the Legislature move the bill quickly. They responded by placing it on his desk less than a month after the session began.

The bill, SB 124, passed the Legislature March 8.

U.S. International Trade Commission Hearing
September 17, 2001
Section 201 Investigation of Steel - Investigation TA-201-73

Written Testimony of the Honorable Bob Wise, Governor of West Virginia

I appreciate the willingness of the U.S. International Trade Commission to carry on with these hearings despite the tragedy that we all experienced in the past week. Your task is important and cannot be delayed. In fact, the events of the past week make the plight of the steel industry even more urgent, as we search for and secure the resources we will need to repair our damaged cities, to defend this country against further aggression, and to provide a strong and vibrant economy.

This testimony is provided on behalf of the residents of the state of West Virginia. As Governor, I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my support for the domestic steel industry – an industry whose survival is crucial to our national security and our economy, and one that has been significantly damaged by imports.

In the course of 18 years as a Member of Congress, I was often called upon to bring to the attention of my colleagues the impact of federal policies on the domestic steel industry and its workers. Throughout my tenure in the House, I was involved in numerous efforts to ensure that this industry would be given every opportunity to compete here and abroad. In my new role as Governor of the State of West Virginia, I am compelled to rise again in defense of this vital industry.

Two of the top ten integrated steel producers in the United States have their headquarters and primary manufacturing facilities in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia. Together, Weirton Steel Corporation and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation employ more than 5,000 of our citizens. Weirton Steel is the second-largest private employer in our state.

Both these companies have faced serious financial difficulties in recent months.

Together, these companies account for nearly one-half of the manufacturing employment in Brooke, Hancock and Ohio counties in West Virginia, and a third of all non-farm wages in that region.

It is also a fundamental part of the tax base we rely on to provide services to our residents. Revenues derived from this industry are used to provide education, health care, transportation and other essential services that allow our citizens to live and work in our state.

West Virginia is proud to be the home for these companies and their employees.

In addition, these same steel producers are also customers of our state's energy providers, including our coal industry, and are essential customers of the state's transportation industry. In fact, the steel industry is one of the larger customers of the rail industry in the state.

Each time the steel industry reduces employment it sends a ripple throughout our state's economy; we estimate that for each steel job lost, 1.7 additional jobs are lost in other businesses.

Because steel jobs are skilled jobs they have traditionally been the among best paid manufacturing jobs in our economy in West Virginia; the average annual wage of \$48,659 is more than 1.6 times the average annual wage for all workers in the state.

I have spoken with our steelworkers and their families. They do not understand how the country can turn its back on the very workers and companies who have provided the crucial materials for the lives we live in this country today. They are bewildered by a national policy that turns a blind eye as one of our key industries is dismantled, piece by

piece, and nothing is put in its place.

Our industries have done what is needed to compete in a fair international marketplace. They have developed more efficient processes, they have reduced employment numbers – at considerable personal sacrifice by many members of this industry. Their workers have accepted the fact that their wages no longer rise as fast or as predictably as they have in the past. Labor and management are working together.

But none of this is enough if the industry is subject to unfair and unrestricted competition from industries abroad that do not pay fair wages, that are not subject to our industry's safety and environmental requirements, and that are allowed to dump surplus products on our markets at far less than the cost of production.

Today's U.S. steel industry employs nearly 210,000 people ... and nearly 10,000 of these workers are in West Virginia. These numbers are somewhat less than what the industry recorded in previous decades due to downsizing, attrition and plant closures which were precipitated by harsh economic conditions, including a surge in imports.

Here in West Virginia, the state recognizes the importance of the steel industry. We have been active in supporting the efforts of the industry during the current crisis. In fact, earlier this year, at my urging, the West Virginia Legislature enacted a new law to require the use of domestic steel in new construction of state buildings. This was a popular initiative that we hope will benefit the entire U.S. industry and our steel producers in the state. We have committed \$1 million in state funds, just this year, to help finance improvements to steel manufacturing facilities in the Ohio Valley.

The future of this industry is paramount to our state's residents and to everyone in America. I recognize that steel is also one of the essential components to our national security. While I acknowledge that the scope of this investigation is limited to the effect of imports on the industry, I believe it is important to reiterate that our country cannot be left without steel capacity and face the decimation of the industry as a result of imports.

We cannot turn our backs to the hardworking men and women of the steel industry, to the communities that are their homes and to the customers that they serve. We must strive to continue to compete in this global environment and I am confident that the domestic steel industry can do this with relief provided through this Section 201 investigation.

Thank you.

News Release
October 22, 2001

Wise Applauds International Trade Commission Ruling

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today applauded the decision of the U.S. International Trade Commission that steel imports have unfairly hurt the American steel industry.

Wise submitted testimony to the commission in September describing the impact of steel dumping by low-cost foreign producers on West Virginia's steel industry.

"This is important. But it is just a first step," Wise said. "We need to continue to stand up for our steel industry in the weeks to come as the commission determines remedies to recommend to the President."

Two of the country's top 10 integrated steel producers are headquartered in West Virginia and operate major production facilities here. Without strong action at the federal level to reduce unfair imports, Wise said, the jobs of thousands of West Virginia steelworkers will be lost.

During his first year in office, Wise has taken several actions to aid West Virginia's beleaguered steel producers – including a \$1 million steel aid bill and a domestic-content bill. Both passed the Legislature, at Wise's urging, earlier this year.

News Release
Dec. 7, 2001

Wise Urges President to Impose Stiffer Steel Tariffs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise said today that the U.S. International Trade Commission's failure to recommend strong steel tariffs places the issue directly into the hands of President George W. Bush.

"I am certain that everyone involved in the steel industry in West Virginia will communicate with one voice," Wise said. "Labor, management, investors, steelworker families, and the communities that depend on steel are united. It is imperative that President Bush impose the highest tariffs allowed by law, and put them in place for a full four years."

Wise was reacting to the ITC's announcement on Friday that it would propose

tariffs mostly in the 20 percent range – less than half the maximum allowed by law. The President has the power to accept the findings of the ITC, or to impose tariffs at other levels needed to correct the harm done by unfair steel imports.

“The damage done by the unrestricted flood of imported steel is clear,” Wise added. “I urge President Bush to act at the earliest possible date, and before another community is devastated by the loss of a vital industry.”

Wise will chair a meeting of the West Virginia Steel Advisory Commission at 3 p.m. Monday in Weirton. The commission includes representatives of steel companies, labor unions and government.

Governor’s Message
December 14, 2001

Steel Crisis Affects All of Us

Every West Virginian should be concerned with the future of our state’s steel industry. The steel plants on the Ohio River may be your next door neighbors, or they may be hundreds of miles from where you work and live. Either way, you have a stake in their future.

West Virginia’s steel companies have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in buildings and equipment – including many recent investments that make them more efficient, cleaner and productive. They pay good wages to hundreds of West Virginians. All these investments are part of the state’s tax base and help support, through their taxes, education, health care, public safety and emergency services functions of government everywhere in the state.

Steelmaking at home and around the country consumes a huge amount of energy – and much of that energy originates in West Virginia coal mines. Communities across the state will feel the impact if steel production continues to move overseas.

We’re at a crucial point in the history of steel in this country. The U.S. International Trade Commission has ruled that other steel-producing nations have been selling their products in the United States at illegally low, subsidized prices. It’s clear that their aim has been to drive the U.S. steel industry into bankruptcy – and they have been succeeding.

The ITC has advised President Bush to impose tariffs on most imported steel products. The level of the tariffs they recommend is below what our steel industries need in order to compete on an even playing field with their subsidized competitors. It’s up to the President to make the final decision on this issue – and I hope he will do the right thing and impose the stiffest tariffs allowed by law.

News Release
January 18, 2002

Wise Sends \$5 Million to Aid Wheeling-Pitt, Sends Letter to President Urging Support of Steel

CHARLESTON, W.Va.— Gov. Bob Wise has sent Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel an emergency loan for \$5 million that will allow production to continue without interruption as the steelmaker works its way out of bankruptcy. This arrangement will mean that 3,500 Wheeling-Pitt employees can continue to produce steel at its Ohio Valley plants, both in West Virginia and in Ohio. The \$5 million loan was distributed from the West Virginia Housing Development Fund. Wise is committed to working with legislators to replenish the money to this fund.

“Wheeling-Pitt, its employees and its suppliers are responsible for a half-billion dollars a year in business in the state,” Wise said. “This \$5 million loan is a critical investment to that business.”

Gov. Wise also sent a letter to President George W. Bush urging him to “act quickly to implement strong but fair remedies for the injured domestic steel industry.”

In the letter Wise thanked President Bush for his support of steel and his launch of the International Trade Commission’s (ITC) investigation into alleged violations of Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act. The president has until Feb. 19 to respond to a recommendation from the ITC, which has found that the domestic steel industry has been damaged by foreign companies that dump steel in the United States at low prices.

“As you are well aware, since the crisis began in 1998, 28 companies with more than 60,000 employees have filed for bankruptcy. While some of these companies have been able to continue operations and emerge from bankruptcy, too many have had to shut down their furnaces. The fact that all the commissioners recommended some form of action illustrates the severity of the crisis and the need for immediate remedies.”

Gov. Wise joined Gov. Frank O’Bannon of Indiana, Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina, Gov. Bob Holden of Missouri, Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, Gov. Don Seigelman of Alabama and Gov. Thomas J. Vilsack of Iowa in signing the non-partisan letter to the president.

News Release
January 30, 2002

Wise Secures \$8 Million for Weirton Steel

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today secured \$8 million for Weirton Steel from the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. The funds will be used by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority to purchase utilities automation equipment, providing financial flexibility to Weirton Steel. This equipment is integral to regulating electricity, natural gas and steam usage within the Weirton Steel plant.

“I want to thank the West Virginia Economic Development Authority for working with us to find the money Weirton Steel desperately needed,” said Wise. Along with this funding, I am going to continue to do everything I can to assist our domestic steel industry in this time of crisis. This financial flexibility provided by the EDA will assist Weirton Steel in ongoing operations.”

Wise and members of his economic development team have spent the last several months holding meetings with Weirton Steel.

Last week Wise sent a letter to President George W. Bush urging him to act quickly to implement strong but fair remedies for the injured domestic steel industry. Wise also met earlier this month with U.S. Commerce Secretary Donald Evans to ask for his support to protect steel workers against unfair imports.

Wise said he will continue to fight for Section 201, the federal trade law permitting the government to limit imports that unfairly hurt American workers.

News Release
March 1, 2002

Wise Urges President to Impose 40 Percent Tariffs for Four Years

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today urged President George W. Bush to stand strong and impose 40 percent tariffs on foreign competitors. President Bush is expected to respond to recommendations from the International Trade Commission (ITC) to impose tariffs by next Wednesday, March 6, 2002. The ITC recommended that President Bush impose 20 percent tariffs – less than half the maximum allowed by law. The President has the power to accept the findings of the ITC, or to impose tariffs at other levels needed to correct harm done by unfair steel imports.

In his letter, Wise said West Virginia along with other steel producing states across the country need a minimum of 40 percent tariffs to help regain financial strength and recover from years of illegal imports. Wise noted that illegal foreign trade is largely responsible for driving 31 American steel companies into bankruptcy, causing 16 of them to shut down and wiping out more than 46,000 jobs.

“More than 9,000 jobs are at risk at Weirton Steel and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel in the northern panhandle. I have spoken to these steelworkers and their families,” Wise said. “They do not understand how the country could turn its back on the very workers and companies who have provided the crucial materials for the lives we live.”

“I am urging you not to turn your back on the hardworking men and women of the steel industry, to the communities that are their homes and to the customers they serve,” said Wise. “We must strive to continue to compete in this global environment. I want to work with you to fight for these good-paying jobs that support an entire region of our state and our county.”

Wise noted that states have been unprecedented in their approach to helping the steel industry in each of their communities. Wise said that states have done all they can do – and it is time for the federal government to step in and help.

Wise submitted testimony to the ITC in September and described the impact of steel dumping by low-cost foreign producers on West Virginia’s steel industry. He also made an emergency loan to Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, which allowed production to continue as the company works its way out of bankruptcy, and secured \$8 million for Weirton Steel to purchase utilities automation equipment in order to provide financial flexibility to the company. In addition, Wise met with Secretary Donald Evans in December and February to press for quick strong action from the Bush Administration on the steel crisis.

News Release
March 19, 2002

Wise Joins Other Governors on CNN, Talks About Economy

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined Govs. Ronnie Musgrove of Mississippi and Michael Leavitt of Utah on CNN Financial News for a discussion about recent troubling trends in state economies.

This discussion comes at a critical time as state revenues continue to decline and the high cost of homeland security begins to affect state budgets. Wise and the other governors discussed the recently passed economic stimulus package that will negatively impact the revenues of 46 states including West Virginia.

“Fortunately, West Virginia is one of the few states not to have a budget shortfall; we’re actually running a small budget surplus,” Wise said. “However, the recently passed stimulus package will cost West Virginians \$16 million in lost revenue this year and another \$35 million in the second. I will continue to work with the our congressional delegation to explore all options to assist the states financially during this difficult time. ”

The Governors discussed a number of topics related to the economy, including the high cost of Medicaid, potential rate increases by the Federal Reserve and energy issues.

“Because of the unusually mild winter, there are large stockpiles of coal sitting untapped at this point in time,” Wise said. “I hope that in the coming months the country will be able to use that valuable resource as summer approaches.”

Wise was asked about the recent developments relating to the foreign steel crisis and how it affects West Virginia.

“I was happy to see that President Bush and the Administration supported some level of tariffs to help protect domestic steel,” Wise said. “It is now time to further help the steel industry through the Federal Loan Guarantee Program.”

Wise has been one of the most outspoken governors in recent months on numerous issues relating to the increased costs of homeland security and other issues affecting state economies.

News Release
April 15, 2002

Governor Celebrates Opening of Highlanders Alloys

NEW HAVEN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and officials from Highlanders Alloys today celebrated the official opening of the company’s plant at New Haven during an event at Wahama High School. The \$8 million investment already has resulted in the re-hiring of 127 people, laid off when the former American Alloys plant went into bankruptcy.

“Today we celebrate good news for New Haven and Mason County,” Wise said. “I’m proud of the new facility and the resiliency of the people in the area. You never lost faith.”

Highlanders Alloys, owned by Dr. Boris Bannai and Eli Riefman, manufactures silicon manganese alloys for the steel and automotive industries.

“We saw a great opportunity here in West Virginia,” said Bannai, president.

“Cooperation at all levels of government combined with the willingness and availability of the work force led to our decision.”

The plant was established in 1951 and has had two other owners. The 300,000-square-foot facility has undergone a multimillion-dollar rehabilitation under the management of Highlanders Alloys, whose parent company is Nokotomi Ltd.

Nokotomi has two mining operations, one in Postmasburg, South Africa, and the other in Otjosondou, Namibia.

Besides the New Haven plant, the company owns a ferro-manganese production factory in Ruda Slaska, Poland.

News Release
October 8, 2003

Wise States Commitment to Weirton Steel

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today confirmed West Virginia’s intensive efforts to keep Weirton Steel Corp. operating by sending David Satterfield, executive director of the West Virginia Development Office, to Weirton today as his representative to continue fighting to preserve jobs.

“The most important component of economic development is keeping good-paying jobs. Strong, healthy companies are West Virginia’s best advertisements that our state works,” Wise said. “West Virginians remain our most precious resource, and we will continue to put our people at the top of the list.

“We have been working with Weirton Steel management and labor constantly during the past two years,” Wise said. “Sending the Development Office director today is simply a continuation of those efforts.” Weirton Steel has been in bankruptcy since May 2002.

Wise outlined a number of actions the state of West Virginia has taken to assist Weirton Steel in preserving jobs:

- Wise met personally two weeks ago with Weirton Steel’s newly appointed CEO and union president.
- The West Virginia Economic Development Authority purchased utilities automation equipment for \$8 million, and this equipment was leased back to Weirton Steel.
- Wise and economic development officials are working closely with West Virginia’s congressional delegation, the White House and the International Trade Commission to continue tariffs on steel imports.

- State officials are meeting with companies interested in buying Weirton Steel.
- Officials are negotiating with Weirton Steel to provide \$10 million in loan guarantees as part of a financing package submitted to the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Program. The request is pending before the Economic Development Authority.

“I know the anxiety Weirton Steel retirees are feeling right now,” Wise said. “That is why we also have created a program to use the federal health care tax credit to assist laid-off workers or retirees who lose their benefits.”

The Health Care Tax Credit helps West Virginians who lose their jobs because of foreign competition or retirees who lose health insurance because their employer discontinues their retirement plans. West Virginia also offers varied programs to help dislocated workers.

“Weirton Steel is one of our top priorities,” Wise said. “We have been working steadily in the past months; we continue to work to keep Weirton Steel an important part of the West Virginia job base.”

Governor’s Message
February 18, 2004

Statement from Governor Wise about the Purchase of Weirton Steel

I’m pleased to welcome the International Steel Group to West Virginia as our newest corporate citizen. As the steel sector has been challenged nationally, I see the company’s investment in Weirton Steel as a significant show of confidence in the men and women employed there, as well as a positive, long-term endorsement for the future prospects of the company.

In each community ISG has entered, it has been an agent of positive change and has exceeded expectations across the board. The U.S. steel industry continues to go through very tough times. There has been the very real possibility that Weirton Steel would be forced to close and be sold in liquidation. This acquisition by ISG means continued operation and the continued employment of many of our citizens in the Northern Panhandle.

Wise Stands Up for Manufacturing Jobs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – In his ongoing efforts to protect manufacturing jobs in West Virginia, Gov. Bob Wise filed a strongly worded objection with the U.S. Department of Justice to its proposed requirement that Alcan divest itself of Pechiney Rolled Products LLC in Ravenswood as part of its merger with Pechiney.

“The planned merger of Alcan and Pechiney is global in scope and involves the integration of facilities and operations all over the world,” Wise wrote in the objection. “It is ironic and incredible that the Justice Department somehow sees Jackson County, W.Va., as the only area of certain danger as a result of this merger.”

The governor’s letter was filed Feb. 13 to meet the department’s Feb. 16 deadline for objections to its proposed final judgment on the Alcan-Pechiney merger announced in September 2003. The proposed consent final judgment would require divestiture of the Ravenswood facility by Alcan as a condition to the Dept. of Justice allowing the merger to proceed.

“It is important to emphasize that West Virginia does not oppose this merger,” Wise added. “The Ravenswood plant needs qualified ownership to ensure its future operation, the livelihood of its workers and the economy of the surrounding area. If new owners lack the qualifications necessary for success, the plant will fail and close. Worse yet, the proposed order is silent on what happens if no qualified purchaser can be found.”

The merger’s theoretical effects on competition in the brazing sheet market prompted the Department of Justice to seek the order to divest. Wise noted that because the plant’s production of brazing sheet makes up only 28 percent of its output, any new owner must be capable of the highly technical, capital-intensive production of the other 72 percent of diverse aluminum products.

“The order for new ownership of the Ravenswood plant has no regard for the impact on real people with established lives and deep roots,” Wise wrote. “It is wholly unacceptable that West Virginia’s economy and hundreds of its citizens may suffer to satisfy some theoretical federal concern that we believe has no basis in fact.”

Wise noted the diverse groups that have raised objections to the Department of Justice, including Ripley and Ravenswood; the Jackson County Development Authority; the Jackson County Commission; Century Aluminum; American Electric Power; United Steelworkers International and retirees.

ENERGY AND MINING

The economy of West Virginia is closely tied to the energy industries. Mining and electricity production have been the mainstays of its employment base and tax base for several generations. Yet as Governor Wise took office, the future of this vital sector was cloudy. Coal development and consumption take a toll on the environment, and pressure was building on a national level for steps to limit the use of coal as a fuel. At the same time, alternative energy sources were being explored around the world, and West Virginia's potential for wind power was being noticed for the first time.

Early in his term, Wise appointed an energy task force to help set the state's priorities in energy policy and to secure its energy future. His leadership on this issue resulted in his appointment as chairman of the Southern States Energy Board, which held an important conference in Charleston in 2004.

Executive Order
February 14, 2001

Energy Task Force

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 5-01

By the Governor

WHEREAS, this State historically has been one of the leading coal-producing states in the nation; and

WHEREAS, this State's coal production is used by the various energy producers to create over half of the electricity generated in the nation annually; and

WHEREAS, more than half of all electricity generated in this country comes from coal-fired power plants; and

WHEREAS, this State has also been one of the leading producers and exporters of natural gas and other natural resources; and

WHEREAS, this State is blessed with vast underground storage areas for natural gas, all connected by miles of interstate transmission pipelines and within a short distance of almost one-half of the nation's population; and

WHEREAS, this State is blessed with countless more decades of commercially marketable and exportable reserves of these abundant natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the powerful forces of utility restructuring, technology evolution, environmental concerns, along with the expansion and deregulation of the electricity market, have all come into play together to reinforce the need for a coherent and uniform energy policy which takes into account this State's abundant natural resources and positions their exploitation in accordance with technological demands.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. The Energy Task Force ("the Task Force") is hereby constituted, which Task Force shall consist of not less than nine members, all of whom shall serve at the will and pleasure of the governor for three-year terms from the date of their appointment.
2. The members of the Task Force shall be appointed in the following manner: One member shall be a representative responsible for economic development in the executive branch; one member shall be a representative from the coal production industry; one member shall be a representative from the natural gas production, storage, or transmission industry; one member shall be a representative from the electricity generation industry; one member shall be a representative from an organization comprised of local businesses or industry; one member shall be a representative from an organization comprised of local manufacturers; one member shall be a representative from a local labor organization; one member shall be a representative from an institution of higher education in this state; and one member shall be a representative from an organization employed in research and development in the relevant subject matters contained in this Executive Order.
3. The Task Force shall have the following duties:
 - (1) Explore and recommend potential partnerships among private and public entities and higher education institutions to maximize use of resources to develop energy production and generation guidelines, develop environmental solutions, and optimize economic development in the state;
 - (2) Research and monitor energy production and generation trends as well as nationwide energy demand and consumption rates;
 - (3) Research and monitor energy production and generation trends as well as global market energy demand and consumption rates;
 - (4) Research and monitor energy production and generation trends nationwide and their potential impact with economic development initiatives;
 - (5) Formulate a comprehensive West Virginia Energy Vision action plan with emphasis on identification of economic development initiatives and opportunities;
 - (6) Investigate and promote national and global economic development

- opportunities in energy technologies;
- (7) Plan and conduct a state energy summit with leading stakeholders in energy production, generation, and technologies.
 - (8) All such other general powers deemed necessary and proper to assist it in carrying out its particular duties under this Executive Order.
4. The Task Force, which shall hold regular meetings, shall conduct and regulate such meetings and other activities in accordance with the procedures it adopts at its first meeting, which meeting shall be scheduled and presided over by the chairman designated by the Governor from among the members of the Task Force as chosen.
5. All members of the Task Force shall serve without salary, although the citizen members of the Council may seek reimbursement from the Office of the Governor for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred related to the official business of the Task Force in carrying out the provisions of this Executive Order;
6. The Task Force, and its subcommittees, shall report the status of their efforts under this Executive Order to the Office of the Governor as they complete their delegated tasks, but in no event may they submit reports no less than semi-annually.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

Governor's Message
June 22, 2001

Meeting America's Energy Needs

The energy crisis is a great problem in the United States right now. Although some parts of the country have a shortage of electric power, we in West Virginia have power to spare. West Virginia's coal, gas and oil are vital to economic activity in much of the nation and the world.

I recently had the opportunity to speak to the Democratic Governors' Association in Washington, D.C. This was the perfect opportunity for me to talk with other leaders about the role West Virginia can play in the energy crisis. I want to focus on a long-term energy strategy, including: increasing investments in research and technology to more efficiently use energy resources; adopting measures to reduce environmental effects of both energy extraction and energy production; adapting energy infrastructure to a market-driven system; and developing public-private-university partnerships to nurture innovation in technology.

Just two weeks ago, I was able to join with Anker Energy, a coal company, and

Dominion, a power company, to announce a plan to build a large new power plant, for the wholesale electric market, in Upshur County. What excites me about this plan is not only will the plant run cleaner and more efficiently than existing coal plants, but the mining is being planned in a way that will help us clean up some of the environmental damage caused by the mining methods of the past. More than half of the fuel for this new plant will be from reprocessed coal wastes.

Our historical role has been as a supplier of the energy commodities. In the future, we will continue to use our natural resources to power the nation but, in the new economy, we will add value to these resources by applying new information technology, power technology and pollution control technology at key points in the energy production, distribution and consumption system.

We also intend to seek solutions to the long-standing battles between those who advocate for the environment and those who advocate for development. It is possible to have both good jobs and a clean environment, but it will require new investments in technology and in education, a sustained investment in research, and flexible thinking on all sides – government, industry and environmental protection. We need to focus on results, rather than on process.

I want those of us in the energy-producing states in the Midwest and Middle Atlantic to work together with the states in the Northeast for our health and for our economic future. We have common concerns about the air we share – and about our future energy needs.

West Virginia will be a leading state in the new marketplace for energy by producing the electric power for the national economy; developing a flexible and dependable infrastructure to distribute energy and producing intellectual power to shape our energy future.

Governor's Message
August 3, 2001

Establishment of Energy Task Force

The energy crisis in the United States is continuing to grow. In West Virginia, we have the energy resources required by the rest of the nation and the world. We must be able to gather those resources and use them in an ecologically friendly way, creating good paying jobs for West Virginia workers and strong West Virginia businesses. We have the opportunity to become the leader in approaches that incorporate advanced technologies to produce a flexible output of electric power, fuels, chemicals and other high value products while limiting pollution and generating jobs for its citizens.

