

# ACE

Newsletter for Allen County Employees



September 2007

Vol. 13, No. 1

## Safety Committee returns with new leadership

The Allen County Safety Committee is reorganized and leading the charge to identify and eliminate safety hazards in the workplace as well as educate coworkers about safe practices on the job.

In June, Department Heads were invited to submit nominees to serve as their Department's "Safety Top Gun," and the members were divided into squadrons. Since then, the squads have received training in loss prevention, accident prevention, hazard assessment, safe lifting practices, prevention of repetitive stress disorders, safety around electricity and hazard identification.

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**We want a few good men & women:**



The few, the proud, the safety conscious, and the innovative ...

The **Top Guns of Safety**

## Employee Clinic opens on CCB 5th floor

In March, the Board of Commissioners adopted an innovative approach to providing health care benefits for County employees by contracting with Fort Wayne Medical Education Program to operate an Employee Clinic. Services are free to employees covered by an Allen County health care plan and their eligible dependents. Located on the 5th Floor of the City-County Building, the clinic is staffed Monday through Friday by a family physician and a registered nurse. Office hours include early mornings, traditional lunch times and early evening hours to accommodate differing employee schedules. After hours, patients can reach an on-call physician by phone.



Bernadette Andrews, RMA, greets patients to the County Employee Health Clinic.

Patients can visit the Employee Clinic for treatment of sore throats, sinus infections, minor sprains/strains as well as flu shots, sports/school

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## WE'RE BACK!

The Allen County Employees' Newsletter - The ACE - is back with a new look and a new emphasis on YOU.

The new ACE will include stories by employees and about employees - their jobs, interests, hobbies and their work in the community. We will also pass along important workplace-related information.

At this time, plans are to publish quarterly in September, December, March and June using an electronic format. Copies will be posted on the Allen County Web site ([www.allencounty.us](http://www.allencounty.us)), the Intranet ([acfwintranet](http://acfwintranet)) and e-mail noticeboards.

We've kicked it off with this issue, but we can't do it alone. To make The ACE an interesting and worthwhile publication, we need feedback, articles, ideas and photos from YOU!

Do you have a suggestion for our next Employee Spotlight?

Do you have an interesting hobby or a recipe to share?

Does this electronic format work for you?

Please e-mail your feedback to:

[mary.hitchens@allencounty.us](mailto:mary.hitchens@allencounty.us)

or call 449-7671

We're waiting to hear from YOU!

## Safety Committee

Current Safety Squad members include: Garnett Mills, Memorial Coliseum; Jody Stafford, Adams Township Assessor; Michele Koop, Court Clerk's Office; Lori Mayers, Office of Homeland Security; Susan Tate, Allen County Prosecutor; Shelley Lochner, Aboite Township Assessor; Capt. Shawn Lawhorn, Capt. Trina Haywood and Capt. Jeff Jackson, Sheriff's Department; Barry Schust and Gwen Sordelet, Voter's Registration; Bradley Hunter, Building Department; Marlene Crouse and Mindy Waldron, Health Department; Julia Brita, Christopher Dunn and Fletcher Upshaw, Youth Services Center; Kim Klerner, County Assessor; John McGauley, Allen County Recorder; and Cathy Serrano, Risk Manager.



*Risk Manager Cathy Serrano is revitalizing the County's Safety Committee.*

Any Department Head or Elected Official who has not yet nominated a member, may still do so. Nomination forms, 2007 monthly meeting dates and times, as well as minutes of meetings already held are available on the County Intranet, under the Human Resources Department, and also under the Committee's Tab (at the top of the screen); or call Risk Management at 449-7455 to obtain a form.

As your Risk Manager, I urge all County employees to be "Safety Aware." If you see something that looks as though it might be an unsafe act, an unsafe piece of equipment or a needed change in procedure, the chances are good that you are right. Report it to your supervisor – take the responsibility to not only "Think Safety," but to "Act Safely." Your actions might prevent not only an injury to yourself, but to countless others. Take the time to report unsafe acts or make safety suggestions. We can always use more Top Guns of Safety!