To seize the opportunity, I established a Governor's Energy Task Force in my first State of the State address. This group of West Virginians is tasked with developing an integrated energy strategy for the next 20 years. To begin developing this plan, I have asked them to bring together the many and diverse interests in the state and incorporate their input.

I recently asked Dr. Pat Esposito to serve as Chairman of the Energy Task Force. He is the president of Whitman Augusta, a multi-state property development group, and directs two sister companies, Augusta Systems and Engineering Decision Consultants Inc.

Last week I named the process committee of the task force. The following individuals were chosen because I wanted to make sure a broad range of voices were heard on the important issues involved in energy development. Each of these members shares my concern with the future of our state and our energy industries.

The members are:

Jim Estep, West Virginia High Technology Foundation, Fairmont
Jack Carpenter, National Technology Transfer Center, Wheeling
Bill Raney, West Virginia Coal Association, Charleston
Clint Hurt, Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, Charleston
Mark Dempsey, American Electric Power, Charleston
Russ Lorince, Allegheny Energy, Fairmont
Kenneth Perdue, AFL-CIO, Charleston
David Hardesty, WVU, Morgantown
Dan Angel, Marshall University, Huntington
Rita Bajura, U.S. Department of Energy, Morgantown
Lee Feinberg, Spilman, Thomas and Battle, Charleston
Norm Steenstra, Citizen's Action Group, Charleston
Henry Harmon, Triana, Hurricane
Jeff Herholdt, W.Va. Development Office Energy Efficiency Program, Charleston
Ted Hapney, United Mine Workers, Reedy
Joe Manchin III, Secretary of State, Fairmont

There is a window of opportunity for West Virginia to grow. We must move swiftly if we are to realize the benefits. The process I have established will produce a roadmap for action by November 2001. Initially, the process will allow a core group of state executives and private sector experts to assemble information and provide options for my consideration regarding methodology, critical issues, expectations and guidelines.

Additional members of the task force will be named. Once convened, the full task force will deliberate on relevance and priority of the critical issues, develop options for addressing each and suggest actions. I will instruct them to seek input from as broad a cross-section of West Virginians as possible.

News Release
April 11, 2002

Governor Unveils First Step Toward West Virginia Energy Leadership Wise Releases Governor's Energy Task Force Interim Report

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – West Virginia has taken its first step toward developing a long-range plan that will position the state as a 21st century energy leader, Gov. Bob Wise said today. Wise unveiled the “first step,” an interim report from the Governor’s Energy Task Force, during a visit to an energy research office park in Morgantown.

“Energy has become a top issue for America following the California energy crisis, the events of September 11 and the situation in the Middle East. Americans have realized that energy is crucial to the economy from Wall Street to Silicon Valley to the neighborhood grocery store,” Wise said. “In the 21st century, America needs an energy supply that is stable, affordable and sustainable.

“With its natural resources – its fossil fuels, skilled workforce and research institutions – West Virginia stands in a unique position to take the lead in national energy supply and delivery,” Wise continued.

From the Collins Ferry Commerce Center, a research park in Morgantown that houses cutting-edge energy technology companies, Wise announced the release of the report. The interim report details the Energy Task Force’s work thus far, outlining the goals and strategies that West Virginia must follow to become a leader in energy supply and delivery.

“With Phase One of our mission completed, the Energy Task Force will now move into Phase Two, the real heart of our work. Under the leadership of Gov. Wise, we will work to suggest specific actions that West Virginia should take over the next 20 years to become a 21st century energy leader,” said Pat Esposito, chairman of the Governor’s Energy Task.

Wise created the Governor’s Energy Task Force by Executive Order last year. The Energy Task Force, comprised of representatives from higher education, research institutions, environmental groups, labor and industry, is charged with developing a 20-year plan that will serve as a roadmap for West Virginia’s national energy leadership.

“The task force has been guided by my belief that energy policy does not exist in a vacuum. It must balance three equally important areas: economy, ecology and energy,” Wise said.

“To be an energy leader, we cannot choose between markets and government or jobs and the environment. To be a leader, we must recognize the importance of each. The desired end is an energy plan that focuses on the development of advanced energy technologies, while limiting pollution and generating jobs for our citizens,” he added.

Following the release of the report, Wise toured the Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL), located next door to the Collins Ferry Commerce Center. NETL leads the nation's research and development of fossil fuel technologies.

The Governor's Energy Task Force interim report can be viewed on the Internet at www.wv.gov.org.

News Release
August 20, 2002

West Virginia Poised for Energy Leadership, Wise Says Governor's Energy Task Force Presents Comprehensive Energy Plan to Governor

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise, along with members of the Governor's Energy Task Force, today unveiled a groundbreaking energy action plan for the state.

“West Virginia has a rich tradition as a leader in our nation's energy supply. The power woes of California and the nation, the events of September 11, and the crisis in the Middle East have reinforced the need to find comprehensive energy solutions for our country – solutions that not only address our energy needs, but also our economic and environmental goals,” Wise said.

Wise was joined by members of the Energy Task Force: business and industry leaders, scientific researchers, academics, labor, environmental leaders, and governmental officials.

“West Virginia has the unique opportunity to move beyond the narrow view of those who say that our better days are behind us and to emerge as a leader not only in fossil fuel extraction, but in the supply and delivery of our nation's energy and in the development of new energy technologies. In short, we have the opportunity to become a true national energy leader,” Wise said.

The Task Force presented Wise with “West Virginia's Energy Roadmap: Our Approach to the New Energy Economy,” an action plan complete with policy recommendations that the Task Force crafted over the past year. Wise created the Governor's Energy Task Force by Executive Order in 2001 to develop a comprehensive roadmap for West Virginia's energy leadership.

“Under the guidance and leadership of Gov. Wise, the Task Force worked to develop an action plan for West Virginia that can not only address our energy needs, but also help to protect our environment and create jobs. If we focus on these types of collaborative, comprehensive solutions, then our energy industry can truly serve as an economic

catalyst for growth in this century,” said Patrick Esposito of Morgantown, chairman of the Governor’s Energy Task Force.

The Governor’s Energy Task Force report can be viewed on the Internet at www.wv.gov.org.

Governor’s Message
August 23, 2002

West Virginia’s Energy Roadmap

West Virginia has a rich tradition as a leader in our nation’s energy supply. The power woes of California and the nation, the events of September 11, and the crisis in the Middle East have reinforced the need to find comprehensive energy solutions for our country – solutions that not only address our energy needs, but also our economic and environmental goals.

This past week I was proud to stand beside members of my Energy Task Force and unveil what I believe is a groundbreaking energy action plan for our state. Last year, I created a task force comprised of business, industry leaders, scientific researchers, academics, labor, environmental leaders, and governmental officials to develop a comprehensive roadmap for West Virginia’s energy leadership.

This task force created a “West Virginia’s Energy Roadmap: Our Approach to the New Energy Economy,” an action plan complete with policy recommendations. The selected action items are to:

- expand tax reforms to provide incentives for development of cutting-edge energy and environmental research and development;
- provide proper and focused work force training to meet the challenges of the 21st century energy and environmental industries;
- utilize West Virginia’s abundant coal and natural gas resources in the production of hydrogen;
- stimulate private-sector investment in West Virginia’s energy infrastructure;
- conduct an assessment to identify West Virginia’s energy infrastructure needs, including infrastructure security;
- assess the potential for the development or redevelopment of a state locality into a sustainable energy community, which utilizes novel distributed and/or renewable energy systems for residences and commercial enterprises;
- identify and protect the availability of West Virginia’s water resources as they relate to energy infrastructure, including the energy transportation infrastructure;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the exploration, development and recovery of methane from coal and waste energy;

- investigate the use of new coal and natural gas resource availability and new extraction technologies to stimulate production while addressing environmental needs; and,
- promote the commercial and residential use of clean energy technologies.

I believe this plan gives us a unique opportunity to move beyond the narrow view of those who say that our better days are behind us and to emerge as a leader not only in fossil fuel extraction, but in the supply and delivery of our nation's energy and in the development of new energy technologies.

This task force worked to develop an action plan for West Virginia that can not only address our energy needs, but also help to protect our environment and create jobs. If we focus on these types of collaborative, comprehensive solutions, then our energy industry can truly serve as an economic catalyst for growth in this century.

In short, we have the opportunity to become a true national energy leader.

You can find the report and recommendations at www.wv.gov.org.

News Release
August 22, 2001

Nonprofit Group Formed to Promote Energy Technology

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today the formation of a new nonprofit organization, the Center for Energy Development and Environmental Assessment (CEDEA). It will focus on creating and identifying opportunities for energy and environmental technology related businesses in West Virginia.

“Increasing energy needs and state-by-state utility restructuring bring us the opportunity to produce more efficient energy systems and enhance economic expansion in West Virginia’s energy sector,” Wise said. “The ultimate goal of CEDEA is to help grow and attract high-value companies that will provide a core economic base for the future of our state.”

The energy technology initiative will build upon the efforts of the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL), West Virginia University, Marshall University, Fairmont State College, and other federal facilities and educational institutions in the state.

The CEDEA project will offer assistance to Wise’s energy task force, headed by Patrick Esposito of Morgantown.

“Given the region’s history of providing power for the nation from its fossil fuel resources, it seems natural that the area emerge as a regional center of energy excellence in the coming decade,” said Wise. With the strong base of energy and environmental research in West Virginia, the creation of a nonprofit to help develop businesses around this research is essential.”

To support area entrepreneurs, CEDEA will serve as a bridge to connect public entities and emerging businesses with one another, and stimulate communication between businesses.

CEDEA will design promotional materials demonstrating the advantages of locating businesses and jobs in the region; hold events to foster a sense of community within the region; provide outreach assistance to angel, seed, and venture capital investment groups for local energy and environmental businesses; and facilitate domestic outreach and international trade missions to tout the products and services of these businesses.

West Virginia businesses and institutions will be invited to join CEDEA in upcoming months. The organization is located adjacent to NETL in the Collins Ferry Commerce Center in Morgantown.

News Release
September 10, 2001

Wise Talks with Vice President Cheney about Energy

LEXINGTON, Ky. – Gov. Bob Wise today talked with Vice President Dick Cheney about the role West Virginia can play in developing a national energy policy.

“West Virginia has the energy resources that the rest of the nation and the world need,” Wise said after the meeting. “This was a good opportunity to discuss our plans to gather those resources and use them in an ecologically friendly way to create good-paying jobs for West Virginia workers and keep our business growing.”

Wise and Cheney are participating in the Southern Governors’ Association meeting in Lexington.

“West Virginia will be at the center of research and development of new energy technologies,” Wise said. “We have a unique combination of federal, university and private energy research resources.”

In August, Wise announced an energy task force that will develop an integrated energy strategy for the state. Pat Esposito, Ph.D., of Morgantown, serves as chair of the task force.

Governor Unveils “Energy Village” Initiative Nonprofit Network to Grow Energy Technology Businesses In West Virginia

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – West Virginia could become home to the next generation of cutting-edge energy and environmental technology companies, Gov. Bob Wise said today, as the state joined community leaders in Morgantown in announcing creation of “Energy Village.”

“Events around the globe signal the urgent need for new technologies that make energy supply and delivery more secure, cost effective and environmentally friendly,” Wise said. “West Virginia, as an energy leader with a ready-made energy research infrastructure, has the potential for explosive growth in the energy technology sector.

“To make that potential a reality, West Virginia must first foster the growth of start-up energy technology businesses – businesses that can research, develop and commercialize the technologies that will power the global energy revolution. With that in mind, Energy Village will grow a cluster of energy technology businesses in the Mountain State – an ‘Energy Village’ that could become a 21st century economic anchor for West Virginia,” the Governor said.

Energy Village is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in the Collins Ferry Commerce Center, a private research and business park that houses a number of science and technology companies in Morgantown. Energy Village is located adjacent to the Department of Energy’s National Energy Technology Laboratory, which leads the nation’s fossil fuel research and development efforts, and near the campus of West Virginia University. Energy Village has formed strategic alliances with the laboratory and with the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation.

Wise provided \$50,000 for Energy Village to begin its important work. The nonprofit will seek additional monies through corporate, institutional and foundation fundraising.

“Through the generous support of Governor Wise, and with assistance and guidance from our partners in industry, academia, research and other areas, Energy Village can become an economic catalyst for West Virginia. It builds on West Virginia’s natural strengths and resources, but takes those strengths to new levels to meet real market needs,” said Patrick Esposito Sr., a member of the board of directors of Energy Village and chairman of the Governor’s Energy Task Force.

Through its network of stakeholders, Energy Village will provide the opportunities, resources, and knowledge that small and start-up energy technology companies need to survive. Energy Village will accelerate business development through small business incubators, entrepreneurs-in-residence programs and mentoring services; outreach

events such as seminars, workshops, and trade missions; internships and job fairs; capital connections through banks and venture capital firms; professional services referrals through local providers; technology evaluations for start-ups; and proposal and grant-writing assistance. Energy Village also will work with economic development entities to publicize and market West Virginia as the premier location for energy technology business and research.

News Release
May 19, 2004

Wise Hosts Leadership Forum on Carbon Management in the South

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise will host a regional forum with more than 100 attendees tomorrow to discuss strategies for carbon management in the southern states. Wise, who currently serves as chairman of the Southern States Energy Board, will bring leaders from all over the country to Washington, D.C. to discuss the potential impacts of climate change.

As chairman, Wise is responsible for building a significant partnership to determine the best approaches for capturing and permanently storing gases that can contribute to global climate change.

“With the voluntary and mandatory carbon emissions reductions discussed across the globe, carbon management is set to have a major impact on public and private bodies,” Wise said. “Carbon management presents a unique opportunity to advance the use of clean energy technologies and craft cooperative approaches between public and private sectors.”

Wise’s work with SSEB helped secure its selection as one of seven U.S. Department of Energy’s Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships. The southeast partnership is a diverse group of experts that will assess the advancement of carbon sequestration technologies in the southern states.

“Implementing conservation techniques, cultivating the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency will lead to a better environment,” Wise said. “Increasing the efficiency of fossil fuel combustion in power plants, industrial processes and transportation will allow for emissions reductions while still producing the same amount or more energy.”

The conference, which begins today and continues through Friday, includes reports from the U.S. Department of Energy; the U.S. Department of State; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Conference attendees will receive updates on domestic and international programs and will participate in discussions about new technologies and approaches to carbon management in the southern states. Thursday’s keynote address, entitled “The Road to Sensible Carbon Sequestration: An Insurance Policy for the Future,”

will be delivered by Ben Yamagata, executive director of the Coal Utilization Research Council.

The Southern States Energy Board is an interstate compact of 16 southern states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each jurisdiction is represented by the governor and a legislator from the House and the Senate. SSEB was created by state law and consented to by Congress with a broad mandate to contribute to the economic and community well-being of the southern region.

Governor's Message
December 24, 2004

Developing our Energy Resources

West Virginia has long been a leader in natural resource production and in energy-related technology research and development. From our coal companies, to our utilities, to our research institutions, to our dedicated work force, West Virginia is rich in opportunity.

While it is important for us to diversify our economy into other areas, it is equally important for us to build from our strengths. Our experience and expertise in the energy industries lay a foundation for future success in advanced energy and environmental technologies – technologies that can translate into new business opportunities and new jobs for West Virginians.

This economic potential led me to establish the Governor's Energy Task Force, consisting of leaders from business and industry, the scientific community, academia, labor, the environmental movement and government. Meeting over the course of a year, and ensuring that all members had an equal voice, the task force developed a balanced 20-year action plan for energy, economic and environmental leadership in West Virginia.

Since the release of this road map, my administration has supported a series of eight workshops to explore West Virginia's opportunities in such areas as wind energy, hydrogen as a clean fuel source, coal work force issues and advanced coal technologies.

We also have instituted a number of successful legislative measures that will contribute to our continued leadership in the energy arena, such as the creation of a research fund to support the development of new technologies, including those focused on energy and environmental needs. And, with assistance from the Vision Shared Implementation Task Force, we implemented incentives for investors who support the development of technology-focused small businesses in West Virginia and expanded the state's research and development credit to benefit new, innovative small businesses.

These innovative energy and environmental technology businesses may need

additional assistance as they grow. My administration has supported the efforts of Energy Village, a private sector, nonprofit organization that assists in the growth of West Virginia's emerging energy and environmental technology opportunities.

Cooperation among differing groups has been a key to these efforts. This cooperation was highlighted recently in the pilot launch in West Virginia of the Carbon Offset Opportunity Program (CO-OP). CO-OP is an innovative effort that can allow for common sense solutions to the climate change debate – allowing West Virginia to protect its environment, while continuing to use its abundant and affordable fossil fuel resources.

I am proud of West Virginia's record of success through collaboration in the energy arena. By promoting advanced energy and environmental technologies and supporting new and established energy businesses, we are laying the foundation for future economic development.

NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT

News Release
May 22, 2002

Wise Announces New Plan for Pipeline Project; Hawks Nest View Preserved

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that a proposed Greenbrier Pipeline project by Dominion Resources in Fayette County has been amended with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission so the natural gas pipeline will not be visible from Hawks Nest State Park.

“I am pleased that this project will proceed without the potential of disturbing one of our state's most spectacular scenic areas,” Wise said. “Providing new infrastructure to deliver West Virginia's energy resources to the national market is vital to the future of our economy. I want to thank Dominion Resources for working on an alternative that proves we can support these efforts while protecting our environment.”

Wise sent a letter to Dominion in February requesting that the company reroute the proposed pipeline to “avoid encroachment on the scenic views from the historic park.”

“The views afforded from Hawks Nest State Park are among the park's most

treasured assets,” Wise said. “A pipeline route through the viewshed would diminish the park substantially.”

The proposed pipeline will provide access to West Virginia’s natural gas for markets in the eastern United States.

BIOMETRICS

The emerging science of biometrics is considered crucial to both national security and to the protection of individual financial and personal security in an increasingly digital economy. The establishment of the FBI’s national identity facility in Bridgeport, W.Va., and the development of biometric sciences programs at West Virginia University and elsewhere in the state made this an attractive location for emerging biometrics industries. Governor Wise supported this development with assistance from the Sunny Day Fund.

Governor’s Address to Biometrics Conference
September 23, 2002
Crystal City, Virginia

States, Universities and Industry: A Partnership in Biometric Technology

Throughout our nation’s history, colleges and universities have played an instrumental role in economic development. In the agrarian 19th Century, states used the money from the sale of federal lands under the 1862 Land Grant Act to establish universities that would educate citizens in the agricultural and mechanical arts and provide technical assistance to farmers.

These universities became the backbone of the American system of higher education, the greatest system of higher education the world has ever known. The names of these institutions constitute an honor roll of higher learning: California at Berkeley, Cornell, Michigan State, Penn State, Rutgers, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University, among many others.

Today, our universities remain essential engines of economic development at the

state level. But in the high-tech 21st Century, the role of universities is different. States are relying on their universities to educate citizens in fields such as forensic identification and nanotechnology and provide research for start-up businesses.

A recent report from the Southern Growth Policies Board, entitled *Innovation U.*, makes the point very clearly: “The American university has set a world-class standard for fundamental, basic research. Less well known is that in the past 10 to 15 years, a new model for the American university, as a partner in its regional and state economies, has also emerged.” We do not yet know which states and institutions will make up the honor roll of this new century and new economy, but in West Virginia we are working very hard to make sure our state and our institutions are at the top of that list, especially in the field of biometrics.

Understanding how academe, industry, and government must work together to maintain national leadership in biometrics is critical. In West Virginia, we understand the role of colleges and universities in stimulating economic development.

We also understand the pivotal role of academic research in creating technology transfer and commercialization, spurring small business growth and innovation, and attracting new knowledge-intensive industries. We understand that academic researchers can and will exert significant influence over a nascent national research agenda, particularly in a revolutionary, multidisciplinary field such as biometrics.

Take for instance, the announcement made last week by Sen. Byrd that six West Virginia companies were awarded a U.S. Army contract to manage the U.S. Defense Department’s Biometrics Fusion Center in Bridgeport. The companies: Azimuth, New-Bold Enterprises, Galaxy Global Corp., West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation, TMC Technologies and WVU Institute of Technology are proof that good things continue to happen in West Virginia.

Scholars at Stanford influenced computer engineering. Berkeley faculty influenced nuclear science. Carnegie Mellon professors influenced the development of cybersecurity. West Virginia researchers have what I believe is a unique opportunity to influence the national biometrics agenda, and there are many good reasons to believe this will happen:

- West Virginia University is organizing an NSF-sponsored workshop for approximately fifty national experts on a research agenda that addresses scientific, technological, political, economic, and ethical dimensions of biometrics. This workshop will be held in Morgantown, West Virginia, in December. We hope that Morgantown will be to biometrics what Rio is to biodiversity and Kyoto is to the greenhouse effect: a geographic location that becomes synonymous with a major consensus of the academic and policy communities around a specific issue or course of action.
- WVU is home to the Center for Identification Research Technology, or CITeR, one of NSF’s Industry-University Cooperative Research Centers. Marshall University, located in Huntington, West Virginia, is one of the four institutional partners in CITeR. CITeR is the nation’s first Industry-University Cooperative Research Center dedicated to building new partnerships in the area of biometric identification technology. CITeR’s director is WVU Professor Larry Hornak, whose distinguished career includes an NSF National Young

Investigator Award in 1992 and more than \$4 million in external research funding.

- WVU is also home to the nation's first forensic identification academic degree program. Students majoring in the program can select from two areas of focus: Biometric Systems and Forensic and Investigative Science. The graduates of this program are the pioneers on the forensic identification frontier.
- We have revitalized our state's EPSCoR Program, and last year, we received a three-year, \$9 million research infrastructure improvement grant from the National Science Foundation. A large part of West Virginia's EPSCoR effort is focused on biometrics, which allows us to leverage additional funding and research capacity in an area where we have existing strength.
- Last year, the West Virginia State Legislature appropriated more than \$2 million as "research challenge" funds to higher education in an effort to spur new and innovative research by university faculty. Among the projects selected for funding is the Biometrics Knowledge Center at WVU, which will synthesize the interactions among all of the disparate academic disciplines that are part of biometrics into a cohesive national research strategy. Another project is the development of DNA testing expertise at Marshall University and an affiliated corporation that would draw on this faculty and graduate student expertise.
- Both WVU and Marshall have well-developed plans for research parks that will serve as incubators for new ideas, the creative power of faculty, and the synergy that occurs when academe and industry work together. As Dan Angel, President of Marshall University, wrote in an editorial a few weeks ago, "The most fertile ground for growth is our universities. In fact, the most important factor in the successful start-up of a biotechnology firm is to have the facilities and expertise of a university nearby."
- The Morgantown-Charleston-Huntington biometric axis that runs through the center of West Virginia also includes the Department of Defense Biometrics Fusion Center, located in Bridgeport, and the West Virginia High Tech Consortium, located in Fairmont, which will soon be designated a National Information Assurance Partnership laboratory.

West Virginia's established biometrics infrastructure, which includes degree programs, research agencies and technology transfer organizations, has drawn two important industry projects.

The National Biometric Security Project, to be established in Morgantown, will facilitate the application of positive human identification for the security of the civil national infrastructure in direct response to any terrorist threat.

Sen. Robert Byrd deserves our thanks and appreciation for his support of this project as well as for his long-term vision of West Virginia's role in the biometrics industry.

Ethentica by Security First Corp. will develop a biometric center of excellence in Fairmont. The company develops and commercializes sensor technologies and applications.

There is a natural and healthy symbiosis between academe and industry, particularly

in a knowledge-intensive, high-tech field such as biometrics. Even a quick survey of our inventory of academic resources, such as I have provided here, reveals that West Virginia is in the right place, at the right time, to maximize the participation of our universities – our intellectual infrastructure – in the growth of biometrics and the economic development of the state.

News release
June 16, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant to Morgantown

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented two economic development grants in Morgantown.

The first was a \$13.9 million economic development grant to the city of Morgantown for a public theater and marina.

“The addition of this theater and marina furnishes the city of Morgantown with several opportunities for citizens to enjoy the arts and the outdoors,” Wise said. “This major capital improvement project will provide significant long-term economic benefits.”

The completion of this project will provide more than \$68 million in construction and service labor, as well as a minimum of \$66 million per year to the Morgantown economy; 750 new jobs; more than \$25 million in annual wages to the local work force and countless new business opportunities.

The second grant was \$2.3 million to the city of Morgantown for the National Biometric Security Project.

“The location of the NBSP in Monongalia County will complement other federal activities in identification and biometrics already established and adds a new dimension to our leadership in biometrics by adding an organization entirely focused on the security of the national civil infrastructure,” Wise said.

New job opportunities at NBSP will raise the potential for in-state employment of area graduates in emerging fields, as well as attract talented and skilled workers from other locations.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

News Release
December 7, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to South Charleston

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented the city of South Charleston with \$1.5 million from the Economic Development Grant Committee.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

This funding will help with the creation of a biotechnology incubator at the Technology Park. Laboratories and offices will be renovated to house biotech focused companies.

“This project will attract new capital investment for biotech research companies and create high paying jobs,” Wise said. “This will help us retain and recruit intellectual capital to the Kanawha Valley.”

In addition to research, the new companies are expected to work with the chemical industry to develop biotech processes to replace traditional chemical processes for key products. This will help the chemical industry remain competitive in the global marketplace.

The grant was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

TOURISM

West Virginia's scenic beauty, clean water and air attract visitors from all over the world. We are fortunate to enjoy vast state and national forests, state parks, hunting and fishing areas, wilderness areas and recreational developments.