## Employee Clinic

physicals, allergy shots and smoking cessation. Many generic medications used to treat conditions diagnosed at the clinic are available on the spot and free of charge.

The Employee clinic also offers Health Risk Assessments that include a panel of blood tests, online questionnaire and a physician consultation. This program is designed to identify and address potential health-related risk factors before they become a problem. Wellness education and programs are available to help patients make lifestyle changes that may lessen their risk of developing life threatening diseases in the future.

Patients are seen by appointment only. Those who call in the morning can often be seen that same day. Call 449-8660 to hear clinic hours, to ask questions or to make an appointment.



*At a July smoking cessation event, LeAnn Hostetler, RN, explains how the County Employee Health Clinic can assist covered employees who wish to stop smoking.*

### LOOKING AHEAD ~ DECEMBER ISSUE

- ➔ Does your office/department celebrate the holidays by helping those in need? Tell us your story.
- ➔ Send us your favorite holiday recipes and family traditions.

## ALLEN COUNTY SAFETY POLICY

The observance of safe practices is the number one responsibility of each employee. Protection of themselves, their co-workers and the community is a key aspect of each individual position.

All employees are expected to comply with safety policies of their departments, to wear proper work attire, use proper personal protective equipment, and to promptly file accident reports if an accident occurs, as well as to cooperate in the investigation of any workplace accident or safety inspection. Safety is so important that it is a part of our Employee Handbook and is considered a condition of continued employment with the County.

But most importantly, we want our employees to follow safe practices both at work and at home, so that they avoid injury and accident for their own health and well-being. Safe employees are healthy, productive employees.

Ideally, we would like to see all accidents eliminated so that no one ever gets hurt on-the-job. That may be a lofty goal – but it is something we can strive toward.

No one wants to see their co-workers and friends injured and in the hospital or at home recuperating from a nasty break or back injury. Not only does it impact that individual employee and their family, but their lost presence at work means their department suffers in productivity and morale as well.

Accidents at work are costly – both financially and in human terms.

By Cathy Serrano  
Allen County Risk Manager

# Recognized for Excellence

## [Judge Thomas Felts](#)

Allen Circuit Court Judge Thomas J. Felts has been appointed by Indiana Senate President Pro Tempore David C. Long to the Indiana Commission on Courts for a four-year term. The Commission on Courts reviews and reports to the Indiana General Assembly on all requests for new courts, changes in jurisdiction of existing courts, and all other matters relating to court administration.

Judge Felts was elected President of the Indiana Judges Association July 1, 2007. The Indiana Judges Association (IJA), established in 1934, represents more than 460 members consisting of justices and judges of the Indiana Supreme, and Appellate Courts, trial courts and magistrates. Judge Felts has been a member of the IJA Board of Managers since 1999 and served as Secretary-Treasurer from 2003-2005 and Vice President from 2005-2007.

Along with the Chief Justice, Judge Felts will be the principal spokesperson for Indiana's judges generally and in all matters outside the courtroom, including governmental and legislative affairs.

In addition, Judge Felts is a member of the Indiana Forensic Diversion Task Force and remains active locally through his work with the Foellinger Foundation, lecturing as an adjunct Professor in Purdue's Department of Organizational Leadership & Supervision at the IPFW campus, and volunteering with Parkview Hospice in Fort Wayne and surrounding communities.

## [Bob Dispenza](#)

In April of this year, Bob Dispenza, Park and Education Manager at Metea County Park, was recognized as Distinguished Professional Interpreter of the Year by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Region 4 (Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Ontario). The award was presented at the Region 4 Workshop held at Pokagon State Park. NAI is the professional organization for nature, culture and history interpreters in the US and internationally, with over 6000 members.

This November Bob will travel to the NAI National Workshop in Wichita, Kansas to receive the National NAI Master Front Line Interpreter award. These awards are presented to outstanding professional interpreters by their peers and are considered the pinnacle of achievement in the interpretive profession.

Bob is a life member of NAI and is certified as an Interpretive Trainer and Interpretive Guide. He is currently chair of the Visual Communications Section of NAI.

## [Randy Brown](#)

Randy L. Brown, CFE, General Manager of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, has been elected to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM).

Brown is the director-at-large representing arenas worldwide and is in his second two-year term on the IAAM board. His election took place in July at the 82nd Annual IAAM Conference & Trade Show, held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

IAAM is an organization committed to the professional operation of amphitheaters, arenas, auditoriums, convention centers/exhibit halls, performing arts venues, race tracks, stadiums and university complexes. IAAM provides leadership development, education and research, life safety and security training, networking and resources for the industry.

## [Memorial Coliseum](#)

The Allen County War Memorial Coliseum beat out larger market arenas such as The Target Center in Minneapolis, Minn. and The Bradley Center in Milwaukee, Wisc. to finish ranked No. 95 in the world for arena ticket sales, according to the 2006 year-end issue of POLLSTAR magazine.

Madison Square Garden in New York City finished at top of the list with 1,181,486 tickets sold. The Memorial Coliseum is the only Indiana venue to make the Top 100, finishing with 95,410 tickets sold. The No. 95 ranking is up two spots from 2005 sales totals. Figures are for tickets sold worldwide as reported to POLLSTAR for shows played between January 1 and December 31, 2006.

The Memorial Coliseum's 2006 concert lineup included national touring performers such as Nickelback, Rob Zombie, Bob Dylan, Martina McBride, Brad Paisley, Third Day, Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Mannheim Steamroller, Gretchen Wilson, Sesame Street Live, Toby Keith and the Gaither Homecoming Tour.

## [Memorial Coliseum, Part 2](#)

The Allen County War Memorial Coliseum was named a "Prime Site" by *Facilities Magazine* for the seventh consecutive year.

*Facilities Magazine*, one of the top publications in the industry, salutes the finest venues in North America with its Prime Site Award. Members of the selection committee are industry executives who are directly involved in site selection, including promoters, booking agents and event planners.

## HERE'S TO GOOD HEALTH

# Employee Health Clinic offers HRAs

- Did you know that 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. has **cardiovascular disease**?
- Did you know that **diabetes** affects more than 20.8 million people in the U.S.?
- Did you know that **diabetes** contributes to over 224,000 deaths per year?
- Did you know that over 30% of adults in the U.S. have **high blood pressure (hypertension)**?
- Did you know 1/3 of people who have **high blood pressure** don't know they have it?
- Did you know that 28% of American adults have **prehypertension**?
- Did you know that **cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension** can often be prevented or controlled through lifestyle changes and with medications?

Do you have risk factors that can cause you to develop these conditions? Even if you appear and feel healthy, your lifestyle and heredity can contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension.

How can you find out if you have any of these risk factors? You can participate in a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) program called INTERVENT, a Dupont corporate wellness program, provided to you by the Allen County Board of Commissioners through the County Employee Health Clinic. If you and/or your dependents are covered under the Group Health Plan, you are eligible to participate in this **free** program.

HRA is a combination of detailed medical history and blood chemistry analyses that will provide a snapshot of your current health status and aid in the early detection (and possible prevention) of potential health issues. The INTERVENT program also offers scientifically based programs to help you make meaningful lifestyle changes one step at a time, one day at a time.

To begin your HRA process or to ask questions about it, call the Employee Health Clinic at (260) 449-8660 and schedule a time to have your blood drawn.



*Complete the HRA process and receive a 52 oz. insulated mug and be entered in quarterly drawings for gift certificates to local merchants.*

## **Self Defense Workshop**

The Allen County Sheriff's Department and the Allen County Safety Committee will sponsor a "Self Defense Tactics/Awareness" workshop for

**County and City Female Employees**

**1 p.m. — October 19**

**Omni Room, 2nd Floor, City-County Bldg**

Learn common sense ways to avoid putting yourself in a dangerous situation and how to defend yourself using common items.

The training will be conducted by Capt. Shawn Lawhorn, Sheriff's Special Operations and Training Division.

To reserve your spot, call County Risk Management at 449-7455.