During his term, Governor Wise supported a number of initiatives to advance the tourism industry, including the construction of new visitor centers and other amenities. He also worked diligently to assure that state agencies were responsive to the needs of visitors and travelers.

Governor's Message
July 6, 2001

Hosting the World Rafting Championships

Last week, I made an announcement that will impact the future of tourism and recreation in West Virginia tremendously. Extreme sports experts acknowledge our state's magnificent whitewater resources are among the best, as West Virginia has been chosen to host the 2001 World Rafting Championships, to be held September 22-25 on the New and Gauley rivers in Fayette and Nicholas counties.

While rafters have long recognized these locations as home to world-class whitewater rapids, the message will soon be relayed across the globe to outdoor enthusiasts looking for new adventures in places they have never visited.

The 2001 competition will be the first ever held in the United States. Past championships have been held in such exotic locales as Chile, Costa Rica, South Africa and Zimbabwe. This is truly a spectacular occasion to advance tourism while showing off West Virginia's ageless natural beauty to a wide and diverse audience.

The event will draw approximately 500 of the world's premier rafters, as well as spectators and media from all corners of the earth. Coverage of the event will reach around the world, and, as the rafters return to their countries, they will share stories of adventure, scenic beauty and hospitality with friends and family.

Annually, our state's rivers host 250,000 rafters, who spend their money on food, lodging, services and other outdoor recreation when they come to the Mountain State. This event will serve as a catalyst for growth, increasing the economic impact of travel in our state from its current all-time high of \$3.9 billion a year.

Never has there been a more opportune time to promote everything West Virginia has to offer. Our guests, both rafters and media, will discover West Virginia is a year-round outdoor recreation paradise, where world-class whitewater rafting shares the spotlight with internationally acclaimed mountain biking as well as snow sports, climbing, caving and hiking.

It is an honor to have a sporting event of this stature. As I have paddled on both the New and Gauley Rivers, I have experienced firsthand the breathtaking excitement spawned from our state's great whitewaters. The World Rafting Championships give us the chance to showcase the Mountain State as a premier outdoor recreation destination.

News Release
December 28, 2001

Wise Apologizes to Traveling Public

BECKLEY, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise traveled today to Beckley to personally apologize to the traveling public and to assure them that backups at state tollbooths and on the turnpike will not happen over this holiday weekend. On Wednesday, traffic was backed up for at least 10 miles on the turnpike.

“We have had a lot of success in boosting tourism in West Virginia through our turnpike, and we want to make sure our customers get the best possible service when traveling on our roads,” said Wise. “I apologize to the traveling public and want to reassure them that on this busy travel weekend we’re open for business and everyone is going to be able to move quickly through our tollbooths.”

Wise has asked the Parkways Authority for a full investigation and response of the delays and recommendations on changing procedures to ensure this does not happen again.

Wise also said during the upcoming holiday weekend that there are more people working and working longer shifts.

“Customer service is a cornerstone of my administration and is a cornerstone for our tourism industry. We will continue to put further emphasis on customer service and the friendly hospitality for which we pride ourselves.”

A Top Notch Outdoor Recreation Destination

During my recent visits to high schools and colleges around the state, I talked about how important it is that we encourage graduates to choose West Virginia and to help create opportunities for the future. I mentioned West Virginia's growing tourism economy and its nearly \$4 billion annual impact on the state. In the few weeks since then, we have received more great news about West Virginia's tourism industry that should make all West Virginians proud: We are among the best in the world. Not just the region, not just the country, but the world.

Readers of Condé Nast Traveler magazine this month named The Greenbrier the top golf resort in the world. As The Greenbrier's president Ted Kleisner said, those are very discriminate readers who look at all aspects of the resort, from food to accommodations, in addition to the golf and other activities. Last September in a North American first, southern West Virginia's New and Gauley rivers played host to the World Rafting Championships, one of the biggest whitewater competitions in the world. The three-day competition was a tremendous success for the event promoters and for West Virginia, as evidenced by compliments from the 16 global teams and international television exposure on the Outdoor Life Network.

Living in West Virginia, we sometimes overlook the message that is clear from visitors across the globe: West Virginia is a world-class outdoor recreation destination. And the accolades don't stop with The Greenbrier and championship whitewater rafting. Snowshoe Mountain was recently ranked one of North America's top summer resorts. Legendary golfer Arnold Palmer remarked about the excellence of our brand-new Stonewall Resort and Palmer Signature Golf Course he opened last month.

Our state park system is considered among the finest in the country. Our rails-to-trails are highly regarded for their quality and extraordinary scenery. The Hatfield-McCoy trail system is unlike anything on the East Coast and is drawing out-of-state visitors as quickly as hotels are built for them. Mountain bikers and road cyclists come from around the country to challenge our narrow forest trails and curving country roads. West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest is a treasure trove of hiking trails, trout streams and federally designated wilderness areas prime for camping, backpacking, rock climbing and mountaineering. The list goes on.

National travel research suggests that more people will be vacationing by car this summer. Because of West Virginia's proximity to major population centers, we expect that a lot of those travelers will choose to visit the Mountain State because of the short car drive. That means even more non-residents will discover the countless outdoor recreational pursuits and fabulous resorts, parks and forests that are in our own back yard.

When you're planning your vacation or weekend getaway this summer, consider West Virginia and the surprising number of activities – especially outdoors – right here. Our own state is quickly becoming a destination other states and the rest of the world are discovering.

If you're wondering where to go this summer, the Division of Tourism's travel counselors can help you plan your next getaway. Call toll-free in state or out-of-state, 1-800-CALL WVA. Or visit our tourism website, www.callwva.com.

News Release
October 11, 2002

Governor and First Lady to Travel State on Fall Foliage Tour

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and First Lady Sandy Wise will take to the open road Oct. 14 and 15 to enjoy the fall foliage of the Mountain State and visit with tourism and economic development partners. On the two-day drive, the governor and first lady will make several stops to learn more about how the tourism industry is growing and developing new products to encourage travelers to visit West Virginia.

The schedule for the fall foliage trip is:

MONDAY, OCT. 14

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| 10 a.m. | Brunch at Simplicity, The Haven Inn, in Sutton with local tourism and business leaders. |
| 12 Noon | Walking tour of the Stonewall Jackson Lake Resort State Park where the governor and first lady will have an opportunity to see the new cabins, tour the golf course and visit the new lodge and conference center. |
| 2:30 p.m. | Reception at Graceland, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins. They will meet with the college administrators and learn about the school's hospitality and tourism programs. The Governor and Mrs. Wise will have an opportunity to talk with students in the hospitality program and to meet with some of the students who are attending D&E on the PROMISE scholarship program. |
| 5 p.m. | Davis and Thomas walking tour. They will meet with local business and shop owners in the towns of Davis and Thomas. Following the walking tour, they will have dinner in Thomas at The Purple Fiddle with local business and tourism leaders as well as local government officials. |

TUESDAY, OCT. 15

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| 8:30 a.m. | Breakfast meeting at Gourmet Central, Romney. After spending the night |
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at Blackwater Falls State Park, the governor will drive to Romney for a West Virginia breakfast meeting at Gourmet Central. The breakfast will be made primarily from West Virginia Grown food products. Members of the local tourism and agriculture community will make a presentation about their development projects and plans for the area.

12 Noon

Lunch and walking tour of Berkeley Springs. Beginning with a community leaders lunch at the Country Inn in Berkeley Springs, Gov. Wise will have an opportunity to learn about the tourism developments in Morgan County and will take a walking tour of the community, ending at the Ice House where, through a recent grant, the Morgan Arts Council is developing a unique artists incubation program.

Governor's Message
November 15, 2002

Holiday Fun Abounds in the West Virginia Hills

This is the time of year when we begin to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of upcoming holidays, family gatherings and friends' visits.

Sometimes, though, we all need to take a breather. We need to get out and enjoy the season around us, with the lights and shows and special activities. And, while it might seem a little early to get started with your plans, I know, like many of you, that it always helps to know what your options are.

In Wheeling, Oglebay Resort is home to the largest holiday light display in the country, featuring more than a million lights on a six-mile drive through the park. Earlier this year, I helped to officially turn on the lights. This display is something you cannot miss.

Tamarack, the premiere West Virginia arts center in Beckley, offers free holiday shows and plays in addition to its famous old-time Appalachian Santa Claus. You also can do some Christmas shopping for gifts made by West Virginia artists.

Cities and towns in all eight of the Mountain State's travel regions have holiday celebrations including parades, concerts, theater shows and local merchant sales.

Big snows in the mountainous regions are common in late December, making a white Christmas a good possibility. Quaint historic towns such as Lewisburg, Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown are festooned with tinsel and garlands, and the streets are lined with shoppers and carolers. State parks feature sled runs, horse-drawn sleigh rides and old-fashioned storytelling with hot cocoa and campfires.

When you're in the mountains during the holidays, it's difficult not to think of the memories like those pictured on an old-fashioned cookie tin.

There's snowy mountains, there's roaring fires and cabins tucked away in the woods. There are holiday lights and small-town residents who wave to you on the street. I can't think of a better way to spend the holidays than with my family in a setting like this.

To find out what's happening in your town, or along one of your favorite West Virginia drives, I encourage you to visit the West Virginia Division of Tourism web site at www.callwva.com.

Governor's Message
March 28, 2003

A Perfect Match

Each year, many West Virginians enjoy outdoor recreation in the midst of America's most beautiful natural areas. Hunters, anglers, hikers, bikers and rafters from around the world come to our state, bringing millions of dollars into local economies.

For these reasons and many others, "the world's foremost outfitter" has chosen to locate in West Virginia. Cabela's Inc., known worldwide for its catalogs and retail stores, will be opening a retail location and distribution center in Ohio County.

Anyone who has visited one of Cabela's stores knows that this will be more than the average outdoor retailer. Plans include museum-quality wildlife displays, live native fish exhibits, and a full-feature shooting and archery range run in cooperation with the Division of Natural Resources.

Most important, these facilities will create up to 1,200 jobs in the Wheeling area, and bring an \$80 million investment in West Virginia by 2007. The central location of Wheeling and its proximity to a major east-west corridor persuaded Cabela's officials to build not only a retail store but also a major distribution center on the site.

The advantageous location and Mountaineers' love of the outdoors played major roles in Cabela's decision. However, the West Virginia worker deserves much of the credit: company officials were impressed with the capable and hard-working character of the West Virginia work force.

Cabela's will be a tourist attraction, working with public and private entities to promote West Virginia's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. The store will feature a state-of-the-art television studio, operated by West Virginia Media, to produce

programming that will be available to stations around the state.

This announcement is the beginning of an exciting partnership that will benefit all West Virginians. I'm sure I'm not the only one looking forward to the opening of this facility. In fact, Cabela's measures the number of visitors to its stores in the millions. The Wheeling store will be a great showplace for West Virginia.

Cabela's will bring jobs, economic development, tourism and national exposure to West Virginia. The state offers a world-class work force, great enthusiasm for outdoor recreation, and thousands of acres of scenic beauty to the outfitter.

This is a match made in Almost Heaven, West Virginia.

News Release
May 28, 2003

Wise Announces Travel Season Reaches New Heights; Issues Mountain Bike Proclamation

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced new tourism numbers showing an increase in visitors and visitor spending during the past year. Wise said West Virginia's diverse tourism offerings are making the Mountain State a drive destination that is increasing in popularity. A new traveler study from the West Virginia Division of Tourism shows the number of visitors coming to the state for leisure and getaway travel increased significantly from 22.3 million in 2001 to 23.9 million in 2002.

"The number of leisure travelers has reached an all-time high of 18.4 million. That means West Virginia continues to succeed in attracting more people to the state," Wise said. "Of those leisure travelers, the overnight numbers are up as well, reaching 7.64 million, meaning vacation travelers are staying longer and spending more money."

Day trip visitors have increased to 14.19 million. Overnight leisure spending is up from \$65.96 to \$74.50 per person per night, and day trip spending is up from \$77.74 per person to \$90.93.

"West Virginia is a travel destination with all of the right stuff," Wise said. "Nationally, Americans are taking more driving trips, staying closer to home and looking for relaxing destinations for vacations. Our state, with its low crime rate, close proximity to most of the East Coast and wonderful outdoor recreation options, is benefiting from these trends."

Betty Carver, commissioner of Commerce and Tourism, said the report is encouraging news for the state's travel industry and, with the summer season just beginning,

the state is poised to greet its visitors with plenty of summer fun.

This summer, the state's tourism industry is celebrating several anniversaries:

- Camden Park, in Huntington, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The park's signature Big and Lil Dippers are listed in the top 25 of the American Coaster Enthusiasts ride wish list.
- Wheeling's Jamboree USA celebrates its 70th anniversary as one of America's oldest live radio shows launched in 1933 by radio station WWVA.
- The National Youth Science Camp celebrates its 40th anniversary. The exceptional combination of scientific exploration and wilderness adventure began in 1963. The camp still operates from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank and a local 4-H camp. This year, even visitors who are not attending camp can enjoy the NRAO's new interactive visitor center.
- Whitewater rafting enthusiasts continue to find the excitement of mild to wild whitewater adventures as the industry marks its 35th anniversary.
- Nature enthusiasts and students of history alike will find plenty to discover and enjoy at the New River Gorge National Park as the park celebrates its 25th anniversary and opens a new interactive visitors center.

Beyond the special anniversaries, West Virginia offers great variety at historic sites, state parks and at fairs and festivals around the state.

State parks are the perfect setting for long getaway weekends, family vacations and reunions. From rustic camping to resort lodging, travelers can enjoy recreation and relaxation, just-right accommodations and special programs.

"There's plenty to keep our visitors busy this summer," Carver said. "Anyone who needs help deciding what they'd like to do will find we offer several options from the Division of Tourism."

The state's Welcome Centers greeted a record 4.3 million visitors last year. These centers are staffed with knowledgeable employees who help travelers find just what they want as they travel through the state, Carver said. For those planning ahead, the 1 (800) CALL WVA Call Center is staffed seven days a week with travel counselors who can find the information and send it quickly through e-mail, fax or regular mail. Travelers who want to explore options on their own can visit the tourism web site, www.callwva.com.

Wise also issued a proclamation naming June Mountain Bike Month in West Virginia. Surrounded by mountain bike enthusiasts, Wise touted the state's well-earned reputation as a premier destination for mountain bike recreational riders and racers. He pointed out that internationally recognized events such as the 24 Hours of Snowshoe and the NORBA National Championship Series add to the prestige of the state's cycling reputation.

"Mountain bikers of all ages and all skill levels come to West Virginia every year to enjoy our state's magnificent scenery and unsurpassed hospitality," Wise said. "Whether it's to enjoy a leisurely ride, to race, or both, our guests are never disappointed with our offerings."

Wise also praised the tireless efforts of many West Virginians who work hard at promoting and maintaining the state's many mountain bike trail systems. "We realize that these people, many who are volunteers, bring vision and energy to making the state's trails great not just for themselves, but for everyone who brings a mountain bike to our state," he said.

Governor's Message
May 30, 2003

Wild Wonder in Your Backyard

This week I announced some numbers that point to a trend that is becoming very clear: West Virginia is quickly becoming an international tourist destination with a reputation for hospitality, adventure and value.

The numbers stand out as a bright spot in the otherwise lean economic times we are experiencing. In 2001, 22.3 million people visited West Virginia for leisure. Last year, 22.9 million travelers took their vacations in the Mountain State. As more people discover the treasures of our state and tell their friends and family, these numbers are sure to increase even more. As more people choose to visit West Virginia, they also are staying longer, enjoying a wider variety of activities and spending more money.

West Virginia has benefited from a recent increase in car travel and close-to-home vacations. Located within a day's drive of most of the East Coast, our wonderful recreation and relaxation opportunities are almost as accessible to folks from Philadelphia or Charlotte as they are to those of us in Morgantown or Beckley. We have taken advantage of this proximity by focusing on highway travelers; our world-class Welcome Centers, which greeted a record 4.3 million guests last year, showcase the attractions, products and friendly people that visitors will find during their stay in our state.

We are working hard to give our guests even more than they expect. One might come to West Virginia expecting thrilling whitewater rafting, and our outfitters' expeditions won't disappoint. What might surprise the first-time visitor, however, is the opportunity to get out of the boat and enjoy an elegant meal at a world-class restaurant within a few hours, or to get up early the next day for a round of golf at one of the nation's premier courses.

More people than ever before took their vacations here last year. This year, as we celebrate such varied milestones as the 25th anniversary of New River Gorge State Park and the 70th year of Wheeling radio station WWVA's Jamboree USA, we will again greet old friends with new adventures and new ones with a warmth that will compel them to return year after year. West Virginia is one of America's best-kept secrets and the word is spreading.

News Release
June 20, 2003

Wise Celebrates West Virginia Day, Opens State-Of-The-Art Conference Center at Tamarack

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today officially opened Tamarack’s new \$5.6 million education and conference center.

“Since Tamarack was built, states from as far away as California have sent representatives to figure out how they can build a facility like ours. We are the example for the country. Tamarack has taken on a life of its own – and the creativity it inspires keeps it very much alive,” Wise said.

The Tamarack Conference Center will complement the retail, dining and educational facilities of Tamarack by providing a flexible space able to accommodate conferences, banquets, educational events and expositions.

“With the conference center, people will not only be able to enjoy and learn about our artistic side, they will be encouraged to bring business meetings to West Virginia,” Wise added. “This facility continues to help us create economic development opportunities for industries throughout the state and enhance West Virginia’s overall image and tourism.”

West Virginia Day marks the entrance of the Mountain State into the Union on June 20, 1863.

Governor’s Message
February 20, 2004

Tourism and Economic Development Working Together

West Virginia is blessed with natural beauty, friendly communities and a rich history. These combine to make the Mountain State one of the best tourist destinations in the nation. We continue to see our tourism industry grow each year, and, as more people discover the adventure that awaits in West Virginia, others return for a second or third trip.

Some of the same qualities that make the Mountain State a great vacation destination are strengths in our efforts to create jobs. Our dedicated work force, the same people who welcome visitors with West Virginia hospitality, are an asset to any business. West Virginia’s proximity to major metropolitan areas is attractive to shippers and manufacturers as well

as day travelers. Crime and pollution are low in our communities, a welcome change for a business owner and his employees.

We must take the lessons learned in the tourism industry and apply them to our economic development strategy.

Each year, the Division of Tourism receives three percent of lottery revenues. This share has grown from \$800,000 10 years ago to \$24 million this year and may grow larger in the coming years.

Under my proposal, Tourism will receive two percent of lottery revenues, or about \$16 million. For two years, Tourism will give the Development Office \$3 million to \$5 million annually to assist in our efforts to recruit and retain businesses in the state. Today, the Development Office receives only \$267,000 for this purpose.

The remaining one percent of lottery revenues will go to fund an investment in research at our state higher education institutions. To create an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship, our state must provide access to the best researchers, brightest students and latest technologies. A small startup technology firm in Huntington or Morgantown has the potential to become the next IBM or Microsoft; we must make West Virginia the place where these success stories will occur in the 21st century.

We have had great success showing the world what a wonderful place West Virginia is to visit. We must now prove that it is a terrific place to start a business, find a job and develop the industries of the future.

News Release
June 14, 2004

Wise Opens New I-77 Welcome Center

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined other state and local officials to officially open the new I-77 Welcome Center.

“Welcome centers are important because more than 90 percent of the people who travel to our state do so by car,” Wise said. “Every day, visitors drive into West Virginia for vacations, for getaways and for business. Every day, they need directions, information or help with reservations. The staff at this center can help.”

Similar to the center on I-68 near the Maryland border, the 74 by 141 foot building with cut-stone exterior is on a landscaped 7.5-acre site. It features an octagonal display area promoting the artistry of state glass-blowers and a theater area for movies on state tourism

destinations. In addition to a vending area, a map display area and an information desk, manned by state tourism personnel, visitors will find a touch-activated computer screen for information about West Virginia. Both men's and women's rest rooms include diaper-changing areas.

The center is located just south of Exit 185 at the junction of W.Va. 14 and 31.

News Release
August 16, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to Mason County

PT. PLEASANT, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented the City of Point Pleasant with a \$1.2 million economic development grant for development of the Riverfront Park.

“This funding will help to create future development opportunities in the city,” Wise said. “The Riverfront Park is designed to support tourism and provide traffic to aid new businesses and create jobs.”

Riverfront Park includes a pedestrian trail, an amphitheater, a picnic area, a welcome center, fishing pier facilities and a day-use marina.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

This funding was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

News Release
January 5, 2005

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to Berkeley County

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented the Berkeley County Roundhouse Authority with \$2.75 million from the Economic Development Grant Committee.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

This funding will help with redevelopment of more than 154 acres to create a civic and cultural amenity, provide continued preservation and lead economic revitalization. This project will help generate tourism related jobs and attract tourists from all around.

The grant was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

MOTORSPORTS

An avid motorsports fan – who kept a vintage Chevrolet parked in the garage of the Governor’s Mansion – Gov. Wise saw the enthusiastic support of this activity in the state as an opportunity to enter a new area of economic development. Early in his term he established a motorsports council to explore the possibilities for expanding racing and other motorized sports.

Executive Order
March 7, 2001

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 6-01

By the Governor

WHEREAS, West Virginians are avid motorsports fans and greatly enjoy participating in and viewing countless motorsports events; and

WHEREAS, West Virginia has a reputation for racing enthusiasm;

WHEREAS, West Virginians will drive long hours to raceways in the southern United States to attend major race events; and

WHEREAS, West Virginians frequent the State’s automobile and motorcycle race events; and

WHEREAS, the national motorsports industry involves tourism, economic development and manufacturing opportunities and has been growing substantially in recent years; and

WHEREAS, this enthusiasm for motorsports should be cultivated and developed into opportunities to advance West Virginia tourism destinations and spawn economic development and manufacturing opportunities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the

Governor of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER as follows:

1. The Governor's Motorsports Council of West Virginia (the "Council") shall be, and hereby is, created.
2. The Council shall consist of members appointed by the Governor. Among those serving on the Council shall be the following individuals, ex officio:
 - a. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Commerce and the Division of Tourism;
and
 - b. The Director of the West Virginia Development Office.

Other members shall be appointed by the Governor to serve at his will and pleasure.

3. The Chairperson of the Council shall be selected by the Governor to serve as his will and pleasure.
4. The Council shall:
 - a. Work with the existing facilities within the state to enhance existing racing;
 - b. Develop a strategy that creates further opportunities, such as encouraging racing training schools, conducting special events, and encouraging special events and the construction of larger in-state racing facilities; and
 - c. Seek opportunities to promote such economic growth and manufacturing jobs related to motorsports.
5. The Council shall hold regular meetings and shall conduct public hearings as it deems necessary.
6. Members of the Council shall receive no compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursements for mileage expenses while attending meetings of the Council to the extent that such funds are available through the Executive Office of the Governor.
7. The Council shall be dissolved on December 31, 2004, unless extended by further order of the Governor.
8. The Council shall report on the status of its efforts in discharging its duties under this Executive Order to the Office of the Governor on at least an annual basis.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-eighth year of the State.

By the Governor

News Release
September 24, 2001

Wise Announces Motorsports Council Director

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that Ripley native Eric Denmark will serve as director of the West Virginia Motorsports Council. Wise said Denmark has the experience to lead this innovative council.

“Eric has been a motorsports enthusiast most of his life,” said Wise. “His knowledge of owning and operating a Baby Grand stock car racing team and traveling across the country to participate in national motorsports events has given him the understanding of what we need to do to bring this fast-growing and profitable industry here in West Virginia.”

The West Virginia Motorsports Council will be an advisory body composed of speedway owners, race team owners, drivers, promoters, car club presidents and other individuals concerned with the future of motorsports in the Mountain State.

“I created the Motorsports Council to promote and support all types of motorsports activities in West Virginia as both a venue for recreation and tourism, and as a means for economic development,” said Wise. “Auto racing is the world’s most popular sport. Last year, more than two billion people worldwide took part in motorsports events. I want West Virginia involved in this tremendous opportunity.”

Denmark will work in coordination with the West Virginia State Tourism office.

News Release
July 10, 2002

Wise Hosts NASCAR Driver Kyle Petty at Capitol

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise joined NASCAR driver Kyle Petty at the West Virginia State Capitol today to show support for motorsports in the Mountain State. Wise said it is incredibly important to have Petty visit West Virginia – not once, but twice in the last ten days.

“To have Kyle’s support for West Virginia to be a major player in the motorsports industry is like saying West Virginia has a place in the sun,” Wise said. “I think we’re finally moving in the right direction. The fact the state government has created a motorsports council also says we’re committed to working with the motorsports industry.”

Petty spent time with Wise discussing the proposed \$20 million West Virginia Motorsports project in Quincy.

West Virginia currently has two excellent proposals before the Economic Development Grant Committee for the formation of racetracks, Wise said.

NASCAR driver Tony Stewart will make a presentation to Wise Thursday outside the Capitol Complex.

News Release
July 11, 2002

Wise Hosts NASCAR Driver Tony Stewart at Capitol

CHARLESTON, W.Va.— Gov. Bob Wise today joined NASCAR driver Tony Stewart and members of the Pontiac-Oakland Club at the West Virginia State Capitol to show support for the motorsports industry in West Virginia.

“Tony Stewart is one of NASCAR’s most renowned drivers,” Wise said. “This event is another example of the gains we’re making in motorsports. We’re devoted to this industry, which is why we have our Motorsports Council up and running.”

West Virginia currently has two excellent proposals before the Economic Development Grant Committee for the formation of racetracks, Wise said.

Stewart presented the governor with a signed limited edition 1:24-scale Home Depot stock car and a copy of his book *True Speed: My Racing Life*. Wise presented Stewart with an officially licensed West Virginia NASCAR plate.

“It’s quite a statement that someone so young has so much to write about,” Wise noted after accepting the book. “And he has so much more ahead of him.”

Wise visited with NASCAR driver Kyle Petty yesterday.

Motorsports, Racing Fans and West Virginia

Two of NASCAR's best-known drivers – Kyle Petty and Tony Stewart – came to call in West Virginia last week. (In fact, it was the second time in two weeks Petty visited West Virginia.)

On top of that, Steve Park, Lake Speed, Bill and Gail Davis, and Bobby Allison have visited in West Virginia recently. And on July 27, Winston Cup racers Sterling Marlin, Kenny Schrader, Michael Waltrip and Steve Park will call at our Ona Speedway near Milton.

All of this says something. It's an indication NASCAR appreciates the strong fan support it has in West Virginia. And I can tell you, as a committed racing fan of long-standing, swapping stories about cars, drivers, teams and strategies is one of the best benefits of being governor.

But these drivers also are businessmen. They're smart, savvy and strategic – just as they are on the track. They're interested in the work of our Motorsports Council, the first and only organization of its kind in the nation. That's my advisory board of speedway owners, race team owners, drivers, promoters, car club presidents and others interested in building opportunities for West Virginia in this fast-growing competitive field.

This appreciation by owners and drivers of the number of racing fans in West Virginia has led to two new proposals to come before the state's new Economic Development Grant Committee. Both propose racetracks in West Virginia. I'm sure these proposals will receive careful attention from the state and community leaders on the committee.

Last year, more than two billion people worldwide followed motorsports. It's the fastest-growing spectator sport around.

The opportunities for growth in tourism and support businesses are tremendous. We're not going to just sit in the stands on this one. We're going to get in the mix. I'm determined that West Virginia should be aggressive about carving its own niche in the mid-Atlantic region and becoming a major economic player in the growth of motorsports.

(By the way, did I mention the international convention and car show of the Pontiac Oakland Club was held in Charleston last week?)

Wise Announces Motorsports Partnership

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced a partnership with Team West Virginia Inc., and the West Virginia Division of Tourism for a special, four-race NASCAR Busch Grand National project featuring Winston Cup driver and NBC color commentator, Wally Dallenbach.

The car, a Dodge R/T carrying the Pepsi brand as primary sponsor and owned by Winston Cup crew chief, Tommy Baldwin, will be driven by Dallenbach at the Michigan International Speedway on August 17; the Lowes' Motor Speedway in Charlotte on October 12; and the Phoenix International Speedway on November 9. The car, driven by rookie sensation Damon Lusk, will carry the West Virginia Wild and Wonderful logo as primary sponsor for the race at Richmond International Speedway on September 6, with Pepsi as an associate sponsor.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for promoting West Virginia,” said Wise. “The media exposure we will receive from both on- and off-track operations will be far reaching.” Wise was joined at the announcement by Lusk; team owners Tommy Baldwin and Eddie DeHondt; Team West Virginia Inc. President David Barker; and members of the motorsports council.

Barker indicated this organization was formed as a first-class motorsports operation in the state. Plans are currently under development for a site in Mercer County.

“It's great to bring in Winston Cup veterans like Wally and Tommy to partner with the state,” said Barker. “I appreciate the Governor's Motorsports Council bringing this project together. This is the beginning of great things for Team West Virginia.”

For the Dallenbach races, there will be in-car cameras and Dallenbach, Baldwin and DeHondt will be provided microphones and will provide real-time audio feeds into the TNT live television broadcasts.

News Release
April 11, 2003

Wise Announces West Virginia as USAC's Official Vacation Destination; Unveils New Website

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the United States Auto Club has signed West Virginia as its Official Vacation Destination. He also unveiled the official website for the West Virginia Motorsports Council.

“Whether driving long hours to southern raceways or frequenting our state’s automobile and motorcycle race events, there’s one thing I’m sure of – West Virginians are avid motorsports fans,” Wise said. “Becoming USAC’s official vacation destination provides our state with tremendous exposure.”

One of the most diversified auto racing sanctioning bodies in the world, USAC will conduct 188 racing events, in numerous professional divisions, in 22 states. Twenty-two of these events will be nationally televised.

The official vacation destination status will place the West Virginia Wild & Wonderful decal on more than 500 cars competing in all USAC divisions and on all USAC haulers and elective placement on all team haulers; place the West Virginia Tourism logo on banners at all USAC events; and place the West Virginia logo on all USAC media releases, event entries, event agates and event advertising.

“We are extremely proud to have the state of West Virginia join our growing family of business partners in 2003,” said Steve Farmer, USAC Director of Sales/Marketing.

Wise also demonstrated the motorsports website, which is available at www.wvmotorsportscouncil.com. This site includes: an editorial page presenting the latest news on the current activities of the council; an interactive map of West Virginia showing all motorsports venues in the state; information about West Virginia touring drivers; and a motorsports activities schedule where every event for the entire 2003 race season is shown on a common calendar.

“This website offers a wealth of information on the hundreds of motorsports events and activities that take place right here in West Virginia,” Wise said.

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

From his work in Congress and a careful study of successful economic development efforts in other states, Governor Wise brought into state government a strong belief that investment in research, particularly in concert with universities and high-tech businesses, would pay long-term dividends for the entire state. Early in the first year of his term, he established the Governor's Task Force on Technology Partnership, the first of several efforts which resulted in a new climate for investment in research and technology in West Virginia.

The establishment of an Economic Development Grant Program later in his term allowed the Governor to place substantial sums of investment money into research projects across the state.

Executive Order
March 22, 2001

Governor's Task Force on Technology Partnership

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 8-01
By the Governor

WHEREAS, it is essential to the state's economic development that new technology-based firms be established and grown, and that the state's established businesses adopt new product and process technologies; and

WHEREAS, institutions of higher education in this state conduct research into technology that can assist in the development of such firms; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for the efficient sharing of information about the kinds of research being conducted and the uses to which the resulting technology may be of benefit to businesses within the state; and

WHEREAS, other states have developed state or regional organizations for these purposes, and believe that the organizations have contributed to the economic well-being of their states; and

WHEREAS, such organizations include the Ben Franklin Partnership Program in Pennsylvania and the Georgia Research Alliance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, Governor of the State of West Virginia, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. There is established a Governor's Task Force on Technology Partnership to develop a program to bring industry and higher education together to improve the state's economic climate for technology industries.
2. The Task Force shall study the structure, organization, policies, costs and success of programs designed for similar purposes in other states, and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.
3. The Task Force shall be chaired by the Governor or his designee. Members of the Task Force shall include the president of West Virginia University or his designee; the president of Marshall University or his designee; the president of a private institution of higher education involved in technology research or his designee; the president of the West Virginia High Technology Consortium or his designee; a representative of the National Energy Technology Lab; a representative of the National Technology Transfer Center; representatives of five businesses engaged in the research or application of modern technology; the chair of the Council on Community and Economic Development or his designee; the chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission; and the chairs of the economic development committees in the Legislature.
4. Members appointed to the Task Force shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor. Members of the Task Force shall not be entitled to compensation, but shall receive reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses. The Task Force shall receive professional and staff assistance from the West Virginia Development Office.
5. The Task Force shall prepare a comprehensive report of the findings to the Governor and the Legislature no later than the first day of November, Two Thousand One, and shall include any recommendations for legislation or appropriations to be considered by the Legislature in the year Two Thousand Two.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston on the twenty-second day of March, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-eighth year of the State.

By the Governor

News Release
September 6, 2001

West Virginia Science Research Programs Receive \$1.4 Million Grant

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced a \$1.4 million National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) grant received by The West Virginia NASA Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

WV NASA EPSCoR will receive \$471,757 a year for the next three years. The funds will be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-federal resources with a total project investment of nearly \$3 million.

“This grant is a significant shot in the arm for West Virginia researchers,” said Wise. “West Virginia has a lot to offer the scientific world, and I hope these funds will solidify the WVU and Marshall commitment to aeronautic and space exploration.”

“Marshall and WVU have tremendous research capacity,” said Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV). “The EPSCoR program recognizes their ability to make significant contributions in science and technology, and I am pleased to see these funds made available to them. West Virginians have made major contributions to space exploration and research and will continue to do so.”

The grant will finance three projects that support WV EPSCoR’s mission to improve science and technology capabilities in West Virginia. The projects include:

Impact of REM Sleep Loss in Memory Functions: \$166,600/year
Drs. L. Grover and S. DeMesquita, Marshall University
In collaboration with Johnson Space Center

This research examines the relationship between Rapid Eye Movement (REM), sleep deprivation and neuronal function leading to deficits in learning and memory. Sleep disturbances are a major problem for U.S. astronauts.

Micro-Mechanical Systems Research \$180,157/year
Drs. P. Famouri and L. Hornak, West Virginia University
In collaboration with Johnson Space Center and the Jet Propulsion Lab

This research will play a central role in NASA ground control applications and space shuttle computer engineering. This research effort also is important to West Virginia’s biometrics and biotechnology industries.

Research Infrastructure Development Funding:

\$125,000/year

This program will foster collaborative research in West Virginia. The money will fund a number of seed grants supporting partnerships between NASA field centers and enterprises, West Virginia University and Marshall University.

“This is a very exciting time for the WV NASA EPSCoR program,” said EPSCoR Director Paul Hill. “This money will help the NASA team at WVU and Marshall expand their efforts in West Virginia as well as fuel technology opportunities in our economy. This is the kind of infrastructure investment Gov. Bob Wise has strongly encouraged.”

“West Virginia is putting an increased focus on research and development,” said Chief Technology Officer Keith Comstock. “The WV EPSCoR partnership with NASA fits perfectly with Governor Wise’s information technology vision.”

Governor’s Message
February 6, 2004

Investing in a 21st Century Economy

Since I took office in 2001, my administration has made education the centerpiece of our effort to transform West Virginia’s economy. With investments in early childhood services, higher standards for our public schools and the expansion of higher education opportunities with the PROMISE, we have laid the foundations for success in the decades to come.

We must make sure our commitment to academic excellence spans all levels of study. Research at our state universities and colleges will be the key to continued growth in the high tech fields in which West Virginia is fast becoming a world leader.

Looking forward, business and academic leaders envision the I-79 High Tech Corridor as a regional research-based economy similar to Silicon Valley in California and the Research Triangle in North Carolina. In both of these locations, entrepreneurship was sparked by students, researchers and graduates of institutions in the area.

At our colleges and universities and in laboratories across the state, West Virginians are leading the globe in biometrics, neurosciences and energy research. But we are not the only state that realizes the future of these industries; we must strengthen our commitment to research, and, for that reason, I am determined to invest \$10 million in our institutions of higher learning to enable the growth of research in the public and private sectors.

What begins as one or two entrepreneurs with an idea can quickly become the

world's next technology superpower. However, these success stories do not occur in a vacuum. They are born where the community has come together to support an economy of creativity and opportunity. They happen where the best professors and the brightest students teach and learn. It takes an investment, but when we see the next HewlettPackard or Apple creating jobs in West Virginia, we will be thankful that we chose to bet on the determination and intelligence of our people.

News Release
April 14, 2004

West Virginia's Commitment to Entrepreneurship Boosts Technology Index

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today praised West Virginia's move to 30th among states in the category of Risk Capital and Entrepreneurial Assets on the Milken Institute's State Technology and Science Index. West Virginia saw the second largest gain among all the states by moving up 18 positions to 30th overall.

"Innovation, research and vision fuel economic success," Wise said. "West Virginia's prudent decision to invest in qualified capital companies shows our commitment to entrepreneurship."

The institute identifies "capable entrepreneurs and the risk capital infrastructure to support them" as ingredients for long-term success in a knowledge-based economy.

"A state's entrepreneurial capacity and risk capital infrastructure comprise the fuel that determines the success rate of converting research into commercially viable technology services and products," according to the report.

West Virginia's continued dedication to those specific ideals will be reflected in an even stronger showing in next year's report, Wise said.

"The Legislature and I worked together this session to secure \$4 million in competitive research grants with the stated understanding that research is a critical component of its strategic plan for economic development," he said. "Recently enacted initiatives specifically address the needs of technology-driven economic development."

Wise also noted that the Economic Development Grant Committee awarded nearly \$43 million to technology-related projects.

Technology transfer components at Marshall University and West Virginia University, as well as nationally recognized advancements in public education, form important elements of the state's commitment to improvement, he said.

West Virginia's overall ranking on the Milken Institute's report increased from 48th in 2003 to 46th in 2004.

News Release
April 23, 2004

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to Marion County Says Research is the Future of West Virginia

FAIRMONT, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented the city of Fairmont and the West Virginia High Technology Consortium in the Alan B Mollohan Innovations Center with \$14.75 million for expansion efforts at the technology park.

“The expansion of the High Tech Consortium will spur high tech economic growth in West Virginia,” Wise said. “We’re building on a project that Congressman Mollohan has worked tirelessly to create.”

The funding will expand the facilities to recruit additional technology companies and help build the largest public computing grid for groundbreaking research and education. The project is expected to create more than 600 new technology and technology support jobs, enhance state technology education and research capabilities, and enable a stream of federal research funding opportunities.

This funding was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and creating jobs. It’s about building a community.”

Wise also praised legislation creating the Research Challenge Fund for research projects at higher education institutions.

“We are at the forefront of research in key areas such as biometrics, energy and neurosciences, but other states are close behind us,” Wise said. “This is our window of opportunity for improving research and stimulating high-tech economic development.”

Additionally, Wise presented Mollohan with a Distinguished West Virginian for his dedication and commitment to the citizens of his district and West Virginia.

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to Cabell County

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented two economic development grants in Huntington.

The first was a \$10.6 million grant to the Tri-State Transit Authority for the construction of Pullman Square, an area that will serve as a commercial and social gathering spot for Huntington and the Tri-State area with a multiplex theater, restaurants, retail shops and offices.

“This development will revitalize downtown Huntington, bringing people into the area for their shopping and entertainment needs,” Wise said. “It also will create an environment that will attract and serve the Marshall University community.”

The second grant was \$12.5 million to the Marshall University Research Corporation to support the completion of the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Science Center and the Center for Biotechnology Commercialization.

“Investing in research is vital to the future of West Virginia. We are at the forefront of research in key areas such as biometrics, energy and neurosciences, but other states are close behind us,” Wise said. “We must invest in research now to stay ahead of the competition. This is our window of opportunity for improving our research capacity and stimulating high-tech economic development.

The center will benefit both undergraduate and graduate students academically by providing opportunities to do collaborative research with faculty in the College of Science, the College of Information Technology and Engineering and the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine.

This funding was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and creating jobs. It’s about building a community.”

News Release
Oct. 12, 2004

West Virginia Funds First Open Public Grid Computing Effort High Technology Consortium Foundation to Direct Leading Edge Effort

FAIRMONT, W.Va. – Taking a significant lead in technology innovation, the State of West Virginia has authorized funding through its Economic Development Authority to develop the first state-sponsored, open public Internet grid computing effort.

Designated as the Global Grid Exchange,[™] this economic development initiative will deliver a cost effective computation infrastructure to drive innovation in the commercial, government and academic sectors across the state and around the world. The Global Grid Exchange will utilize the power of the Internet to aggregate the idle or unused computer processing resources throughout the state. With access to such resources, the Global Grid Exchange will soon be the largest open public computing grid in the world.

“The Global Grid Exchange is an excellent example of the type of economic development program we need to move West Virginia forward,” said West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise. “The response to this effort from around the state has been incredible, resulting in an amazing commitment of donated computing resources – from PCs to mainframes – that will help power the Global Grid Exchange.”

“This is an innovation that will make our state a leader in a very promising technology area. Under the direction of Jim Estep, president and CEO of the West Virginia High Technology Consortium (WVHTC) Foundation, the Global Grid Exchange will be a powerful tool for advancing our work in fields ranging from biometrics to cancer research,” said Congressman Alan B. Mollohan, D-W.Va. “It’s a forward-thinking investment and we are grateful to Governor Wise for his support in making part of the funding possible.”

“Our partnership with the state in building the Global Grid Exchange helps to accelerate the Foundation’s vision of a vibrant statewide and regional high-tech business environment based upon knowledge, ideas and technological innovation,” said James L. Estep, president and CEO of the WVHTC Foundation. “Though our initial focus will be in supporting economic development initiatives within the State of West Virginia, soon organizations from around the world will have easy access to this unique resource directly from their desktops.”

Implementation of the Global Grid Exchange has already begun. Users will be able to access the power of this grid effort beginning in fall 2004.

News Release
November 8, 2004

Wise Presents Development Grant to Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today awarded West Virginia University \$10 million from the Economic Development Grant Committee for the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute.

“The work done at the Institute benefits not only West Virginians, but people across the world,” Wise said. “Alzheimer’s is a horrible, debilitating disease. This research facility will provide more space for researchers to work to understand these types of diseases.”

This funding will help with the construction of the \$30 million research center. When complete, the center will bring together as many as 40 scientists to study Alzheimer’s disease, which affects 4.5 million Americans.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “Investing in research means supporting the growth of regional economies.”

The grant was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

News Release
November 16, 2004

Wise Announces \$24.4 Million for WVU Research WVU Will Create 600+ Jobs, Double Pace of Health Research Expansion

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced a \$24.4 million funding package that will allow West Virginia University to complete a 12-year research expansion plan in as little as half that time. The facilities will enable the University to add 600 new health sciences research positions over the next 6 to 8 years.

“This is an investment in a future that will benefit every West Virginian,” Wise said. “We benefit from the jobs WVU will create; we benefit from the medical research that will make our lives better; and we benefit from the new private enterprises that will sprout in West Virginia to support this research enterprise.”

The funds will build new laboratories at the University’s Mary Babb Randolph

Cancer Center and new neurosciences laboratories. It also will create research space in the new Health Sciences Library.

Wise brought together three state development agencies to create the funding package. The Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council will provide \$9.4 million, the Economic Development Authority \$9 million and the West Virginia Housing Development Fund \$6 million. Up to \$3 million of the Infrastructure Council's allocation will be forgiven if WVU meets its job creation target.

"Governor Wise has been an advocate for higher education, particularly for research, throughout his public life," said WVU President David C. Hardesty, Jr. "The leadership he has shown in putting together and delivering this unprecedented state commitment to research means his legacy as a builder will long outlast his term in office."

WVU has developed a 12-year plan to develop strong research capabilities in a number of focused areas of health and biosciences, including neurosciences, cancer and heart disease. The funds provided by Wise will allow the University to speed the recruitment of top researchers and complete most of its research facilities in six to eight years.

"With this up-front financing, we can build facilities that will be among the most advanced at any health sciences center or research institute in the country," said Robert M. D'Alessandri, M.D., WVU vice president for health sciences. "That will attract top researchers, and they will bring an influx of federal and private research funding to WVU."

WVU's health sciences research plan envisions a minimum of 600 – and as many as 850 – new research-related jobs on campus by the end of the decade. Another 500 jobs will be created in the North Central region of the state as a result of indirect effects on the economy – an annual payroll boost to the region of \$55 million.

The funds will be repaid to the agencies by WVU over a 15- to 17-year term, and will carry interest rates of 3 to 5.3 percent. Payments will be made from the University's share of research grant funding.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

A shadow that hung over the budgets of every West Virginia governor in the last decades of the 20th century was the mounting liability the state faced in its Workers Compensation program. By the middle of Governor Wise's term, the unfunded liability was estimated at \$2 billion. The crushing debt not only hampered the operations of state government, but interfered with economic development, as the compensation insurance rates charged to businesses rose to meet the spiraling costs of the program.

With support from both business and labor, Governor Wise introduced legislation in 2003 that started discussions on how to emerge from years of deficits in this program. Although the legislation did not pass in the regular session of the Legislature, the energetic debate started West Virginia toward a solution.

After the establishment of a special work group and a series of town hall meetings hosted by the Governor, the Legislature passed a landmark bill that reconstituted the Workers Compensation division as a separate state agency and implemented a series of reforms aimed at efficiency, worker safety and fairness.

Governor's Message
January 22, 2003

Fixing Workers' Compensation

We face many challenges this year. Keeping doctors, making ATV use safe, and implementing the .08 blood alcohol standard are all important measures that I have asked the Legislature to address during the current session. One of the most important is the package of Workers' Compensation reforms I proposed during the State of the State address. I am grateful that the leaders of the House of Delegates and the Senate have acted in such a timely fashion on this critical legislation.

Our solution must be bold and must address the short- and long-term problems of the Workers' Compensation program. Internally, the Workers' Compensation Division will undergo serious reorganization and streamlining, projected to save \$135 million. The unfunded liability is a large enough problem; duplication and redundancy only exacerbate the troubles.

The second injury and second injury reserve funds, originally created (but never funded) to ensure World War II veterans access to jobs, must be eliminated. These funds account for nearly 70 percent of new permanent disability awards and their elimination will

do a great deal to reduce the growth of the liability.

My proposal will create a Deficit Reduction Account, dedicated solely to paying down prior Workers' Compensation debts. All companies will then be assessed new rates based on their projected future costs, rather than on the pressure from the unfunded liability.

Many people have worked hard and bridged many gaps to address this issue. At the State of the State, I thanked Jim Bowen, Kenny Perdue and Steve White, all labor leaders, along with business leaders like Paul Arbogast, Dana Waldo and Mike Basile for their efforts on Workers' Compensation reform. These leaders of the Vision Shared committee proved what great gains can be made with cooperation between business and labor when they joined forces to push for tax-increment financing, culminating in the successful referendum last fall on Amendment One. These same groups and leaders are helping to tackle the tough Workers' Compensation issues facing the Legislature.

Like modern health insurances, the goal of Workers' Compensation should be to keep people healthy and working whenever possible. Of course, we must continue to provide for those workers who can never return to the work force and those who are temporarily prevented from working.

This \$7 billion unfunded liability is a hindrance to the Mountain State economy. We owe it to future generations to finally begin to address the problem, rather than pass it along and allow it to worsen. Like so many issues we will address this year, this requires us all to work together as West Virginians do so well.

News Release
April 4, 2003

Wise Announces Workers' Compensation Meeting Set for Monday

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the first meeting of the 11-member work group assigned to develop a compromise bill on workers' compensation is set for 1:30 p.m. Monday, April 7 in the Senate Judiciary Room.

The group will review the various workers' compensation proposals introduced during the legislative session and discuss possible solutions.

"I have been working continuously with members of both houses to look for an answer to our workers' compensation situation," Wise said. "I'm confident this group will come to a consensus."

This is expected to be the first in a series of meetings. Working group members include: Keith Burdette, Mike Garrison, Alex Macia and Ed Staats, members of the Governor's staff; senators Brooks McCabe, Walt Helmick, Jeff Kessler and Vic Sprouse; House Speaker Bob Kiss; and delegates Sam Cann, Tom Campbell and Don Caruth.

News Release
May 6, 2003

Wise Proposes \$60 Million in Workers' Compensation Administrative Savings

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today unveiled a plan to save the workers' compensation system \$60 million over the next 3 years.

"These administrative savings are just the first step as we take on the workers' compensation problem," Wise said. "Failure to address this situation means workers won't be getting checks in two years, and taxpayers will have to pay the penalties. We're not going to let that happen."

The plan includes changing the claims process to work better for the employer and the claimant and developing a more efficient way to conduct individual medical exams (IME), resulting in a savings of \$10-\$15 million a year.

Wise also said Workers' Compensation officials plan to save between \$1.2 and \$1.5 million a year by not filling vacant positions.

The third step of the governor's plan is to contract with a Pharmacy Benefits Manager (PBM), similar to that of state-run health benefits programs like PEIA and Medicaid, to allow for a more efficient distribution of pharmacy benefits, which would result in a savings of \$4 million a year. This will be the first step in working with PEIA and Medicaid to produce savings through the purchasing of health-related services.

"Finding a solution to the workers' compensation problem includes administrative, financial and legislative reforms. This is the beginning of our administrative changes. We will continue to move ahead with our bipartisan legislative workgroup – made up of members of both houses and my office – that I convened following the legislative session," Wise added. "We will work with our legislators to put together a legislative package and a financial package to get this system under control."

Workers' Compensation – A First Step

The crisis of the Workers' Compensation program has reached a turning point. Resolving this situation will require administrative, financial and legislative reform. We must take bold steps now to save this important piece of employee protection. By moving forward on several fronts, we can meet this challenge and secure the economic benefit that a final and workable solution will bring.

This week, I unveiled a comprehensive administrative reform package that will save Workers' Compensation \$60 million over the next three years. The plan includes changing the claims process to work better for the employer and the claimant and developing a more efficient way to conduct individual medical exams (IME), resulting in a savings of \$10-\$15 million a year. We also will streamline the agency by not filling all positions that are currently vacant, saving an additional \$1.2 to \$1.5 million each year.

State programs like the Public Employees Insurance Agency and Medicaid have had success with using Pharmacy Benefits Managers (PBM) to efficiently distribute pharmacy benefits. Under my plan, Workers' Compensation will save \$4 million annually by contracting with a PBM and will begin to work with these other programs in an effort to produce even greater savings.

These changes will help to stop the hemorrhaging of money from the Workers' Compensation system and will be the basis for a more sustainable framework for the program. These administrative reforms are one of three major areas we have identified as requiring timely and substantial attention if the system is to be truly fixed.