## RECIPE EXCHANGE

### **Commissioner Linda Bloom's Lemon Bars**

#### **Crust:**

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 2/3 cup powdered sugar
- ½ cup cornstarch
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 sticks cold butter, cut into small pieces

#### **Filling:**

- 8 large eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 ½ cups fresh lemon juice (6 large lemons)
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a food processor, pulse flour, powdered sugar, cornstarch, salt and butter until mixture looks like course crumbs. Press on bottom of a 9x13 inch pan. Bake for 20 minutes. Refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Reduce oven to 325 degrees.

Beat eggs with mixer until thick. Add remaining filling ingredients and mix well. Pour over crust. Bake 20 minutes. Cool to room temperature, then refrigerate 1 hour. Sift powdered sugar over the top.

## MILESTONES

### **Recognizing years of County service:**

#### **5 years**

Tom Fox, Building Department  
Tammy Meneghello, St. Joe Township Assessor  
Mick Stiles, Superior Court  
Stephanie Coleman, Superior Court

#### **10 years**

Roger Clark, Building Department  
John Hostetler, Building Department

#### **20 years**

Sharon Spice, Building Department

# Employee News

## New Employees

- **Katrina “Katie” Rorick**, secretary, Office of Homeland Security.
- **Carrie Pflueger**, deductions deputy, Auditor’s Office.
- **Brandy Knox**, part-time employee, and Michael Quirk, real estate deputy, St. Joe Township Assessor’s Office.
- **Trina Dray**, court services clerk, Superior Court Misdemeanor and Traffic Division.
- **Katie Molter**, graduate of Indiana University Bloomington Law School, and Alex James, graduate of Notre Dame Law School, new law clerks, Superior Court Civil Division.
- **Kellie Liponoga** and Gwen Ruppert, alcohol countermeasures probation officers, Superior Court Criminal Division Services.
- **Jodi Harwood**, secretary, Superior Court Criminal Division Services.
- **Douglas Goeglein**, case manager, Superior Court Criminal Division Services.
- **Shawn Bartels**, part-time data entry clerk, Superior Court Criminal Division Services.
- **Jennifer Knorr**, court reporter/criminal scheduler, Superior Court Criminal Division. Jennifer is returning after a six-year absence to raise her daughters.
- **Teresa Worman**, Republican system operator, Voter Registration.
- **Shannon Green**, director of premium seating, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.
- **Jeff Baxter**, superintendent of Allen County Parks.
- **Susie Eloph**, office manager, Allen County Parks.
- **Natalie Haley**, environmental educator, Fox Island Park.
- **Cindy LeMaster**, gift shop manager, Allen County Parks.

## Promotions

- **Kristin Harris** has been promoted to payroll accountant in the Auditor’s Office.

## Retirements

- **Erlene Covault**, Republican system operator retired from Voter Registration on April 27 after 22 years of service with Allen County.

## Departures

- **Robin Beasley**, Court Reporter, Superior Court Civil Division, will be leaving us Sept. 7th to join the Judicial Technology and Automation Committee in Indianapolis as a Court Reporter Subject Matter Expert/Field Trainer.

## Weddings

- **Alicia O’Riordan** married John Stack on April 28. Alicia is a records deputy III in the Records Management Division, Clerk’s Office. The “Mother of the Bride” is **Brenda O’Riordan**, criminal scheduler, Superior Court Criminal Division.
- **Daisy Ketron** married Anthony Follis on August 25. Daisy is an RJO deputy III in the Records of Judgments and Orders Division, Clerk’s Office.
- **Jodie Knipstein** and **Brock Williams** were married July 13. Jodie is a court reporter, Superior Court Misdemeanor and Traffic Division. Brock is an officer in the Sheriff’s Warrants Division.