I continue to work with the leadership and members of the House of Delegates and the State Senate to reach agreement on the most important legislative changes. Members of the bipartisan working group I created at the end of the legislative session have put in long hours identifying areas of consensus and positive actions the Legislature can take to reform Workers' Compensation. Their work will be the foundation of the full Legislature's response to the crisis.

We also must identify significant financial resources to alleviate the unfunded liability. Even when the system has been reshaped into one that is more efficient and fiscally sound, the mistakes of the past will have to be paid for. Economic conditions and the overall lean state of West Virginia's coffers will make this challenge even greater, but we simply may not avoid it.

Without action, injured workers will stop receiving checks in a few short years. Without changes, rates will rise to levels that will cripple our businesses and create catastrophic job loss. Without reform, the Workers' Compensation system will be an even greater burden for our children than it is for us.

But with reform, bold actions and cooperation, we can restore the Workers' Compensation system and make it a positive component of our commitment to workers and businesses. There are many talented and dedicated people working with me as we face this challenge, for they know that the time to act has come. Together, we will build a better system, a better economy and a better West Virginia.

Governor's Remarks
May 22, 2003

Remarks Delivered to the Workers' Compensation Working Group

I wanted to come to this meeting today to thank you for the work you are doing. I know you have been meeting frequently, and the meetings have been productive.

This is a very serious issue. Failure to address this situation means workers won't be getting checks in two years, and taxpayers will have to pay the penalties. Without changes, rates will rise to levels that will cripple our businesses and create catastrophic job loss.

I wanted this working group to be open and inclusive, and I am particularly impressed with the bipartisan effort of everyone involved.

My staff has kept me apprised of the direction this group has taken, and I understand we are close to forging a consensus. I am pleased to say that I intend to call a special session on this topic sometime in June, assuming we have reached a consensus – and I am confident we will.

I have instructed members of my staff to meet with the various interested parties to inform them of the direction this group has taken and ask for their input. In addition, I have asked members of the group to work with legislators so they are fully informed about our proposals.

This problem is severe, and solutions will require sacrifices from all parties so we can protect those who are truly injured.

Thank you again for your tireless efforts toward reforming our workers' compensation system.

Resolving this situation will require administrative, financial and legislative reform. We've made several positive administrative changes, and I am committed to making more.

With reform, bold actions and cooperation, we can restore the Workers' Compensation system and make it a positive component of our commitment to workers and businesses.

Wise Hosts Second Town Hall Meeting on Workers' Compensation

WHEELING, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today held the second in a series of workers' compensation town hall meetings at West Virginia Northern Community College. Wise joined policy experts and business, labor and community leaders in a discussion about possible solutions to the current system.

“We must do something about workers' compensation, and we must do it quickly,” Wise told the participants. “We're facing a \$225 million shortfall. Failure to address this situation means workers won't be getting checks in two years, and taxpayers will have to pay the penalties. Without changes, rates will rise to levels that will cripple our businesses and create catastrophic job loss.”

Wise noted, while the \$3.6 billion unfunded liability in workers' compensation is a long-term problem, short-term decisions must be made right now.

“The workers' compensation working group has identified the most immediate need as dealing with the short-term,” Wise said. “We spend about \$870 million in payments and administrative expenses and have only \$600 million in revenue; that paints a pretty clear picture. The proposed legislation will address this.”

Aside from legislation, Wise says there must be financial and administrative changes.

“You can't raise rates on businesses enough, cut workers benefits enough or do both in combination and eliminate the shortfall,” Wise said. “We must find another financing piece. We've already identified \$60 million of administrative savings to take place over the next three years, but that won't be enough.”

Wise plans to call a special session sometime in June, providing a consensus has been reached on the legislation. He held a similar town hall meeting yesterday in Martinsburg. Next week, Wise will hold meetings in Princeton, north central West Virginia and the Kanawha Valley.

Protecting Workers' Health and Jobs

This week, my Workers' Compensation working group released a comprehensive bill which addresses the many facets of the crisis currently facing this important worker protection system.

Over many long sessions, the group identified the large and small problems that have brought the Workers' Compensation program to the point of near collapse. Its conclusions have made it even clearer to me that we cannot be satisfied with short-term solutions or partial reforms. The proposals contained in the legislation made public this week amount to a significant overhaul in how the Workers' Compensation program is administered, funded and regulated.

These changes are the result of bipartisan cooperation on the part of the working group, and I commend them for their efforts. Together, we are taking necessary steps; inaction could cause injured workers to stop receiving checks in two years, and businesses and taxpayers would be forced to pay the heavy penalty.

We must make sure that businesses are not permitted to conduct operations in West Virginia while ignoring their Workers' Compensation premium obligations. Under the new Employer Violator System, owners of firms who have delinquent or defaulted debts will not be issued permits or licenses by any state agency. Individuals also will be held responsible for firms in which they maintain a significant percentage of ownership.

The Workers' Compensation Division, which will be separated from the Bureau of Employment Programs and re-established as an independent agency, will emphasize rehabilitation of workers and encourage workplace safety. It also will, through its fraud/abuse investigation unit, vigorously enforce the high standards to which businesses, employees and health care providers will be held.

Both workers and employers are being asked to make sacrifices in these changes. Base premium rates for businesses will increase by 15 percent, and maximum Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefits will be reduced from 70 percent to 66.7 percent of the average weekly wage. The maximum duration of TTD benefits will be two years instead of four. Permanent Total Disability (PTD) will be raised from 40 percent to 50 percent medical impairment on the entire body. These and other new guidelines will apply to all awards issued after the effective date of the legislation.

Two new governing bodies will be created to run and regulate the Workers' Compensation program. The new Board of Managers, made up of qualified individuals with experience in worker safety, economics, and business, will work with the executive director, who will be responsible for all administrative policy. The legislation also abolishes the Board of Appeals and creates an Intermediate Court of Appeals, whose full-time judges

will hear only Workers' Compensation cases. I will ask the Supreme Court to review the jurisdiction and selection process of this new court.

While we reform Workers' Compensation for the future, we must still pay for the mistakes of the past. Even with the premium increase and modifications to the benefit structure, the system needs \$225 million to cover the expected shortfall by 2005. These funds will come from a penny-per-cigarette tax increase, the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund, the Black Lung Trust Account and General Revenue funds. Taxpayers, like employers and workers, are being asked to share the heavy burden this crisis represents. However, we must choose to take difficult steps now rather than face a catastrophe in the future. In time, we will look at the sacrifices these changes will bring and realize that they were vital to building the foundations of both worker safety and economic prosperity in the 21st century.

News Release
June 10, 2003

Wise Calls Special Session Historic for Job Creation

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today said the special session beginning tonight could be seen as one of the most historic sessions on job creation. Wise said the Workers' Compensation bill would help keep jobs while the Economic Development Grant Committee will help create hundreds of good-paying jobs across the state.

“If these bills don't pass, we will have not only job creation efforts halted—but it also will endanger injured workers from getting checks,” Wise said. “Failure to deal with the problem at hand will be devastating to business, labor and every West Virginian.”

Wise is encouraging the public to attend the public meeting on Workers' Compensation tomorrow at 1 p.m. in the House of Delegates Chamber. Wise noted that public input is critical.

“I held public town hall meetings across the state during the past two weeks because I believe the Workers' Compensation problem affects everyone,” Wise said. “Bringing people together and working out ideas in the public eye are ways to create positive changes.”

News Release
June 14, 2003

Wise Calls Workers' Compensation Reform Historic

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise today called the passage of the Workers' Compensation bill historic and praised the hard work of the Legislature and the working group.

“The passage of this bill represents a true bipartisan effort to find real solutions to a very complicated problem,” Wise said. “I commend the members of the working group for their efforts and thank the members of the Legislature for their time and dedication.”

Wise noted he was pleased the legislation remained substantially similar to the recommendations made by the workers' compensation working group.

The legislation identifies funding sources to eliminate the projected \$225 million shortfall. It includes changes in the organizational structure of workers' compensation, improves and strengthens operations and modifies the benefit structure.

“This is the first step to solving a problem that has plagued the system for nearly a generation,” Wise said. “Our concern has always been ensuring that truly injured workers continue receiving checks, businesses can continue to grow and create jobs, and taxpayers are not unfairly burdened.”

New Release
October 1, 2003

Workers' Compensation Embarks On “A New Beginning”

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise and Workers' Compensation Executive Director Greg Burton today joined Workers' Compensation Commission employees in launching “A New Beginning,” officially recognizing the WCC as a separate state agency.

“I'd like to acknowledge all of the employees of the new West Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission as they embark on this new era,” Wise said. “I'd also like to recognize Greg Burton and the outstanding leadership team he has assembled here to complement this professional and dedicated work force.”

Under Senate Bill 2013, approved by the Legislature and signed into law effective

July 1, the former Workers' Compensation Division separates from the state Bureau of Employment Programs today. The legislation also establishes a new 11-member oversight committee, known as the Board of Managers, replacing the former nine-member Compensation Programs Performance Council.

Workers' Compensation marked the occasion with a series of events. Burton, Deputy Directors Phil Lynch and Phil Shimer and other senior managers greeted employees as they arrived for work beginning at 7 a.m., presenting them with commemorative buttons to mark the occasion. An afternoon news conference at the Workers' Compensation headquarters in Kanawha City marked the unveiling of a new logo and mission statement, chosen by employees, for the new commission.

The mission statement is "To provide superior customer service to West Virginia's employers, workers and medical community, emphasizing cost-effective safety, health and return-to-work programs."

"Our 'New Beginning' starts today," Burton said. "We've made significant progress in the 90 days leading from the effective date of Senate Bill 2013 to this event. The next 90 days leading to Jan. 1, 2004, will likewise bring new challenges as we continue to refine our structure."

Burton noted that the 90th anniversary of the first workers' compensation claim in West Virginia takes place on Friday. A coal miner received a \$5 check in compensation for an injury that occurred on Oct. 3, 1913.

"There were many good things and good people associated with the Workers' Compensation Division. We're trying to build on those positives and provide West Virginia with a workers' compensation system that is fair and effective for everyone," Burton said. "It sounds simple, but one of our first goals has been to establish the right people in the right jobs, so they can be productive and effective in bringing new points of view and new solutions to our old problems. More often than not, those folks were already here."

Burton also used the occasion to announce two initiatives – E-Comp, which stands for the Electronic Compensation Online Management Program, and a series of "Town Hall" meetings scheduled throughout the state, beginning later this month.

E-Comp provides employers and vendors with easy, effective and secure Internet access to file and pay quarterly wage reports; file the first report of injury; view policy account information, detailed claim information and account contact information; and request CDs of claim and policy documents. The system is designed to save money through the electronic filing of reports and forms, improving speed and accuracy with an eye toward getting sick or injured workers back on the job sooner.

"In the long run, E-Comp can mean lower premiums and a Workers' Compensation system that works with West Virginians and for West Virginia," Burton said.

Wise picked up on the theme, issuing a challenge to all state agencies to begin using E-Comp by Nov. 1. He also challenged West Virginia businesses and industries, "to

make a firm commitment to improve safety standards. It's going to take a team effort – government, business, labor and individuals – to help cut costs associated with lost-time injuries and illnesses and make the workplace safer for all West Virginia employees.”

The series of informational “Town Hall” meetings will feature a panel of Workers’ Compensation executives who will discuss the structure of the new agency and legislative changes incorporated in Senate Bill 2013. Burton said the meetings will be used to identify and address concerns of various stakeholder groups, including business, labor, medical providers, government and individual citizens.

Wise toured several floors of the Workers’ Compensation complex after the news conference, stopping often to shake hands and chat with employees.

“The challenges ahead of you are great. But, as Sen. Brooks McCabe and others have observed, there is a new sense of optimism about Workers’ Compensation that hasn’t been here before,” Wise said. “There is a renewed confidence that things will get better. And we’re looking to all of you to lead the way.”

Chapter 6

SENIOR CITIZENS

One side effect of the long stagnation in West Virginia's economy has been a demographic tilt toward an older average population than most other states. The key issue for many older West Virginians in Governor Wise's term was the rising cost of health care, particularly for medications and other services not covered by Medicare. Although health costs affected everyone, senior citizens on fixed incomes were at particularly high risk.

Working with the Commission on Aging and the West Virginia Lottery, Governor Wise provided every West Virginia senior with a drug discount card. The discount was one of many steps taken by state governments in the early part of the 21st century that paved the way for a national drug benefit under Medicare.

Wise was also instrumental in the development of a nursing home for older veterans in Clarksburg.

The Governor, himself a member of the "Baby Boom" Generation, asked people from around the state to participate in planning for the aging of this large cohort of West Virginians.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Throughout his term, Governor Wise devoted considerable time to senior's issues. He made time nearly each week to visit senior centers, seniors' events and conferences. Many of the proposals he advanced throughout his term developed from suggestions that arose at these meetings.

News Release
July 1, 2001

Governor Announces Summit on Aging 2001

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today that the 9th annual Governor's Summit on Aging sponsored by the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services will be held August 22-24 at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, WV. The focus of the Summit is adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In announcing the Summit, Governor Wise said, "Older people today are more visible, more active and more independent than ever before. They live longer and are in better health, but as the population of older Americans escalates, so does the often hidden problem of elder abuse, exploitation and neglect." He continued, "While abuse comes in many guises, the net effect is the same. Abuse creates potentially dangerous situations and feelings of worthlessness, and it isolates older persons from those who can help."

This year's Summit was specifically planned to further educate new and veteran health and human services and aging services personnel and law enforcement professionals who work with abused, neglected and exploited adults in the Mountain State. Continuing education credits are available for social workers, nurses, nursing home administrators, and law enforcement personnel. The program also will benefit the general public who is interested in learning more about this important field.

In extending his invitation to attend the conference, Governor Wise states, "It is not acceptable for vulnerable members of our society to be subjected to abuse, neglect and exploitation. We want you to come away from the conference with an awareness that this problem is real in West Virginia, and that each and every one of us can do something about it."

Registration before July 31 is \$100 for in-state registrants, \$125 for those out-of-state, and \$50 for senior citizens age 60+ and full-time students. For more information about the Summit, for a registration form, or if you would be interested in being an exhibitor or sponsor, please call the WV Bureau of Senior Services at (304) 558-3317. The complete agenda and a printable registration form is available for view at the Bureau's Web site at www.state.wv.us/seniorservices.

News Release
February 26, 2002

Senior Day at the Legislature Set for March 4

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – The West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services in cooperation with AARP West Virginia, and the West Virginia Directors of Senior & Community Services announced today that Senior Day at the Legislature will be March 4, 2002. Gov. Bob Wise will address the group at 10:30 a.m. in the Cultural Center Auditorium.

This annual event begins with registration at 9 a.m. in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center. Hundreds of seniors from all over West Virginia will visit the Capitol.

Registration is free and open to all seniors. Organizations providing services to West Virginia's seniors will display information in the Capitol Rotunda, upstairs on the House of Delegates side.

Senior Day at the Legislature allows seniors from all 55 counties an opportunity to visit the State Capitol and observe the legislative process as well as share their ideas and concerns with their representatives.

For more information about this event, please call Fredericka White at 304-558-3317.

News Release
May 16, 2003

Wise Schedules Senior Forum for May 29 in Martinsburg

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that the first of the 2003 Governor's Senior Forums will be held Thursday, May 29 from 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon at the Berkeley Senior Services Center in Martinsburg. The topic of the forum is "What We Do Makes a Difference."

"These senior forums are the perfect opportunity to talk with seniors about issues affecting them, such as the rising cost of brand-name prescription drugs," Wise said.

"Governor Wise has continued the senior forums he started when he was in Congress because of the importance of seniors to West Virginia and to our country," said Ann M. Stottlemeyer, commissioner of the Bureau of Senior Services. "Seniors are vital to

our communities in so many ways.”

Guest speaker for the forum is Dr. Konrad C. Nau, vice chairman of the Department of Family Medicine – Eastern Division, West Virginia University Health Sciences Center. Dr. Nau also is program director of WVU’s Rural Family Medicine Program and associate professor of family medicine in the WVU School of Medicine. He will speak about aging well in the Eastern Panhandle.

Commissioner Stottlemeyer will make welcoming remarks, as will Director Linda Holzapple of Berkeley Senior Services, host of the event. Miss Erin Merceruio, a senior at Martinsburg High School, will sing the national anthem and “God Bless America.” The Kitchen Band, members of the Center’s Lazy River Band, and Retired Men’s Choir will provide musical entertainment.

Several agencies will set up displays and give out brochures and other types of information on senior issues. This event is free and open to the public; registration is not required. Coffee hour begins at 8:30 a.m.

Future forums will be held in Vienna, W.Va., on Thursday, June 12, at Ohio Valley College, and in Wayne, W.Va., on Wednesday, June 25, at the Wayne County Senior Center.

GOLDEN MOUNTAINEER CARD

The Golden Mountaineer Card was introduced by Governor Jay Rockefeller in the 1980s, and issued to West Virginians over the age of 60 through the Bureau of Senior Services. Many businesses and agencies offered senior citizen discounts in connection with the card, but it had fallen into disuse by 2000. Governor Wise revived the card by negotiating a prescription drug discount plan, and re-issued new gold and blue cards – more than 400,000 of them – toward the end of 2001.

Golden Mountaineer Card Expanded

Our society is judged by the way we treat our seniors. Today, our West Virginia seniors are forced to choose between buying the medicine they need to stay healthy and buying groceries. West Virginia seniors need real solutions that lower the cost of their medicine. That's why I have been working with the Bureau of Senior Services and PEIA to expand the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card.

For the first time, we have been able to negotiate a pharmacy discount for every senior citizen in the state. This won't solve all the problems seniors have in paying for prescriptions, but it guarantees they won't be paying far higher prices than other citizens and will save money they need for other necessities of life. The Golden Mountaineer Card is available to all West Virginians age 60 and over, and there are no income limits.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller first introduced the Golden Mountaineer Card in 1980 during his tenure as governor. Until now, it was honored by retailers and service businesses for discounts but not widely accepted for drugs. We have taken the card and expanded it to cover prescriptions.

Reducing the cost of prescription drugs for all West Virginians is a priority in my administration. The cards will be good at 420 pharmacies in the state and will replace all earlier Golden Mountaineer Cards and the SPAN II Cards issued in recent years. There is at least one participating pharmacy in each county, and the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services is working to sign up more retailers.

AdvancePCS of Irving, Texas, the nation's largest discount card pharmacy network, will manage the pharmacy program, including providing toll-free customer service; a pharmacists' help desk 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and an online alert for pharmacists during the dispensing process. This will alert pharmacists to possible drug interactions, allergies, etc.

A list of participating West Virginia pharmacies is available online at www.state.wv.us/seniorservices/ and at senior centers throughout the state. For the convenience of traveling seniors, the card also is accepted at some out-of-state pharmacies.

Cost savings on prescriptions vary from pharmacy to pharmacy; however, the following guidelines will be followed by all participating pharmacies. Seniors will receive the lesser of two prices:

- For brand-name drugs and some generic drugs: average wholesale price minus 13 percent, or the pharmacy's usual and customary price.
- For most generic drugs: average wholesale price minus 60 percent, or the pharmacy's usual and customary price.

Nearly 400,000 Golden Mountaineer Discount Cards are in the mail right now. Seniors who do not receive the card by October 1 should call the Bureau of Senior Services at 304-558-3317.

News Release
September 28, 2001

Golden Mountaineer Discounts Available in Every County Card Saves Seniors \$20,000 in Four Days

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – More than three hundred West Virginia pharmacies, including at least one in each county, are accepting the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card.

“In the first four days that West Virginia seniors had these cards in their hands, we documented more than \$20,000 in savings on vital prescription drugs,” said Gov. Bob Wise. “These savings started to add up before all the cards had even been delivered. This is proof that there is a real need for this program, and that it is making a difference.”

People over 60 who have not received a Golden Mountaineer Card can sign up at any West Virginia senior center, or online at www.state.wv.us/seniorservices/.

In addition to prescription discounts, the card will be honored by any retailer who participates in the 20-year-old program. The Bureau of Senior Services, in cooperation with local senior centers, is recruiting new businesses to participate.

News Release
Dec. 17, 2001

Golden Mountaineer Card Saves Seniors \$239,618

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – “Senior West Virginians saved \$239,000 on prescription drugs with their new Golden Mountaineer Discount Cards in October,” says Gov. Bob Wise. “The average senior who used the card saved \$18 – enough to buy a holiday gift for a grandchild or a few extra necessities at the grocery store.” October was the first full month the cards were in use.

This fall, the State of West Virginia mailed new Golden Mountaineer Discount

Cards to nearly every citizen age 60 or over. For the first time, Gov. Wise and his administration have added a prescription drug benefit to the card, which also is accepted at many retail locations for other senior discounts. “We’re very pleased to be able to help seniors with the high cost of prescription medicine,” Wise said.

According to figures provided by AdvancePCS, which administers the drug discount program, the average prescription price was reduced by 17.65 percent when seniors used the card. More than 300 West Virginia pharmacies accept the card, including at least one in every county. These pharmacies offer seniors the lower of two prices: the pharmacy’s usual and customary price, or the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card price.

All West Virginia residents age 60 and older are eligible for the card, regardless of income. To apply, please call the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services toll-free at 1-877-987-3646 or contact a local senior center.

To apply for a card online, or to view the statewide list of participating pharmacies, visit the Bureau of Senior Services website at: <http://www.state.wv.us/seniorservices/>.

News Release
March 4, 2002

Wise Addresses Crowd at Seniors’ Day

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise outlined several ways that state government can be of assistance to West Virginia seniors at today’s Senior Day at the Legislature.

“We have several services throughout the state to help you,” Wise said. “Senior Legal Aid and the Senior Health Insurance Network provide valuable information to seniors who are looking for answers.”

Senior Legal Aid assists seniors with legal matters while SHINE offers one-on-one counseling about Medicare. The toll-free number at Legal Aid is 1-800-229-5068 and the toll-free number at SHINE is 1-877-WV-SHINE.

Wise also touted the new Golden Mountaineer Discount Card and the savings it is providing our seniors.

“It gives me great pleasure to tell you that West Virginia is making great strides in caring for our seniors,” Wise said. “In the past six months, the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card has helped more than 15,000 seniors save an average of \$18 a month on their prescriptions.”

The toll-free number for the Golden Mountaineer Card is 1-877-987-3646.

The event was sponsored by the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services in cooperation with AARP West Virginia, and the West Virginia Directors of Senior & Community Services.

News Release
August 12, 2002

Wise, Nation's Governors Support DHHS Lawsuit over Preferred Drug Lists

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that 23 of the nation's governors wrote a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson urging the federal government to “respond vigorously” to a lawsuit by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

The lawsuit seeks to bar states from using preferred drug lists (PDLs) as a cost-controlling measure. It also attempts to invalidate Michigan's program to lower prescription drug costs by using a PDL for Medicaid patients.

“Preferred drug lists are one of our best methods for lowering the cost of prescription drugs,” Wise said. “With pharmacy costs rising 15 - 20 percent annually – doubling every four years – this issue is reaching crisis proportions.”

A key concern to the governors was a section of the suit that seeks to enjoin the programs of “other states that are similarly situated.” Although states aren't specifically listed, the provision could affect at least 11 other states using PDLs, including West Virginia.

West Virginia has given seniors an 18 percent discount on prescriptions through the Golden Mountaineer Card, and the Public Employees Insurance Agency will save at least \$25 million over the next three years with the multi-state drug plan. In addition, West Virginia CHIP will save \$3 million over the next 3 years.

“States are the laboratory of democracy,” Wise said. “We must find a way to continue to lower the costs of prescription drugs.”

Governors from Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming joined Wise in signing the letter.

Additional Pharmacy to Accept Golden Mountaineer Discount Card

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that CVS Pharmacy will now accept the West Virginia Golden Mountaineer Discount Card.

“This is great news for West Virginia seniors,” Wise said. “We can’t expect seniors to choose between buying their medication and buying food or heating their homes. This is another step in ensuring access to affordable prescription drugs, and I thank CVS for becoming an active participant in the Golden Mountaineer Card.”

Through July, the card averaged a 19-percent savings for seniors. Individuals using the card have saved \$12 million since the pharmacy part of the card started in September 2001; they have saved more than \$2.5 million this year.

“We are pleased to work with Governor Wise in offering the Golden Mountaineer card at CVS,” said Tom Morrison, vice president of pharmacy services at CVS Pharmacy. “As a health care provider, we want to ensure that all of our senior customers have access to important pharmacy services.”

The Golden Mountaineer Discount Card covers all prescriptions for individuals over the age of 60 and can be used for discounts on other goods and services at participating merchants.

In addition to creating the drug discount program for seniors, Wise also formed the first-ever multi-state prescription drug purchasing pool and created a preferred drug list, saving \$14 million for the state’s Medicaid program.

A list of participating pharmacists and merchants and an application can be found at www.state.wv.us/seniorservices. Applicants may also call 1-877-987-3646.

VETERANS NURSING HOME

In his 2002 State of the State Address, Governor Wise urged quick action on the construction of a long-awaited nursing home for veterans on the campus of the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Administration Medical Center in Clarksburg. Within a week, his administration issues a request for proposals from architects interested in designing the project. Wise continued to push for faster completion of the many steps required to bring the home into being. Ground was broken in October, 2003.

News Release
February 8, 2002

Veterans Nursing Home Project Moves Forward

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today that three companies have expressed interest in designing West Virginia’s new veterans nursing home.

“I’m pleased that this important project is moving forward. Our veterans need and deserve this facility, so we certainly want to see it built as soon as possible,” Wise said.

Wise announced January 9 during his State of the State address that a request for proposal on design of the nursing home would be issued within 30 days. The RFP was offered the week of the governor’s address.

Wise said he’s hopeful a design will be approved this year. The construction phase could begin shortly after the design is accepted.

Two of the three firms interested in designing the facility are from West Virginia.

The nursing home is being financed through the West Virginia Lottery’s “Veterans Cash” scratch-off games, which were authorized two years ago by the state Legislature.

The scratch-off games have generated \$1.5 million toward construction of the nursing home.

News Release
May 23, 2002

Veterans Nursing Home Project Moves Forward

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today that engineering plans for West Virginia’s new veterans nursing home will be completed by August 15, the state’s deadline for applying for federal grant money to assist with the project.

Federal grant money will cover about 65 percent of the costs for building the \$20 million facility, which is to be built in Clarksburg. Completed engineering plans must be included in the state’s grant application.

“We are well on our way to beginning construction on this extremely important nursing home,” Wise said. “And we’re going to do a first-rate job. We will settle for nothing less than a turn-key approach to this project. When this nursing home is built and the ribbon is cut, we will be open for business.”

The governor’s announcement followed a meeting that included architects, legislators and state agency directors.

“This project is moving forward. And we will commit all resources necessary to staying on schedule,” said state Secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety Joe Martin.

The nursing home is being financed through the West Virginia Lottery’s “Veterans Cash” scratch-off games, which were authorized two years ago by the state Legislature.

Through April, the scratch-off games had generated \$1.96 million toward construction of the nursing home.

News Release
Jan. 20, 2003

Wise Announces Groundbreaking for Veterans Nursing Home

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise announced today that construction should begin in late March on West Virginia’s veterans nursing home.

“We’ve made tremendous progress toward constructing this state-of-the-art facility,” Wise said. “This project has run smoothly from the beginning. Weather permitting,

we'll be breaking ground right after spring arrives.”

Wise also announced that the 120-bed Clarksburg facility will include a 30-bed wing designated for Alzheimer's disease patients.

The nursing home will be located next to the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Administration Medical Center. The hospital will provide food and laundry services for the nursing home.

“This will be a unique relationship, but it will also be a practical one,” Wise said. “Using those services from the hospital will free up money to provide more rehabilitative services.”

Federal grant money will cover about 65 percent of the costs for building the roughly \$20 million nursing home.

The state's share of the project is being financed through the West Virginia Lottery's “Veterans Cash” scratch-off games, which were authorized two years ago by the state Legislature.

The scratch-off games have generated \$2.6 million toward nursing home construction.

News Release
March 6, 2003

Wise Announces Land for Veterans Nursing Home Given to State

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs plans to transfer 5.54 acres of land to West Virginia to construct and operate a state veterans nursing home.

“This is just one more step forward in our plans to create a new state veterans nursing home,” Wise said. “For generations, more than in any other state, West Virginians have served in our armed forces to preserve our freedom. They need and deserve this facility, and we certainly want to see it built as soon as possible.”

Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi wrote to Governor Wise and to U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd to notify them about the transfer. The land currently is part of the VA Medical Center in Clarksburg. Federal grant money will cover about 65 percent of the costs for building the new \$20 million facility.

“When men and women take the oath to serve in the Armed Forces and to risk their lives to protect our freedoms, the government makes a number of promises to them in return. One of those promises is for lifetime health care,” Senator Byrd explained.

“In addition, in West Virginia, many of our older veterans require around-the-clock medical care, but cannot find an adequate, affordable facility to meet their needs. This new complex in Clarksburg would provide quality medical care to veterans who need full-time, long-term medical treatment, rather than just an occasional visit to the doctor.”

The nursing home is being financed through the West Virginia Lottery’s “Veterans Cash” scratch-off games, which were authorized two years ago by the state Legislature.

News Release
October 13, 2003

Wise Leads Groundbreaking Ceremony for Veterans Nursing Home

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today led a groundbreaking ceremony for a state-of-the-art 120-bed nursing home for West Virginia’s veterans.

“This is a magnificent day for West Virginia. Today we break ground on a phenomenal project that has been years in the making,” Wise said. “West Virginians have always responded when their country was in danger. They deserve this facility.”

Several hundred people – including federal, state and local elected officials – attended the ceremony. The nursing home will be located adjacent to the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Wise has made construction of the veterans nursing home one of the primary goals of his administration.

“This facility will be second to none,” Wise said. “It has been extremely important to me that we move quickly and efficiently in our efforts to see that this facility is built as soon as possible.”

The federal government is paying roughly 65 percent of the construction costs for the more than \$20 million nursing home.

The state’s share of the project is being financed through the West Virginia Lottery’s “Veterans Cash” scratch-off games. The games have generated more than \$3 million toward nursing home construction.

BABY BOOM GENERATION

By 2004, one-third of West Virginia's citizens were members of the "Baby Boom" generation, born between 1946 and 1964. As this group approached retirement age, people throughout state government began to plan for the effect of their transition out of the workforce – an exodus of experienced employees from both state government and private business, and increase in demand for health care service, new housing and transportation needs and a wide range of other changes.

Governor Wise organized a commission to address these needs, and to assure that this group's financial future was considered throughout state government.

Executive Order
April 15, 2004

The Governor's Commission on the Baby Boom Generation

WHEREAS, between 1946 and 1964 during the post-World War II era, the United States experienced an exceptionally high rate of birth now known as the "Baby Boom," and those born during that period are commonly referred to as "Baby Boomers;" and

WHEREAS, Baby Boomers have had a profound impact on society and the economy throughout all the stages of their lives, and it is predicted that they will have unprecedented needs in both volume of demand and variety of services as they now near the retirement age; and

WHEREAS, Baby Boomers and other retired workers and their spouses throughout the nation are at risk of crisis due to lack or loss of pensions and health insurance; and

WHEREAS, West Virginia's Baby Boomers comprise a third of the State's population, which may result in an accelerated state of crisis due to the size of the population requesting support and services; and

WHEREAS, there is a distinct need for coordination and cooperation within State Government for the development and delivery of services to this age group of our citizenry.

NOW THEREFORE I, BOB WISE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Governor of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. The Governor's Commission on the Baby Boom Generation [Commission] is hereby created.

2. The Commission is a state interdepartmental group and shall coordinate the development and delivery of programs and services for West Virginia Baby Boomers who are experiencing, or who anticipate, economic difficulties due to job loss or pension loss.
3. The objectives of the Commission shall be to coordinate existing programs and services, maximize the use of available resources, enhance collaborative efforts among State Government agencies and providers of services for the benefit of West Virginia Baby Boomers, and create a forum for discussion and decisions on issues of importance.
4. The Commission shall be appointed by the Governor and composed of not less than fourteen members, who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor. The Governor, at his discretion, may appoint additional members to the Commission.
5. Serving as members of the Commission shall be:
 - (a) One representative of the Bureau for Medical Services, Department of Health and Human Resources.
 - (b) One representative of the Bureau of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Resources.
 - (c) One representative of the Bureau for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Resources.
 - (d) One representative of the Bureau for Health and Health Facilities, Department of Health and Human Resources.
 - (e) One representative of the Bureau of Employment Programs.
 - (f) One representative of the Development Office, Bureau of Commerce.
 - (g) One representative of the Bureau for Senior Services.
 - (h) One representative of the Division of Labor, Bureau of Commerce.
 - (i) One representative of the Governor's Office on Workforce Investment.
 - (j) One representative of the Office of the Governor.
 - (k) Three representatives of the community at large.
6. The representative of the Office of the Governor shall serve as chairperson.
7. The members of the Commission shall be selected based on their related experience and expertise in the needs and interests of Baby Boomers.
8. The Commission shall convene its first meeting within thirty days of the issuance of this Order and shall meet once every two months, or as directed by the Governor.
9. The Commission shall:
 - (a) Implement statewide goals and objectives for programs that will benefit Baby Boomers; and
 - (b) Create a web site with access to programs and information that will benefit Baby Boomers; and
 - (c) Convene a statewide summit on issues that affect and are of importance to

West Virginia Baby Boomers.

10. The Commission may consult with outside experts and receive testimony from the public during its regularly scheduled meetings.
11. The Commission shall encourage and utilize input, information and recommendations which it receives from groups, organizations and individuals.
12. The Commission shall receive necessary staff support and assistance from each of its member agencies.
13. The Commission shall continually review its progress in achieving its established goals, shall oversee all cooperative agency efforts, and shall submit a progress report to the Governor within three working days of each meeting.
14. The Commission shall present to the Governor a plan of action and a schedule of implementation of such plan no later than the thirty-first day of May, 2004, and shall present to the Governor by the first of December, 2004, a cumulative report describing its progress and achievements.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Four, and in the One Hundred Forty-First year of the State.

News Release
April 26, 2004

Wise Appoints Members to Commission on Baby Boom Generation

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today named his appointees to the Commission on the Baby Boom Generation.

Wise pointed out the need to address the challenges faced by the Baby Boom Generation during his State of the State address in January. He created the commission by executive order.

“West Virginia’s baby boomers face special challenges when they find themselves without a job, without health care and without a pension,” Wise said. “We are going to help our older workers get back on their feet. They have mortgages to pay; they have kids to put

through college; and they have health care needs.”

The Commission will study, among other issues, strategic ways to use existing services and increase accessibility through the creation of a website and will convene a summit to foster dialogue on issues boomers face.

“In order to address these problems, we must begin to grasp the severity of the issues,” Wise said. “We must help individuals when the security they have worked for is threatened.”

West Virginia’s baby boomers comprise nearly one-third of the state’s population. The commission members are:

Shelley Baston, director of Medicaid Managed Care, Bureau for Medical Services

Nancy Bazzle, director of the Office of Community and Rural Services, Bureau for Public Health

Mildred Brown, employment programs manager, Bureau of Employment Programs

Jennifer Burgess, director of safety, boiler and elevator section of the Division of Labor, Bureau of Commerce

Joe Ciccarello, deputy director of the Small Business Development Center, West Virginia Development Office

Tim Dean, sub-district director of the United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO

Lynn Dipasquale, director of the Northwestern Area Agency on Aging of Ohio County

Carla Dunn, special assistant to the commissioner and personnel and staff development, Bureau of Commerce

John Grass, community services manager for Mason County, Bureau for Children and Families

Elaine Harris, International Representative of the Communications Workers of America

Emily Hopta, assistant for research and policy, Governor’s Office

Bob Jones, business specialist for the research and planning division, West Virginia Development Office

Julie Norman, deputy director for the Governor’s Workforce Investment Division, West Virginia Development Office

Vickie Parlier, assistant commissioner, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities

Mark Roach, chairman of the Sheet Mill Division of the Independent Steelworkers Union

Robert Roswell, director of Cabell County Community Services, Inc.

Ann Stottleymer, commissioner, Bureau for Senior Services

Determining the Needs of the Baby Boom Generation

There are about 76 million baby boomers in the United States, and West Virginia's boomers comprise nearly one-third of the state's population. The concerns of the baby boom generation are heard across the country and meeting their needs are important for the future of West Virginia.

Earlier this week, I announced the results of a study by the Commission on the Baby Boom Generation. I created this commission by executive order to determine the needs of West Virginia baby boomers and study strategic ways to use existing services offered to seniors.

A group of 200 randomly selected baby boomers was asked questions about employment, health care, insurance, retirement and interest in a baby boomer summit. Our boomers responded, sharing their attitudes, opinions and perceptions of the state and identifying the most important issues facing individuals ages 46-64.

Three in 10 boomers cited health care costs as the biggest problem for West Virginia boomers, and one in five cited health insurance. Other concerns are jobs and unemployment; personal finances; personal safety; social security; loss of retirement funds; and care for older family members or in-laws. Boomers also expressed concerns with the cost of prescription drugs and paying for their children's education.

These findings demonstrate the challenges we must address to protect and care for the citizens of this state. We've made great strides in several of these issues, including funding the PROMISE Scholarship and creating a pharmaceutical advocate to help fight the rising cost of prescription drugs, but there is still work to be done. These results will help us look at ways to address the concerns of baby boomers in the future.

West Virginia's baby boomers face special challenges when they find themselves without a job, without health care and without a pension. We are going to help our older workers get back on their feet. They have mortgages to pay; they have kids to put through college; and they have health care needs. We must help individuals when the security they have worked for is threatened. I am confident this commission has surveyed the needs of West Virginia's boomers so we may now begin to meet current challenges and accurately plan for the future.

Chapter 7

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

West Virginia's natural heritage – clean air and water, open spaces, wildlife and fertile soils – are the basis of its appeal to generations of citizens, and to thousands of tourists each year. Yet, as in every part of the world with such resources, it is a continuing challenge to balance enjoyment of their benefits with our obligation to preserve them for future generations. Governor Wise, an avid outdoorsman, worked throughout his term in office to assure that state government played a major role in protecting the natural resources of the state.

PROTECTING LANDS FOR THE PUBLIC

The earliest American conservationists – back to the time of John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt – concentrated on acquiring or retaining large tracts of land for public ownership. West Virginia benefitted from Federal land purchases in the National Forests, and also established a series of expansive State Parks and Forests that are the envy of many Eastern states. Unlike in the American West, however, the bulk of West Virginia’s land area, including much forested and wilderness land, was already in private hands when the conservation movement began. Private owners, including families, timber and energy companies and others, played an important role in protecting and improving these lands throughout West Virginia’s history. Yet much of the state’s outdoor heritage remained in need of protection as Governor Wise took office.

Wise embraced partnerships among private owners, outdoors organizations and state agencies to enhance the protection of valuable lands and targeted highly-prized areas enjoyed by thousands of West Virginians for special attention.

State, Conservation and Business Interests Join Forces to Protect Critical Land

BRUCETON MILLS, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today joined officials from The Conservation Fund and Allegheny Power to celebrate a public-private partnership to permanently protect more than 1,000 acres in the heart of the lower Cheat River Canyon.

“I am pleased to announce that West Virginia will acquire this highly valued piece of property, which will allow us to continue to protect a large portion of this viewshed,” Wise said. “This area is not only valuable because of its wildlife, but also because of this incredible view.”

In the complex transaction negotiated by The Conservation Fund, the state of West Virginia will acquire 1,100 acres of important wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation lands that adjoin Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area and Cooper’s Rock State Forest from Allegheny Energy. The property contains several parcels, the largest of which lies across the river from Cooper’s Rock State Forest, while smaller parcels border the forest boundary. The additional lands will protect important plant and wildlife habitat, as well as add new buffer zones to the forest.

“The Conservation Fund is proud of its long-standing commitment to working with companies, communities and elected officials throughout West Virginia to protect the state’s irreplaceable land and water resources,” said Larry Selzer, president of The Conservation Fund. “Thanks to the steadfast leadership of Governor Wise, the commitment of leading companies like Toyota and Allegheny Energy and the support of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, this extraordinary project demonstrates the true power of partnership.”

Working with The Conservation Fund, Toyota, one of the state's largest employers, and the Richard King Mellon Foundation provided additional funding support.

“As part of its steadfast commitment to responsible environmental stewardship, Toyota is extremely pleased to work with The Conservation Fund and its partners in support of a project that will provide lasting benefits to the citizens of West Virginia,” said David Copenhaver, vice president of Toyota's West Virginia operations.

Seward Prosser Mellon, president of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, said, “The Richard King Mellon Foundation is delighted to work with The Conservation Fund and the state of West Virginia in making these special lands available to the public. It reaffirms our continuing effort to do our part in protecting the natural resources of our nation.”

Flowing from the highlands of the Allegheny plateau, the Cheat River is the longest un-dammed stretch of whitewater in the eastern United States. A popular recreation destination, especially among whitewater enthusiasts and fly-fishermen, the Cheat River attracts tens of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts every year. The area also is home to a diverse number of wildlife species including black bear, bald eagles, wild turkey and white-tailed deer.

“Allegheny is pleased to finalize this agreement with the state of West Virginia, which will allow continued public access to this land and state management of a large portion of the viewshed from one of the region's most well-known overlooks,” said Jay S. Pifer, chief operating officer of Allegheny Energy. “We are proud of our contribution to quality recreational opportunities in the Cheat Lake area, and transferring this land is another illustration of our long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship and working with public agencies to create quality recreational opportunities.”

PRESERVING CLEAN WATER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

West Virginia's abundant water resources provide drinking water for our citizens, crucial support for agriculture, a vital raw material for our industries and a potential export product of immense value. As water supplies worldwide are increasingly threatened, the protection of West Virginia's water becomes ever more vital.

Governor Wise supported statewide efforts to catalogue sources of water, water users, and threats to water quality so that the state could act on good information on formulating water policy.

Executive Order 22-03
Sept. 12, 2003

Governor's Stream Restoration Program

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 3,500 miles of streams in the State of West Virginia that are degraded by acid pollution from mine drainage and acid precipitation; and

WHEREAS, acid pollution of streams results in damaged ecosystems, reduced populations of fish and other aquatic life, and loss of angling and other recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, these effects have caused significant annual losses to the State's economy; and

WHEREAS, restoration of streams damaged by acid is one of the highest natural resource priorities of State Government; and

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources are authorities known nationally for their work in the restoration of streams damaged by acid pollution; and

WHEREAS, these agencies and other State, federal and private entities can implement acid stream restoration initiatives more effectively by acting in concert with one another.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby ORDER that:

1. The Governor's Stream Restoration Program is hereby established to facilitate implementation of stream restoration projects, with emphasis on acid-impacted streams.
2. A Steering Committee of not more than ten members shall be established and shall include representatives of appropriate State and federal agencies, industry groups, and conservation organizations that have expertise and an interest in the restoration of acid-impacted streams in the State.
3. The Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection, and the Director, Division of Natural Resources, shall serve as co-chairs of the Steering Committee and shall appoint its members, except that the Governor shall appoint two at-large members. All members of the Steering Committee shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor and will not receive compensation for their services to the Steering Committee.
4. A Technical Committee, including such representatives of State and federal government, industry, and conservation organizations as are necessary to facilitate project implementation, shall be appointed by the co-chairs to advise the Steering Committee on technical and scientific issues relating to restoration of acid-impacted streams.
5. The Steering Committee shall report on the status of acid stream restoration projects in the State, including the miles of stream restored, the biological, recreational and economic impacts of that restoration, and program recommendations for the coming year, to the Governor and both Houses of the Legislature by November, 2004, and shall so report each November thereafter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the twelfth day of September, Two Thousand Three, and in the One Hundred Forty-First year of the State.

STATE PARKS AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES

West Virginia's State Parks are visited by tens of thousands of people each year, including many West Virginians and countless visitors from other states and nations. Governor Wise, from the start of his term, was a believer in maintaining and strengthening the state park system and encouraged park managers to develop innovative means of funding important park projects.

News Release
August 30, 2001

Coal Lease to Benefit Wayne, Mingo Projects

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has instructed the State Division of Natural Resources to use the proceeds from a coal lease at Cabwaylingo State Forest to fund needed improvements to DNR facilities in the forest and the surrounding counties. This year, an estimated \$600,000 will go toward improvements at the Cabwaylingo Group Camp and to supplement funds already committed for the restoration of Laurel Lake in Mingo County.

“Local leaders brought it to our attention that they were never given a chance to request funds that the state generated from mining leases at Cabwaylingo,” Wise said. “This administration is committed to having an open process in the sales of any state assets, and to involving local communities in deciding how these types of funds are spent.”

The group camp at Cabwaylingo State Forest is used by 4-H, church, family reunions, and specialty groups as a resident camp for the groups' activities. The camp consists of a shower house, a 100-bed dormitory, and a mess hall that also serves as the activities building. The camp is open the week prior to Memorial Day until after Labor Day, and earlier or later if requested by users. The facility is virtually at 100 percent occupancy from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Laurel Lake is a popular sport fishery providing angling opportunities for Southern West Virginians seeking trout and channel catfish.

“The expenditure of these funds in the local area is consistent with the reforms previously outlined by the Governor,” said DNR Director Ed Hamrick. “These projects are much needed to serve the outdoor recreation needs of Southern West Virginia.”

The leases were developed by the West Virginia Public Land Corporation. The corporation will meet Friday, August 31, at 1:30 p.m. in the DNR Conference Room (Room 674), State Capitol Building 3, Charleston.

75 Years of West Virginia State Parks and Forests

We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of some of West Virginia's best-loved scenic treasures – our state parks and forests. For three-quarters of a decade, West Virginians and tourists from all over the world have enjoyed the natural wonder of our parks and forests.

The first state park was created in 1928 when Droop Mountain Battlefield was purchased in Pocahontas County. The West Virginia State Parks and Forest System now includes 35 state parks, eight state forests, four wildlife management areas and two rail trails, which total more than 180,000 acres of protected natural, historic and recreational land. Accommodations range from rustic cabins and campgrounds to some of the best resorts in the eastern United States.

With every type of recreation – from fishing and boating to bike trails and snow skiing – our parks have something to satisfy even the most adventurous traveler.

Tourism has become an important part of our state's economy, and our state parks and forests are two big contributors. A recent study indicates West Virginia's state parks and forests produce an annual economic impact of more than \$105 million. With the current gas prices, West Virginia's state parks are some of the true values for the travel dollar this summer.

The addition of an online reservation system at Pipestem Resort, North Bend, Hawks Nest, Twin Falls, Tygart Lake, Blackwater Falls and Cacapon state parks has made it easier than ever to enjoy a Wonderful West Virginia vacation. By visiting the West Virginia State Parks website at www.wvstateparks.com you can take a virtual tour of park accommodations and make your reservation.

It is difficult to capture the beauty of our state parks and forests with words, so we are sponsoring a photography contest to encourage West Virginians to capture their favorite park on film. The "West Virginia State Parks and Forests – Through Your Lens" contest is already under way. For contest details, call 1-800-CALL-WVA or visit www.wvstateparks.com.

The photo contest is just one of the many ways to celebrate this special anniversary, so keep watching your newspaper and the Parks website for details.

This 75th anniversary is worth celebrating, and everyone is invited to the party. Let's all take part in this special anniversary celebration. Visit your favorite park, or explore a park or forest you've never seen before. Take your family or invite your out-of-state friends, and help make this a great year for our State Parks and Forest System.

Wise Presents Economic Development Grant Money to State Parks

MULLENS, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today presented two economic development grant committee checks to West Virginia state parks.

“The investments we make today are for the future of our state,” Wise said. “It’s about strengthening our economy by creating revenue and jobs. It’s about building a community.”

The first grant was to Chief Logan State Park for \$10 million to construct a 75-room lodge and indoor recreation center adjacent to the newly constructed conference center and restaurant.

The second grant was to Twin Falls Resort State Park for \$3 million to fund a 30-room expansion of the lodge with commensurate expansion of dining and indoor recreational amenities.

“State parks are an important part of West Virginia’s tourism economy, producing a more than \$127 million economic impact each year,” said Wise. “Investments of this type are especially important for the long-term health of our local economies.”

This funding was approved by the Economic Development Grant Committee. Wise praised local officials and legislators for working with him to pass this historic investment.

SUPPORTING HUNTING, FISHING, AND RECREATION

As an avid hunter and fisherman, Governor Wise shared with many citizens a love for spending time outdoors with family members, friends and fellow sportsmen. He found time during nearly every season to get away from the Capitol for a day or two in the woods and streams. Often, he combined his recreation with a promotion for one of many events and programs designed to introduce West Virginia’s young people to outdoor sports.

News Release
October 25, 2001

Gov. Wise and Youth Outdoors Program Featured on National TV Network Show

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise and Logan Bailey of Sutton are the featured outdoorsmen in an upcoming edition of “Bill Rock’s Outdoor USA” program, which will be broadcast three times in the next two weeks on the Outdoor Channel cable network.

Rock taped the half-hour program in May during the first “Governor’s Spring Turkey Challenge,” which brought six West Virginia youths to Flatwoods and Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park for an educational hunting and fishing program. Wise, an avid outdoorsman who enjoys fishing and hunting in the Mountain State, joined the youth and Rock for the program, which is part of a series of events in the Governor’s Youth in the Outdoors Program.

The Spring Turkey Challenge was sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the West Virginia Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

The show features Governor Wise as he talks about the importance of educating youth on good sportsmanship, safety and the wonders of West Virginia’s wildlife. It also features Logan Bailey as he fishes and hunts at Stonewall Jackson Lake and Wildlife Management Area. The program includes Division of Natural Resources staffers talking about some of the state’s wildlife programs.

The half-hour show likely will be rebroadcast next spring, near the time of the 2002 Governor’s Spring Turkey Challenge, Rock said.

News Release
November 13, 2001

Wise Announces Efforts to Automate the Sale of Hunting and Fishing Licenses

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise announced today that beginning November 1, the Division of Natural Resources (DNR) is providing sportsmen the opportunity to purchase hunting and fishing licenses by telephone and over the Internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“This is just the first step in our efforts to improve the sale of hunting and fishing licenses in West Virginia, and it is a good example of how we can improve access to

government services,” said Wise. “I am confident our citizens will enjoy the convenience provided by these initiatives.”

DNR has signed agreements with Bass Pro Shops and GreatLodge.com. Bass Pro Shops will offer West Virginia hunting and fishing licenses over the telephone at 1-800-992-4348. GreatLodge.com will offer hunting and fishing licenses on the Internet at www.greatlodge.com. These partnerships between the public and private sector are among the many strategies that can be developed to improve government services for the hunters and anglers of West Virginia.

The second step in this major initiative will be to develop an electronic, point-of-sale license delivery system. DNR is working closely with the Governor’s Office of Technology to develop and implement this state-of-the-art system.