## Babies

- **Rob and Kathy Zartman** are the proud grandparents of twin boys, Aiden & Carson born January 17, 2007. Rob is a parking control officer and Kathy is a permit specialist / typist in the Building Department.
- **Cynthia Specht** has a new daughter, Samantha, born April 2. Cynthia is a records deputy III, Central Services Division, Clerk’s Office.
- **Regina Gillum** has a new daughter, Sarah Kay, born June 9. Regina is a court reporter, Superior Court Misdemeanor and Traffic Division.
- **Jodi Ulmer** has a new son, Logan Michael, born August 13. Jodie is a court services clerk, Superior Court Misdemeanor and Traffic Division.
- **Melissa Reinking** has a new granddaughter, Madison Rose, born July 16 to daughter and son-in-law Emily and John Manning. Melissa is a court reporter, Superior Court Civil Division.
- **Barb Gongaware** is th proud grandmother of Alexandria Mae Toryn Davis, born February 16 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Barb is a data manager, Superior Court Criminal Division.
- **Diane Brenner** became a first-time grandmother May 22 with the birth of Evan Daniel, son of Adam and Lindsey Brenner. Diane is a court reporter, Superior Court Family Division.
- **Lily Martinez** has two new grandsons - Damien P. Lopez, born April 9 to daughter Eva Lopez, and Isaiah Matthew Romero, born June 18 to son Alejandro Romero. Lily is a court reporter, Superior Court Family Division.
- **Jeanne Lombardo** became a grandmother for the sixth time with the birth of her first granddaughter, Taylor Rose Hannon, born August 15. Jeanne is an indexer in the Recorder’s Office.

# Meet Bob Dispenza

## *Park and Education Manager – Metea County Park*

If Metea County Park is the emerald of northeast Allen County, Bob Dispenza is the jeweler.

But don't assume that the word "manager" in his title means he doesn't get his hands dirty.

While he does provide the planning and direction for Metea, Cook's Landing and Payton County Parks in northern Allen County, more often than not, he's also the one carrying out the plan. The entire education staff at Metea consists of Bob and two part-time naturalists. So, in order to provide the many educational programs, exhibits and guided hikes offered at the 240-acre park, everyone pitches in. They also rely heavily upon volunteers, seasonal employees and the support of the non-profit group "Friends of Metea."

Bob holds a Bachelor of Science degree in natural resources from The Ohio State University, with specialization in environmental interpretation. He has received national recognition for his ability to make the science of nature understandable through a variety of methods (see *Recognized for Excellence*, p.3). He is currently working toward an MBA degree online from California State University.

A typical work day for Bob includes opening up the Nature Center, and giving it a quick once-over to make sure everything is tidy before the park opens to the public at 9 a.m. Then he's likely to tackle an inbox full of e-mails, work on program planning and write a story or two for *The Wild Grapevine*, Allen County Parks' quarterly newsletter. After that, he might build an exhibit, lead a group of preschoolers and their adult partners on a search for animal tracks or manage Metea's natural areas by removing non-native plants or conducting a controlled burn on the prairie.

It's not unusual for folks to bring in animals for park staff to identify. Most often, they want to know if the critter in question can hurt them and whether there might be others lurking about. "Snakes usually arrive in pieces," said Bob, while more friendly-looking animals often come in cardboard boxes with air holes.

Bob enjoys the variety that his job at Metea Park provides. "It's never the same from one day to the next," said Bob. "Nobody gets rich doing this, but, if you really love your job, you never work a day in your life."

Bob's kinship with Mother Nature extends throughout all aspects of his life. He and his family live in an old farmhouse located within Metea Park, allowing him to walk

to work and to the church they attend just across the street. Bob's wife of 22 years, Jackie, is a biology teacher and naturalist. So it's not surprising that their four children, aged 4 ½ to 17, are quite comfortable sharing their turf with native flora and fauna. "They aren't afraid of things," said Bob. "They know what hurts you and what doesn't."

When distance requires a vehicle, Bob saves energy by driving the electric car he converted from a 1985 Honda Civic four-wheel-drive station wagon. When the engine died in 1996, he ordered a component kit from California and set to work on the conversion project. It took a while to work out all the bugs. (They had to tow the car from Ohio when they moved here six years ago.) But today, the electric Honda runs just fine – up to 25 miles on a single charge. After eight hours plugged into a regular

household outlet, the car is recharged and ready to go again. The Dispenzas also have a conventional van for longer trips.

In his spare time, Bob plays trombone with the Fort Wayne Community Band and is involved in his church's music ministry. He also collects and repairs pocket watches – the wind-up variety – batteries not included.

Stewardship of our community's natural treasures and living an environmentally-friendly lifestyle seem to be second nature to Bob and his family. In his words, "We like to leave a light impression."

But fortunately for Allen County, Bob's presence in our community has left a strong and positive impact.



*Bob Dispenza oversees educational programming as well as the day-to-day operations of Metea County Park.*

## BENEFITS CORNER

# 2008 Benefits Open Enrollment

October is Open Enrollment time! Be sure to attend one of the open enrollment meetings to pick up your 2008 benefit packet and review the plans available to you in 2008. The open enrollment period begins with meetings on October 8 and ends on November 2. During this time, you are able to make changes to your coverage and add or remove dependents effective for January 1, 2008.

### *Open Enrollment Meeting Schedule:*

#### **Monday October 8**

9:00 & 10:30 a.m., 1:00 & 2:30 p.m.  
City Council Chambers Rm 126

#### **Tuesday October 9**

7:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.  
Memorial Coliseum

#### **Wednesday October 10**

7:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. - ACJC  
9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m.  
Commissioners' Courtroom

#### **Thursday October 11**

7:00 a.m. - Jail Officers' Dining Room  
9:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
City Council Chambers, Rm 126  
2:30 p.m. - South Barn

#### **Friday October 12**

7:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. - CASA Bldg  
10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, Rm 126

### *Health Fair*

Plan to visit the Health Fair on Wednesday, October 10, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 pm. on the second floor mezzanine of the City County building. Representatives of the various benefit plans will be there to talk to you. Please plan to stop by and learn more about the benefit plans that are available to you.

## Noteworthy Events

Metea Renaissance Faire IX – Sept. 29 & 30 at Metea County Park, 8041 Union Chapel Road. Medieval fun for all ages. Saturday, 10-6, Sunday 10-5; \$7 for adults, \$4 for ages 7-12, ages 6 and younger, free. Admission \$4 for Allen County Gold Parks Pass Holders.

HRA Drawing – The first prize drawing for county employees who have completed the Health Risk Assessment process offered by the County Employee Health Clinic will be held Oct. 12. The lucky winner will receive a \$125 gift certificate.

Fort Wayne Money Fair – 5:30-8:30 p.m. Oct. 15 at Prime Time Center, 3701 S. Calhoun St. Financial education sessions for adults, teens and children; basic financial education in Spanish. Large groups are asked to RSVP by Oct. 5. For more information, call the Cooperative Extensive Service at 481-6826, option 3.

Mid City Grill will host a full day of live music, raffles and an end-of-summer cookout Sept. 23 as a fund-raiser for the Northeast Indiana Burn Council. The NEIBC is a non-profit group that provides assistance to children, families and adults affected by burn injuries. The music begins at 1 p.m. and continues until midnight. Musician and vocalist Cathy Serrano (Human Resources Attorney / Risk Manager) will perform at 4 p.m.

## Late Summer Lawn Care

Late summer and early fall is **THE** time to fertilize lawns. Research at Purdue University reveals that late summer / fall fertilization encourages strong turfgrass root development for the following spring. One application of fertilizer in early September, followed by a mid-October fertilizer can do wonders for the lawn.

Many problem lawn weeds are best controlled in the fall. In autumn, plants (including weeds) begin to send sugar from the leaves to the roots. If herbicide is applied to a weed in the fall, the herbicide is more readily transported to the roots than during the summer months.

Late summer/early fall is also the best time to establish a new lawn, or renovate an existing lawn. Core aeration is also a wonderful method to open up the lawn for air and water penetration. Often core aeration is a great precursor to renovating a lawn, because the rough surface promotes good seed germination. For more information regarding lawn care, contact the Allen County Extension office at 481-6826 and press option 2 for our Gardening Hotline.

By Ricky D. Kemery

*Purdue Horticulture Extension Educator*



### **The ACE**

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