DNR Director Ed Hamrick said the two ventures announced by the governor required no development costs on behalf of DNR. Both companies developed their own sales systems and will charge users an issuing fee. Bass Pro Shops will charge a \$4.95 issuing fee, while GreatLodge.com will assess a \$3.95 issuing fee.

Bass Pro Shops is based in Springfield, Mo, and is one of the world’s leading suppliers of premier outdoor products. They currently sell hunting and fishing licenses for nine states using their call center.

GreatLodge.com is an Internet technology company based in Jackson, Wyo. It specializes in providing a variety of services to the outdoor community. GreatLodge.com currently sells hunting and fishing licenses for four other states.

News Release
April 25, 2003

Wise Announces Winners in 2003 Youth Wild Turkey and Bass Challenge Event

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced the names of the 10 essay contest winners who earned two days of learning firsthand about the importance of wildlife management in West Virginia.

The contest is part of the third annual Governor’s Wild Turkey and Bass Challenge held May 15-17 at Flatwoods in Braxton County and Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park in Lewis County. The Spring Turkey and Bass Challenge is part of the Governor’s Youth in the Outdoors Program, which includes several other outdoor sporting and educational events each year.

“More than 200 essays were received this year with the theme, ‘Why Hunting and Fishing Are Important to Me,’ ” Wise said. “That’s more than three times the number of essays submitted last year. Nearly every essay included references to the role hunting and fishing play in family bonding, and that’s part of the West Virginia heritage we’re working to encourage with the Youth in the Outdoors Program.”

The Governor’s Wild Turkey and Bass Challenge is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, The West Virginia Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the West Virginia Division of Tourism, Flatwoods Days Inn, WV B.A.S.S. Federation and Mossy Oak.

The winners of the essay contest are:

Taylor Brogan, age 10, Ivydale, Clay County
Christina Hamrick, age 11, Elkview, Kanawha County
Robin Singleton, age 12, Summersville, Nicholas County
Joshua Cooper, age 13, Cross Lanes, Kanawha County
Natalie Northcutt, age 14, Charleston, Kanawha County
Steven Corbin, age 14, Inwood, Berkeley County
Heather Lindsay, age 15, Mill Creek, Randolph County
Adam Pettrey, age 16, Bluefield, Mercer County
Jason Coleman, age 16, Fayetteville, Fayette County
Jamie Ziegler, age 17, Wheeling, Ohio County

The winners will participate in workshops on turkey hunting safety, wild turkey biology and management and bass fishing techniques. They also will go on an early-morning turkey hunt in the Flatwoods area, guided by members of the WV Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation and a fishing trip on Stonewall Jackson Lake guided by members of the WV B.A.S.S. Federation.

“All of those involved are proud to sponsor this innovative program, which we think has been successful in encouraging young people to experience West Virginia’s great outdoor heritage,” said Division of Natural Resources Director Ed Hamrick. “This is a fun event for all the participants, youths and adults, and I suggest youngsters from all over the state start sharpening their pencils and writing skills now to prepare for next year’s competition.”

News Release
October 23, 2003

Wise Announces Archery Education Pilot Project in 18 West Virginia Schools

ELKVIEW, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced a new partnership between

several state agencies, private organizations and sponsors to introduce a pilot archery education program into 18 middle and high school physical education programs across the state.

The program is called “West Virginia’s Archery in the Schools Program” and is designed as a two-week curriculum modeled after a similar program in Kentucky and other states. The pilot program will provide physical education students with an opportunity to become involved in a life skill that has no barriers.

“Unlike many activities, boys and girls of all sizes can easily be involved in archery,” Wise said. “We’re starting small with 18 participating schools, but we intend to expand during the next few years. Our neighbors in Kentucky started with just 21 schools in 2002 and now have expanded to 190 schools. We think we can match or exceed that success.”

Earlier this year, two DNR wildlife representatives, Scott Warner and Dave McClung, along with Randy Eppling of the West Virginia Bowhunters Association, were trained by the National Archery Association as Level II instructors, and they will train physical education instructors at the pilot schools during the next few months. During the training, the teachers will learn about archery history, safety, shooting form, and competition. Each school will receive an archery kit consisting of 10 bows, five targets, safety netting, arrows and related equipment.

“Each kit costs approximately \$2,000 and will be purchased by our partners and what we hope will be a growing list of sponsors,” said Wise.

Schools participating in “West Virginia’s Archery in the Schools Program” pilot project during the current academic year are: Braxton County High School, Braxton County Middle School, Chapmanville Middle School, Clay-Battelle High School, Duval High School, Elkins High School, Elkview Middle School, Harman Elementary/High School, Morgantown High School, Parkersburg South High School, Ravenswood High School, Ripley High School, Sissonville Middle School, Trinity High School, Tygart’s Valley Middle/High School, University High School, Wahama High School and Wyoming County East High School.

Sponsors include: Gary’s Sporting Goods, International Bowhunting Organization, Parker Bows, Stateline Hunt Club, Warner Law Offices, WV Bowhunters Association, WV Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, WV Department of Education, WV Department of Education and the Arts and WV Division of Natural Resources.

“As the competition for our kids’ attention increases, it’s important we expose them to the joy of pulling a bowstring and hearing that satisfying sound of the arrow hitting a target,” said DNR Director Ed Hamrick. “I want to thank the partners who already supported our efforts, and I encourage sponsorship from anyone else who wants to make sure our sporting heritage is passed on to the next generation.”

Other states that have started the archery education program this year include Alabama, Arizona and Georgia.

For more information about “West Virginia’s Archery in the Schools Program,” contact Scott Warner or Dave McClung at the WV Division of Natural Resources, (304) 558-2771 or e-mail [HYPERLINK “mailto:wildlife@dnr.state.wv.us”](mailto:wildlife@dnr.state.wv.us) wildlife@dnr.state.wv.us.

News Release
May 18, 2004

Wise Joins Thousands of West Virginia Turkey Hunters and Anglers

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise began his day early, joining thousands of spring turkey hunters and warm water fish anglers, as he took to the woods and waters for some last-minute spring gobbler hunting and largemouth bass fishing. He will be joined by Division of Natural Resources Director Ed Hamrick, who has participated in the governor’s outings several times during the past few years. They plan to hunt and fish in the central and western part of the state.

“This is the last week of the spring gobbler season, and I’m not going to bag a turkey from my office, so we’re going out for a couple of days and see what we come back with,” said Wise. “Hunting and fishing are important to West Virginia’s economy.”

“The governor loves to turkey hunt and to fish, but his busy schedule has prevented him from going out until now,” said Hamrick. “He has a pretty good chance of being successful, even this late in the season, because the turkey are still gobbling and there are fewer hunters in the woods during the last week.”

The spring gobbler season began April 26 and concludes May 22. Hunters are required to be out of the woods by 1 p.m., so Wise and Hamrick will spend the afternoon fishing and trying for a “surf and turf” evening meal.

More than 90,000 turkey hunters enter the woods in West Virginia each year, resulting in an economic impact of more than \$34 million annually, according to WVDNR. Anglers produce an economic impact of about \$103 million each year.

Wildlife biologists expect this year’s spring wild turkey harvest to be similar to last year’s, with 10,000 to 13,500 birds being harvested. The 2003 spring gobbler harvest was 12,535. WVDNR designed the spring gobbler hunting season to protect the wild turkey resource, provide quality hunting recreation and assure aesthetically pleasing hunting experiences. The opening date in the spring is set to occur during the week when gobbling normally peaks and the majority of hens are incubating eggs and less likely to be illegally killed by poachers.

In the early part of the twentieth century, unregulated hunting and loss of habitat

because of logging almost wiped out wild turkey in the Mountain State. However, thanks to an intensive turkey project in the 1980s, DNR captured turkeys in the areas where they still thrived and relocated them to suitable habitat on both private and public land. Since then, they have reproduced to the point that West Virginia became the first state to schedule a spring turkey season in all of its counties.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As a major source of coal and natural gas, West Virginia benefits from the worldwide demand for energy. Yet we are also among the areas most likely to feel the economic effects of changes made by industries, governments and individuals in response to climate change. Governor Wise, recognizing the potential long-term impact of climate change on our state, promoted partnerships among state and federal agencies and government, industry and educational institutions to lead the way in developing climate change initiatives.

News Release

July 13, 2004

Wise Unveils Pilot Climate Change Initiative Federal Effort Launched in W.Va., Supported by Industry

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today unveiled an innovative pilot program that will help West Virginia and the nation meet the challenges of climate change.

The Carbon Offset Opportunity Program (CO-OP), launched on a pilot basis in West Virginia, was developed by Augusta Systems, a Morgantown-based consulting, research and technology company, in consultation with representatives of industry, government and other organizations. The program was developed under the direction of the U.S. Department of Energy National Energy Technology Laboratory (USDOE/NETL).

“This program will allow West Virginia to take a leading role in the climate change debate. To ensure effective solutions, we first must find common ground,” Wise said. “CO-OP, with its broad support from industry, government and others, provides this foundation.”

CO-OP is a web-based tool that facilitates collaboration in the development of energy and environmental projects, including those in the emerging area of carbon sequestration, which offset or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CO-OP assists industry, government and other organizations by matching potential investors with projects. In addition, an educational component provides information about project development, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

“USDOE/NETL is targeting the development of new technologies to manage greenhouse gas emissions – specifically carbon capture and storage. CO-OP promotes collaboration, which is key to the wide-scale use of these technologies. Because of the importance of coal to power generation, West Virginia is an ideal location to roll out CO-OP,” said Scott Klara, USDOE/NETL’s carbon sequestration technology manager.

Participants in the pilot launch include Appalachian Power, West Virginia Coal Association, Southern States Energy Board, West Virginia AFL-CIO, West Virginia Interfaith Climate Change Campaign, and the state Dept. of Environmental Protection.

“CO-OP acts as a high-tech matchmaker, connecting investors with projects. These projects help to meet environmental goals, while allowing businesses to meet their bottom line. CO-OP is a win-win for everyone,” Augusta Systems CEO Pat Esposito said.

CO-OP has been funded to date through the USDOE/NETL Carbon Sequestration Program; it will transition to private-sector funding as it moves forward. Following the West Virginia pilot launch, a national launch of CO-OP is planned for the fall of 2004. For more information, visit CO-OP’s website: www.offsetopportunity.com.

Chapter 8

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND EFFICIENCY

Preparing and managing the state budget is one of the Governor's core duties. The key function of the state budget process is to set priorities for government operations – a process the Governor carries out in collaboration with the Legislature. Governor Wise made it a priority to set out his proposals early enough in each legislative session so that legislators would have ample opportunity to discuss them in detail and work cooperatively in determining the state's priorities. The content and priorities of those budgets are described in the annual State-of-the-State messages reproduced in Chapter 1.

As the head of the Executive Branch of the state government, Wise also had the opportunity to have a positive impact on the management of state government on a day-to-day level. He insisted on accountability, customer service, and efficiency in the operation of the state agencies under his direction.

SERVING TAXPAYERS BETTER

News Release
August 13, 2001

Wise Extends Hours for All State Offices

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise has instructed all state agencies to remain open to the public and have staff on duty to answer phones and provide assistance until at least 5 p.m. each work day, starting next Monday.

“These extended hours are just one step forward in providing the best customer service we can,” said Wise. “I want to make sure that if you call after work with a problem or want to do business with the state, someone will be here to help you.”

Citizens who visit a state office during business hours and find it closed, or call and get no answer, are encouraged to call the Governor’s Office at 1-888-438-2731.

Governor’s Message
August 17, 2001

A Customer Friendly, Focused State Government

One of my goals as governor is to make government a more customer-focused institution. I have spent more than 18 years in public service and, while some things may have changed, one thing remains the same – I want to help people.

During the past seven months, I have worked side by side with state employees who have that same philosophy. They want to help you.

I am committed to making sure state government is doing everything it can to serve the public. That is why I instructed all state agencies to remain open to the public and have staff on duty to answer phones and provide assistance until at least 5 p.m. each work day. These extended hours are just one step forward in providing the best customer service we can. We want to make sure that when you call with a problem or want to do business with the state, that someone will be there to help you.

I also am working to expand the reach of state government to everyone. Many of us do not work a 9-to-5 job schedule. This is why it is critical that we offer a 24-hour service to those who cannot visit a state office during regular office hours. We are working on ways to implement online programs that will allow you to do everything from renewing your driver's license to purchasing your hunting and fishing licenses.

In January, I appointed three special assistants to work in the Northern Panhandle, the Eastern Panhandle and Southern West Virginia to work directly with the Governor's Office. People in these areas won't have to travel to Charleston to make government transactions.

I also have assembled a team of caseworkers who soon will have mobile offices in your neighborhoods. My mobile offices will travel to every county each month. These caseworkers are committed to advocating on behalf of you – our customer. They will provide you with the materials you need and give you the resources to help you with any problem you may have.

Meeting the challenge of providing improved service and increased efficiencies in government will require that agencies work together. Our state employees are working hard every day to improve customer service, and I promise you that I will do everything I can to provide you the best service possible.

News Release
August 19, 2002

Wise Announces Another Tool for Customer Service

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today released *A Guide to West Virginia State Government Services*, a guidebook providing valuable government information.

"I believe that government is a service business," Wise said. "West Virginia must serve its citizens in the most capable and efficient manner possible."

The guide has a complete listing of all state and federal organizations and representatives. The guide also explains the function of each organization and provides important contact information for department heads in main and local offices.

"This guide helps citizens determine what agency would provide them the best assistance and whom they need to call," Wise added.

The guidebook will soon be available for public use at all libraries, courthouses, and public schools.

REDUCING THE STATE'S VEHICLE FLEET

Governor Wise, like many West Virginians, is an auto enthusiast; during his term he kept his 1960s-era Corvair parked in the garage behind the Executive Mansion and took it on regular drives on Kanawha Boulevard in nice weather. But he also realized – in part from his personal experience as a car owner – that the cost of purchasing and maintaining the state's large fleet of vehicles put a considerable burden on taxpayers. He instructed state government department heads to strictly limit the use of state cars to official business, and prohibited his appointees to use public vehicles for everyday commuting.

Wise also ordered agencies to eliminate vehicles that were not well-used, resulting in the sale of some 200 vehicles, the return of a half-million dollars to the state treasury, an annual savings in excess of \$4 million.

News Release
November 8, 2001

Wise Reduces Number of State Cars – Saves Millions

CHARLESTON, W.Va.– Gov. Bob Wise signed an executive order to limit the use of state-owned vehicles and reduce the current fleet of cars by at least 10 percent, saving more than \$17.8 million over the next four years. Several months ago, Wise assessed the process used to manage the fleet and found that the number of cars in use does not meet the national average for miles driven per month to justify the size of the fleet.

Wise ordered all of his appointees not to use state cars to commute from their homes to their jobs, except in special circumstances.

“I have asked the head of each agency to limit authorization for commuting in state-owned vehicles to employees whose job travel requirements make commuting cost-effective and practical,” said Wise. “Each agency will provide a plan of reduction within the next 45 days that will result in this 10 percent cut.”

Wise also said by reducing the fleet he will be able to free up state resources for other purposes and make better use of the taxpayer dollar. Wise also said his plan will:

- Obtain vehicles at the lowest possible cost
- Use multi-state and multi-agency cooperative purchasing
- Establish comprehensive policies for the purchase of vehicles and fuel
- Create a management system for vehicle inventory
- Implement a statewide pool

- Create an on-line reporting venue for misuse of vehicles
- Provide driver education and training

Executive Order
Nov. 8, 2001

Restrictions of Use of State Vehicles

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 20-01

By the Governor

WHEREAS, the people of West Virginia have a right to expect use of state-owned vehicles to be strictly limited to the necessary performance of official state business; and

WHEREAS, the purchase, assignment and use of such vehicles should be determined in accordance with the fulfillment of governmental goals of promoting efficiency, economy, and improving the quality of customer service of state government; and

WHEREAS, vehicles should be provided to agencies at the time needed, and at the lowest possible cost; and

WHEREAS, the current fleet available for state employees consists of 8,500 vehicles, many of which are underutilized; and

WHEREAS, performance measures should be established for the acquisition, maintenance, fuel consumption, and risk management of such vehicles; and

WHEREAS, cooperative purchasing between agencies, state and local governments and multiple states may be advantageous for acquisition of vehicles and properly managing related direct and indirect costs; and

WHEREAS, all Federal Gasoline Excise Tax Credit should be fully and properly captured; and

WHEREAS, there are certain state employees whose job travel requirements make commuting in state-owned vehicles the only cost-effective or practical alternative.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, GOVERNOR of the State of West Virginia, under the authority vested in me by Article VII, Section 5 of the Constitution of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT that:

1. Excluding law enforcement and emergency service vehicles, Cabinet Secretaries and other appropriate heads of agencies, board, and commissions shall conduct a review of the current fleet under their respective authorities and report planned reductions of no less than ten percent to the Governor within forty-five days of this Executive Order.
2. Pursuant to and consistent with the definitional requirements of the Internal Revenue Code, the Secretary of the Department of Tax and Revenue shall define control employee, as well as law enforcement and emergency vehicles, as those terms apply to government employees and travel. Such individuals shall not be entitled to use a state-owned vehicle for official business and shall not be allowed to use a state-owned vehicle for the purpose of commuting. The head of each agency shall limit authorization for commuting in state-owned vehicles to those employees whose job travel requirements are such that commuting is the only cost-effective or practical alternative.
3. The Secretary of the Department of Administration shall coordinate the establishment of policies and procedures for the acquisition, utilization, fuel consumption, maintenance, and risk management of the state fleet.
4. The Secretary of the Department of Administration shall, under the guidance of the Governor's Chief of Operations, commence a re-engineering process of the state's fleet management program.
5. Notwithstanding paragraph two above, no appointee serving at the will and pleasure of the Governor shall use a state-owned vehicle for the purpose of commuting. Such appointees may use a state-owned vehicle for driving between home and office only when such travel is connected to a departure for, or a return from, a trip on official state business.
6. The head of each agency or institution of the state shall be directly responsible for ensuring compliance with this Executive Order and all applicable state laws and regulations.

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this eighth Day of November, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand One, and in the One Hundred Thirty-ninth year of the State.

By the Governor

News Release
November 12, 2001

State Police Leaders Trade Cars with Troopers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Two late-model West Virginia State Police cruisers assigned to the superintendent's office will be rotated out to officers in the field Tuesday. State Police Superintendent H.E. Hill Jr., will use one of two cruisers with 130,000-plus miles on the odometers that the field troopers have been instructed return to headquarters at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Governor Bob Wise and Hill will present the keys to the newer cruisers to two troopers who have been driving the department's most worn-out marked and unmarked cars.

"I chose Col. Hill as superintendent because I know he cares about law enforcement – and the officers who work every day to protect us," Wise said. This gesture is a sign that he truly cares about the officers' needs."

Instead of a new cruiser, Hill will be assigned a 1997 Ford currently being driven by Trooper J.W. Milum of the Logan Detachment. The unmarked patrol car has about 130,000 miles of service. Another car assigned to the Superintendent's office, a nearly-new 2000 Ford, will be assigned to Trooper B.H. Moore of the South Charleston Detachment. His 1996 cruiser, with 135,000 miles will be returned to headquarters.

"I don't think that I should have a better vehicle than the troopers working the roads," said Hill. "I will eventually move all new vehicles out of headquarters and into the field where they belong."

Following the presentation, Hill and Wise will take questions from the press about the future of the West Virginia State Police.

Executive Order
January 8, 2003

Reduction of State Vehicle Fleet

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHARLESTON
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-03

By the Governor

WHEREAS, the people of West Virginia have a right to expect that the use of all State-owned vehicles be strictly limited to the necessary performance of official State business; and

WHEREAS, the purchase, assignment and use of such vehicles should be determined in accordance with governmental goals of promoting efficiency, economy, and improving the quality of customer service of state government; and

WHEREAS, the current fleet available for State employees consists of an excess of vehicles, many of which are underutilized; and

WHEREAS, vehicles should be provided to State agencies at the time needed, and at the lowest possible cost; and

WHEREAS, budget constraints require that all excess State-owned vehicles be retired; and

WHEREAS, measures must be established for the acquisition and sale of such vehicles.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BOB WISE, GOVERNOR of the State of West Virginia, under the authority vested in me by the Constitution of this State, do hereby ORDER that the state fleet be reduced by 555 vehicles, approximately 15 percent of the entire fleet, by no later than March 31, 2003, in the following manner:

1. Vehicle fleets of the following State departments and agencies, and divisions where noted, must be reduced by the following numbers, with no exceptions:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| a. Bureau of Commerce | 22 |
| b. Department of Education | 2 |

c. Department of Education and the Arts	4
d. Bureau of Employment Programs	3
e. Department of Environmental Protection	53
f. Office of the Governor	1
g. Department of Health and Human Resources	22
h. Higher Education Policy Commission	123
i. Public Service Commission	3
j. Natural Resources	35
k. Department of Tax and Revenue	8
l. Department of Transportation	279

2. Each Cabinet Secretary, Bureau Commissioner, Higher Education Chancellor and agency head shall make this fleet reduction a top priority, and may reach the total number of vehicles to be eliminated within their department of agency in any manner they desire. Individual agencies that have five or fewer vehicles are exempt from the reduction.

3. The Division of Purchasing, Department of Administration, is charged with managing the fleet reduction and shall have discretion in so doing.

4. The Purchasing Division shall not encumber or mail any vehicle contracts or purchase orders for any of the above agencies for one year without first demonstrating to the Secretary, Department of Administration, the existence of extraordinary circumstances warranting additional purchase orders.

5. Each of the above agencies shall deliver their eliminated vehicles to the Purchasing Division's Surplus Property Unit location in Dunbar, West Virginia, after making advance arrangements to do so. Surplus Property Unit personnel will receive the delivered vehicles and document compliance with the reduction.

6. Each vehicle shall be delivered to the Surplus Property Unit in good condition, free of defects, with clear titles, keys, and any other options or enhancements intact. Any agency that fails to deliver the vehicles in good condition will forfeit any proceeds from the sale of all vehicles retired pursuant to this reduction effort. The Purchasing Division will have discretion over such funds.

7. Agencies that currently lease vehicles from the Purchasing Division may only retire those vehicles approved by the Purchasing Division.

8. After retiring the vehicles, the Purchasing Division's Surplus Property personnel shall aggressively market these vehicles to cities, counties, other eligible organizations and the general public in accordance with the law in order to obtain the highest and best price for each vehicle.

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this eighth Day of January, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Three, and in the One Hundred fortieth year of the State.

News Release
June 3, 2003

Wise's Vehicle Auction Generates Revenue and Reduces State's Fleet

DUNBAR, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise today announced that his May 31 Vehicle Reduction Auction generated more than \$500,000 in revenue and eliminated nearly 200 state-owned vehicles.

“By conducting this auction, we’re making government more efficient,” said Wise. “The state benefited by reducing its vehicle operating expenses, and our state taxpayers received some good deals in return.”

This auction was part of the governor's fleet management plan announced during his 2003 State of the State Address. The goal of his plan was to reduce the state's fleet by about 15 percent or 555 vehicles. Smaller auctions were conducted throughout the state; however, this auction was the largest sale scheduled. The state will save more than \$2.2 million each year by not having fuel, maintenance and insurance expenses for these vehicles.

Fleet reduction was first suggested through the West Virginia Employees Communication Network (WVECN). WVECN was launched last December as a forum for state employees to share ideas on how to streamline state government and save taxpayer dollars.

There were 833 individuals who registered as potential bidders for this sale, which was conducted at the Surplus Property Unit of the Purchasing Division at 2700 Charles Avenue in Dunbar.

STATE BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Several times during his term in office, economic conditions required the Governor to make reductions in state spending. Each time, Governor Wise used the budget crisis as an opportunity to revisit state priorities and allocate scarce funds toward the priorities he had pledged to support while a candidate: education, jobs, health, public safety and other high priority items. Similarly, in times when government revenues exceeded expenditures, he worked with the Legislature to invest in programs that would pay long-term dividends to citizens.

News Release
March 23, 2002

Wise Signs Budget; Looks toward Job Creation and Education

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Bob Wise signed a \$2.9 billion budget that stresses funding for jobs creation, education and homeland security without raising any taxes.

“Education, jobs creation and homeland security are my top priorities, and they are all in the budget,” Wise said. “This budget, when joined with the jobs creation legislation I just signed, moves West Virginia in the right direction. This is a budget to create more job opportunities throughout the state.”

Included in the budget is a Sunny Day Fund that will give Wise the financial flexibility to attract new businesses and create new jobs. It also calls for the state’s first-ever sales tax holiday to help West Virginia families purchase back-to-school items in August.

In addition to jobs creation funding, there is increased funding for a record teacher pay raise, building and renovating schools throughout the state, and funding, at an increased rate, the PROMISE Scholarship.

“Education is the key to our economic development,” Wise said. “Our students deserve the best opportunities possible.”

In a time of increased security concerns, this budget includes money for additional state trooper classes.

“This administration recognizes the threat of terrorism and has significantly increased the funding for protection of all West Virginians,” Wise said.

Also provided is funding for coal mine safety and for more water and sewer infrastructure improvements.

Governor's Message
December 6, 2002

Working Together for a Common Cause

We've been talking a lot about budgets lately, and you'll continue to hear about the state's challenging financial situation in the future.

However, it's important for us all to remember that budgets aren't just about numbers; they're not black and white. Budgets are about people; budgets are about a child being educated; a mother or father being able to provide health insurance for their children; good jobs for working people and making sure our streets and our highways are safe with good law enforcement. This is not going to be politics as usual. We will use this time as an opportunity to change state government.

Our state's present financial status will never deter us from our vision and our responsibility to provide critical services to those who need them. The citizens of our state depend on us. Nothing is more important to me than being there for the families that need help.

We have been financially conservative since the day I took office. For the past two years, I have imposed a three percent spending freeze saving the state more than \$57 million. Additionally, we had to cut \$90 million from the TANF fund.

Unfortunately, national economic trends have caught up with us. West Virginia now faces some of the same problems our neighboring states have seen for quite some time. The National Governors Association reported yesterday that 37 states were forced to reduce their enacted budgets by \$12.8 billion in fiscal year 2002, and all states across the nation are dealing with what is being called the worst financial situation since World War II. Every state bordering West Virginia is in exactly the same or worse financial shape.

Our revenue collections are coming in lower than anticipated, and our estimates for the year will need to be revised downward. We need to find an extra \$30 million to balance the budget for next year to carry out the basic responsibilities of the state.

These are serious issues that require immediate attention. Last week, I:

- directed all agencies, except public education K-12, to reduce spending by an additional 3.4 percent this year;
- directed my cabinet secretaries to limit their employees to essential travel only;
- directed all agencies to impose hiring restrictions across state government;

- and
 - canceled all holiday parties at the Governor's Mansion.

Fiscal Year 2004 presents even greater challenges. We are facing up to a \$250 million budget gap. The 10 percent budget reductions I directed from each agency this year will not be sufficient.

While we do not anticipate layoffs for this fiscal year as a result of my actions, we do not know what the future will hold. However, we do know that we have more than 2,000 unfilled jobs and at least another 2,500 that could be absorbed through resignations and retirement. Better management of this attrition will be our first option.

This is not just about balancing the budget for this year – or next year. This is a chance to rebuild state government to what we want it to be – not what it has simply evolved to be.

I am asking for ideas to make state government better and more efficient. I am holding a town hall meeting with our state employees and establishing a website for them to voice their opinions on restructuring state government. With your help, we can continue making strides and making improvements in the critical services we provide to the citizens of our state.

I did not ask for the challenges put before us. I had hoped we would not have to come to these measures, but it is here. We have a responsibility to make difficult choices that determine the future prosperity of the citizens we serve. We will face these challenges. We will make the tough choices. We will build a stronger West Virginia.

Governor's Message
November 21, 2003

Facing the Budget Challenge

The sluggish national economy has caused many West Virginia families to rethink their priorities. When times are tight, every household must focus on ways to reduce expenses.

State government is no different. The continued economic downturn has hurt every state, and revenues from personal income tax and consumer sales are down this year. At the same time, our expenses are growing. We must prioritize spending and identify areas where government services can be run more efficiently.

Last year, the budget I submitted to the Legislature reflected the lean times we faced. Most agencies had their budgets reduced by 10 percent from the previous year's

levels. It is my goal to avoid similar across-the-board cuts this year; however, if significant savings or new sources of revenue are not identified, it will be an inevitability.

We are facing a shortfall of about \$20 million during the current fiscal year. This will require a midyear adjustment to agency budgets. Thankfully, prudent planning and attention to national trends have helped us avoid a larger budget hole.

Next year, however, we face an estimated shortfall of \$80 million. This figure assumes funding of each agency at current levels, but it does not account for additional costs associated with repairs and renovations of state facilities, growth in many healthcare programs or needed new classes of State Police.

While revenues are expected to remain flat or decrease, costs will continue to grow. The bulk of our increased spending will be payments on underfunded pension systems, particularly the teachers' retirement system. Costs associated with running and providing educational services for new juvenile facilities also are significant. The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has requested a \$5.5 million increase to its budget.

Every branch of state government has felt the pain of budget cuts; we have long since trimmed the fat from operations; now we are to the point where further broad reductions will affect the level of service we can provide. I am determined to move from a mode of reduction to a mode of reform and provide a better service at a lower cost.

We must face the realities of today, yet we must not ignore the future. If we are to avoid facing similar budget crunches in coming years, we must address complex issues like unfunded liabilities, insurance costs, healthcare access and job creation by taking aggressive action today. I am confident that, working together, we can meet short- and long-term challenges and make West Virginia a better place for our children and grandchildren.

Governor's Message
November 12, 2004

Exciting News for West Virginia

Earlier this week, I made two exciting announcements. First, we expect that West Virginia will have a one-time budget surplus of \$243.7 million in Fiscal Year 2005.

We can credit this surplus to an excess of lottery funds and a better than expected general revenue collections. The projected surplus includes \$10.6 million from the General Revenue Fund and \$43.1 million from the Excess Lottery Fund in Fiscal Year 2004 and \$88 million from the General Revenue Fund and \$102 million from the Excess Lottery Fund in Fiscal Year 2005.

There are several reasons for the General Revenue Fund surplus. Severance Tax collections are likely to exceed year-end estimates by at least \$50 million. In addition, the Corporate Net Income/Business Franchise Tax collections will likely exceed estimates by \$25 million and the Personal Income Tax collections will likely exceed \$12 million. It is important to remember, however, that this is a one-time surplus; unfortunately, it won't be here every year.

Secondly, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources has received nearly \$4 million in bonus funding for its success in assisting Temporary Assistance for Needy Families clients in their move toward self-sufficiency. Because of that, I have directed DHHR to issue a \$50 clothing voucher to all students who were eligible this past July.

West Virginia issued almost \$6 million of clothing vouchers in July but, because of budget problems, the vouchers were trimmed back to \$100. In past years, they had been \$150; this bonus funding allows us to restore that amount.

The clothing vouchers go to qualified families who receive WV Works assistance along with other qualified foster children. Each voucher is good toward the purchase of clothing or piece goods for those families that desire to sew clothing for their children.

I am proud to have this surplus, and even more proud to be able to help our families. With only two months before the end of my tenure, it feels good to say that I am leaving the state in the black.

Chapter 9

HONORING GREAT WEST VIRGINIANS

One of the most enjoyable duties of the Chief Executive is to represent the people of West Virginia in honoring individuals from among the state's citizens who have provided exemplary service to the state, the nation and the world. Many such citizens were honored during Governor Wise's term; the Governor's remarks on two important occasions are presented below.

Another equally important duty of the Governor is to express the gratitude of the state upon the death of a citizen or other prominent American who has given much to the state and nation during his or her life. The state orders the lowering of flags to half-staff as a gesture of respect. A list of those so honored is included in this chapter.

U.S. SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Governor Wise and the Legislature worked together in 2001 to name Robert C. Byrd as “West Virginian of the Century” in recognition of the work he did from the 1950s through the turn of the century to advance the well-being of the state. The Governor was joined by the members of both houses of the Legislature, U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller and Congressman Nick Rahall in saluting the Senator.

Introduction of Senator Byrd by Governor Bob Wise May 31, 2001

Robert C. Byrd is a man of intellect. A man never satisfied with his own understanding, who gathers and absorbs and organizes information. He is a man who understands the lessons of the past and who guides us in the decisions we must make for our future.

Robert C. Byrd is a man of action. When a lofty cause requires him to remain on his feet on the floor of the Senate for hours or days, he does not hesitate. When it requires that he spend days or weeks on the campaign trail in West Virginia, he is equal to the task – and for that I am particularly grateful.

Robert C. Byrd is a man of principle. We are all, from time to time, confronted with issues that try our souls. Senator Byrd has the calmness that comes from having wrestled with the great questions of the 20th Century, and found a steadfast rock to cling to in the Constitution of the United States.

Robert C. Byrd is a man of service. West Virginians have come to depend upon him for all manner of services, great and small – untying the knots of the federal bureaucracy for a confused and harried citizen, guiding our tiny towns and our great cities to better serve the people, shoring up our institutions of learning.

Robert C. Byrd is a man who understands duty. Just last week, he cast his 16,000th roll- call vote in the Senate – more than any Senator before him. Over the entire course of his service in the Senate, he has an attendance rate of 98.77 percent.

Robert C. Byrd is a family man. Many of us know, love and respect his wife, Erma. Senator Byrd is devoted to her. Their daughters and grandchildren and great-granddaughter know him as a loving parent, a doting grandfather.

Robert C. Byrd is a West Virginian. There is a bond between this individual and the citizens of this state that is hard for outsiders to understand. It is the essence of the West Virginia spirit that we see in him, and hope is reflected in us: independence, fairness, dignity,

community, faith, friendliness and fundamental decency.

Fellow West Virginians, please join me in welcoming the West Virginian of the 20th Century, United States Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd.

**Closing Remarks and Proclamation by Governor Bob Wise
May 31, 2001**

Thank you, Senator Byrd:

With the wholehearted approval of the West Virginia House of Delegates and the West Virginia Senate, and the people of West Virginia, I make the following proclamation:

Whereas, United States Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd of Sophia, Raleigh County, West Virginia, has contributed to the advancement of the people of the State of West Virginia, the United States of America and the world, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd has led an exemplary life, marked by his dedication to his wife, Erma, their daughters, grandchildren, and great granddaughter, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd is the only person in history to serve as a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates, the West Virginia Senate, the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd has held more leadership positions in the United States Senate than any other Senator, including President Pro Tempore, Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and,

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd has been returned to office by the grateful citizens of West Virginia at the conclusion of each of his terms as Senator since 1958, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd is the author of the most comprehensive history of the United States Senate and is the world's foremost expert on the rules, procedures and traditions of this institution, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd is an ardent defender of the United States Constitution, and has made the study of the Constitution and the application of its principles a part of his daily life, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd has remained loyal to the traditional values and culture of West Virginia, and has worked tirelessly to promote the interests of West Virginia and its people, and

Whereas, Senator Robert C. Byrd's accomplishments and public service far exceed those of any other citizen of this state in the recently concluded twentieth century

I hereby proclaim that United States Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd is the West Virginian of the 20th Century.

To mark this day, and this honor, for all West Virginians and for all time, I have directed that the words "West Virginian of the 20th Century" be cast in bronze and affixed to the statue of Senator Byrd that the grateful citizens of West Virginia have erected in the Rotunda of this Capitol.

I would like to show you an artist's conception of how those words will appear.

Thank you all very much for coming here today and joining me in recognizing this great West Virginian.

JESSICA LYNCH

U.S. Army Private First Class Jessica Lynch, a resident of Palestine, West Virginia, was seriously wounded and taken prisoner during the first days of U.S. military operations in Iraq in 2003. Her rescue from a hospital far behind enemy lines was a worldwide media story; later, a book about her experiences became a national bestseller.

Governor Wise was on hand, along with hundreds of fellow West Virginians, when she returned home for the first time after her ordeal.

Governor's Remarks
July 22, 2009

As Governor of the state of West Virginia, I am happy to welcome home Pfc. Jessica Lynch. The eyes of the world are on Wirt County as Jessica comes home. And while this is the homecoming of all homecomings for the Lynch family and West Virginia, this also is a homecoming for the world.

Today, we welcome back a young citizen and soldier. She left here – one of many newly enlisted in the military – pursuing both her duty and her dream. She returns a renowned international figure and a symbol of the quiet courage and commitment of all our armed forces. Like our armed forces, she may consider her duties routine; we know they are heroic.

Jessica, on behalf of all the people of our great state of West Virginia, I welcome you home. The entire state has had a yellow ribbon around its heart. We celebrated your rescue and the release of the others who were captured; we mourn and remember the loss of your comrades.

In Palestine, after your rescue, a church put up a sign – “God is still in the business of making miracles.” One of His miracles has come home to the mountains today.

Through all of this, we have come to know your family – your parents, Greg and Dee; your sister, Brandi; and your brother Greg. They have shown the kind of people who make up West Virginia. Their determination, their faith and their patriotism have inspired the world.

LIST OF THOSE HONORED BY THE LOWERING OF FLAGS

Reverend Leon Sullivan, born in West Virginia and one of the first Americans to take effective action to end the practice of apartheid in South Africa, died April 25, 2001.

Sergeant Gene Arden Vance, Jr., a Special Forces soldier with the West Virginia National Guard, was killed fighting terrorist organizations on May 19, 2002 in Afghanistan.

U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Anissa Ann Shuttleworth Shero, a native of Grafton, was killed on June 12, 2002, in combat operations in Afghanistan.

William Wallace Barron, a Randolph County native, served as the twenty-sixth Governor of the State of West Virginia from 1961 through 1965 and died November 12, 2002.

Seven astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia – Rick Douglas Husband, Michael P. Anderson, David M. Brown, Kalpana Chawla, Laurel Blair Salton Clark, William C. McCool, and Ilan Ramon – died February 1, 2003.

A. James Manchin, who served as West Virginia Treasurer, Secretary of State, a member of the House of Delegates, and in other positions of public service beginning in 1948, died November 3, 2003.

Thomas A. Keeley, Commissioner of the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration, died November 19, 2003.

Fred H. Caplan, a Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals from 1962 to 1980, died March 4, 2004.

Charles Haden II, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia and former Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, died March 20, 2004.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Simpson Schott of the U.S. Army was killed in April, 1972, in Vietnam. His body was recovered and returned to his family for burial in Shepherdstown, W.Va. on April 7, 2004.

Corporal Joshua Shane Wilfong of Wood County, West Virginia was killed on April 30, 2004, while performing combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Juston Tyler Thacker of Princeton, West Virginia was killed on June 24, 2004 by enemy fire at Bari Khout, Afghanistan.

Ronald Wilson Reagan, the fortieth President of the United States, died on June 5, 2004.

Elizabeth V. Hallanan, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of

West Virginia, died on June 8, 2004.

James Marshall Sprouse, Judge of the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and winner of the Bronze Star in World War II, died July 3, 2004.

Louise Corey Palumbo, a leader in civic and community affairs in Charleston, died July 3, 2004; her husband, Mario Joseph Palumbo, former West Virginia Attorney General, died July 4, 2004.

U.S. Army Specialist Danny Bruce Daniels, II, was killed July 20, 2004, when his patrol vehicle came under enemy attack in Baghdad, Iraq.

Sergeant DeForest Lemar Talbert of the West Virginia Army National Guard was killed on July 27, 2004, while on patrol at Baladruc, Iraq.

U.S. Army National Guard Sergeant Bobby Edward Beasley of Inwood, West Virginia, was killed on August 7, 2004, by hostile action while on duty at Ghazikhel, Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Private Brandon Robert Sapp was killed on August 15, 2004, by hostile action while on duty at Najaf, Iraq.

Hovah Underwood, West Virginia's First Lady from 1957 through 1961 and again from 1997 through 2001, died September 24, 2004.

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal John Thomas Byrd, II, of Fairview, West Virginia, was killed on October 30, 2004, by enemy action while on duty near Fallujah, Iraq.

U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Romulo Jose Jimenez, II, a native of Belington, West Virginia, was killed on November 10, 2004, during combat action in Fallujah, Iraq.

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Bradley Lee Parker of Mannington, West Virginia was killed on November 15, 2004, during hostile action in Fallujah, Iraq.

U.S. Army Corporal Cory Michael Hewitt, a native of Wheeling, West Virginia, and U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Darren Dale VanKomen, a former resident of Bluefield, West Virginia, were killed on December 21, 2004, during a suicide bomber attack near Mosul, Iraq.

U.S. Army Corporal Jeremiah Joseph Harper of Dunbar, West Virginia, a veteran of Iraq, died January 1, 2005, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

Chapter 10

FINAL ADDRESS

The Governor's Final Address to the state comes at the conclusion of his term. It is not required by law, nor is it an opportunity to propose legislation. Yet the Legislature traditionally grants the outgoing Governor the privilege of a Final Address, to sum up the accomplishments of the previous four years and encourage those entrusted with the ongoing responsibilities of State Government to continue the successful policies established during the Governor's term of office.

Governor Bob Wise's Final Address was delivered to a Joint Session of the West Virginia Legislature in the House of Delegates chamber.

Final Address to the State Legislature
Governor Bob Wise
January 12, 2005

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the House and Senate: For the last time, it is a privilege and an honor to address you. We have shared the past four years together, by the grace of God and consent of the people of West Virginia.

It is with enormous confidence that I hand the responsibility of the Governor's Office to Governor-elect Joe Manchin. He has demonstrated his ability; he has won the confidence of the people; and he has attracted talented and dedicated West Virginians to join him in the administration of state government. With the help of this Legislature, I am sure he will do great things for our state and for our people.

Four years ago, the people of this state entrusted us with the responsibility of taking on tough issues. The West Virginia Legislature and the executive branch developed innovative solutions to the problems facing our state. Our Supreme Court of Appeals carefully considered many of the issues our work placed before them and made timely decisions.

Throughout the past four years, I have been privileged to work with West Virginia's able representatives in the United States Congress. Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator Jay Rockefeller, Congressman Nick Jo Rahall, Congressman Alan Mollohan and Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito have worked with us, again and again, in developing new jobs and protecting those we have.

I have been very fortunate and blessed to work with a dedicated and talented set of state officials and staff, and I thank them very much for their commitment and love of West Virginia.

Time after time we faced West Virginia's toughest issues. When I came to you with difficult budgets, we worked together to continue a record of fiscal responsibility. When I came to you seeking help for West Virginians who had lost everything in devastating floods, we found the resources to help them. When our nation's security was threatened and every state was asked to do more, the Legislature, the executive branch and all of our public servants worked together to make West Virginia safe.

Despite the tough times, we have managed to – as I pledged in my inaugural address – not focus on the next election, but invest in the next generation.

If you and I had four years of peace and calm to work for change in West Virginia's future, no one would be surprised at the progress we mark at the end of this administration. Together, we faced the threat of global terror; the collapse of the economic boom of the last decade; the crisis in the medical profession; and the steady erosion of state revenues. Over the past four years, at one time or another, every part of our state has been battered by floods and other natural disasters – some communities two or three times.

No attack, nor any disaster, nor any economic setback, could defeat the spirit of the West Virginia people.

Our most pressing responsibility as stewards of government is, as always, the safety of our people.

It has been one of my greatest honors over the past four years to serve as commander-in-chief of our West Virginia National Guard and to work with the dedicated men and women of the Guard and Reserves. It also has been an honor and a privilege to work with the West Virginia State Police, corrections officers, conservation officers, the uniformed agencies of state government, and our county and municipal police forces, fire departments and emergency management agencies. Each of these has been tested, repeatedly, by the events of the past four years. In every case they rendered service to their country and their state that earned the enduring thanks and praise of their fellow citizens.

As I leave office, I will not forget those who sacrificed so much in the past four years to protect what is precious to us. I ask you to join me in a moment of silent reflection on the lives of those lost in the service of West Virginia and the service of the United States.

If I were asked to describe in a phrase what we in West Virginia accomplished in the last four years it is this – we took on the tough issues . . . and we made a difference.

If you have a book about West Virginia that's more than four years old – throw it away – it's out-of-date.

We took action to create jobs.

Four years ago, economic commentators were trying to write obituaries for West Virginia's steel industry. We fought for steel, and we provided crucial funding to get our steel mills past their darkest days. Today, West Virginia steel is flowing from upgraded mills, and West Virginia steel is helping rebuild the World Trade Center.

In a state that desperately needed business investment, we've put our faith in the future by committing hundreds of millions of dollars toward economic development, and we've drawn significant funds into the state. The total new investment in our economy exceeds \$1 billion, including projects like the new Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute; Cabela's; the Marshall University Biotechnology Development Center; and The West Virginia High Technology Consortium.

Taken together, these investments constitute the largest jobs creation package ever in our state's history.

We worked together – business, labor and government – in many areas of economic development, particularly the implementation of the Vision Shared proposals.

We stimulated venture capital like never before. We removed barriers to new businesses and provided support to existing enterprises. And we rescued our Workers' Compensation system from bankruptcy.

We took action on health care.

We have a record enrollment in the Children's Health Insurance Program, and moved to the top level of states in providing health coverage for children. We also made it possible for small businesses to obtain cheaper health coverage for their employees.

The Legislature led the national movement to fight the soaring cost of prescription drugs, a cost that threatens people and families and drags down our entire economy.

We enacted a Patients' Bill of Rights to give patients and doctors the right to make their own health care decisions, elevated mental health care to equality with other treatment and provided coverage for people with high health risks.

Two years ago, the most pressing problem facing this Legislature was how to keep West Virginia's doctors from leaving the state. Today, because of the work we did together, hospitals in every part of the state are now keeping their doctors and recruiting new ones.

We took action for our senior citizens and veterans.

We revitalized the Golden Mountaineer Card, and we gave seniors a prescription drug benefit.

We found extra funding to assist persons with Alzheimer's disease.

We are building the first Veterans' Nursing Home in the state to give older and disabled vets a place to live in dignity.

West Virginia's people honor and value our soldiers and veterans. They proved that once more by approving our constitutional amendment to give returning soldiers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo a bonus for their service.

We took action to protect our natural resources.

We preserved thousands of acres of precious land in special places like the Blackwater Canyon and the Cheat Canyon.

We provided new resources to reclaim land polluted or disturbed by past mining practices.

We protected our waters by establishing the people's interest in all of our rivers and streams and establishing a system to measure water resources and water use.

We made West Virginia the outdoor capital of the nation by aggressively supporting and promoting hunting, fishing, rafting, skiing, mountain biking and all the other adventure sports that are possible here.

We took action to improve the education of our children.

We provided millions of additional dollars to counties to build state-of-the-art schools.

We saved parents and families more than \$6 million with back-to-school sales tax holidays.

We provided incentives for teachers to become nationally certified, and, when possible, significantly increased their salaries.

We greatly increased our investment in higher education and provided the greatest level ever of research funding to strengthen our colleges and universities.

We created the Governor's School for Mathematics and Science from my unused inaugural funds to nurture our brightest young people.

But, most important, in the past four years . . .

We created a change in the culture of learning in West Virginia.

We are raising standards in high schools. The results are clear – rising scores on standardized tests make better-prepared freshmen in our colleges and universities.

We are sending more and more students to college. In fact, our college-going rate, for the first time in history, equals the U.S. average.

Our college students are doing better, too. The number who continue successfully beyond the freshman year is rising as the results of our work percolate up through the college system.

All this points toward a better future for West Virginia. Today's students – working harder, staying in school longer, making better grades – will erase the barrier that once existed to the economic and social development of West Virginia.

Four years ago, our children could wander past gambling on their way to the candy counter in convenience stores. We replaced this illegal gambling with the limited video lottery system and, in the same legislation, doubled funding for critical infrastructure, such as water, sewer and school buildings. We funded the Economic Development Grant Committee issuing \$215 million in grants that is generating more than \$1 billion in economic activity.

And, what I am most proud of in my term as governor . . . we funded the PROMISE Scholarship.

We put tens of millions of dollars in the college funds of thousands of West Virginia students. This is the best investment ever made in West Virginia's future.

The PROMISE Scholarship is reshaping education. You know the requirements – a B average in high school and meet the qualifying scores on a national test. Do this and West Virginia promises you will receive a scholarship for tuition and fees to any West Virginia institution of higher education.

By next fall, we'll be assisting more than 11,000 PROMISE scholars and thousands of other students already attending college with the help of needs-based scholarships.

PROMISE is changing our high schools. Standardized test scores are rising, and students are seeking tougher courses to take to be ready for the tests.

We have faced a long list of problems together – problems we didn't ask for, like floods, terrorism, medical malpractice and workers' compensation. But, there's one problem we should all be happy to face – so many more of our young people want to stay home in West Virginia that we need to find more money to fund the PROMISE in years to come.

It will be a challenge, but it is a challenge West Virginia families will thank you for facing. They asked us to save their families by making opportunities for young people at home. The PROMISE is doing just that. Each year, 500 more of our best and brightest students are attending West Virginia schools than before the PROMISE existed. And, a recent study showed that almost 75 percent of students who graduate from a West Virginia institution of higher education will stay in West Virginia.

Our choice is clear. Invest the roughly \$3,000 per student per year to keep our kids here, or spend millions later to recruit them back.

Some people say we cannot afford to do this. I know – and you know – that we cannot afford not to do it.

Keep the PROMISE.

Throughout the four years of this administration, I have proposed and the Legislature has adopted budgets that are balanced and reasonable, based on realistic projections of the state's income and the cost of the various essential programs our government provides.

We have remained within the spending limits set by these budgets, and I'm happy to say that in the current year, West Virginia will have almost a quarter of a billion dollar surplus as a result of conservative financial policies of this administration.

We have done the hard work required to keep the state solvent through a time when many of our sister states created deficits, laid off state employees or sacrificed vital investments in the future.

Together, over the past four years, we have raised the bar for West Virginia government. We have faced enormous problems, but, because we faced them head-on and took the actions required to solve them, we are better off today than we were four years ago.

We have learned that problems we ignore continue to grow; problems we face turn into opportunities.

Let me speak directly to the people of our state.

Thank you for the privilege you have given me to serve this state both in the United States

House of Representatives and as your governor. My heart belongs to this state, and it always will.

It is my wish that the lasting mark of the four years I have served as your governor not be a building, a road or a bridge – but the change we have created in the minds of our people – the new ambitions we have launched, the careers that will serve us all and the families that will make their homes among the hills of West Virginia in the years and decades ahead.

The gains we have made in the past four years have not been easy.

We have given West Virginia the promise of a better economy – and built the foundation for the jobs of the future.

We have given West Virginia the promise of better health – and protected our health care system.

We have given West Virginia the promise of care for seniors, veterans and children – and we have delivered.

We have given West Virginians the promise of education for all who work hard for it – and education will ensure our future.

We have done much. We have built much. We must continue to build and, of course, we must – in my final words to you – Keep the PROMISE!

God Bless You, and God Bless the State of West Virginia.