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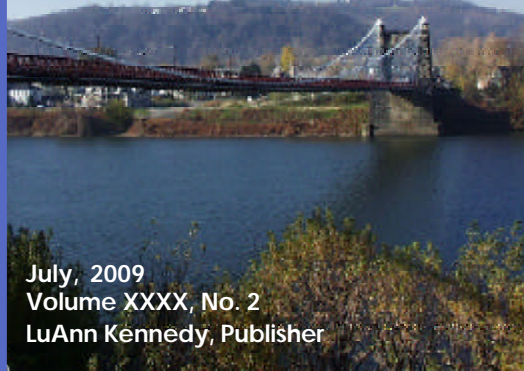
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# Belomar Regioner



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Belmont, Ohio, Marshall,  
and Wetzel Counties

NWAAA: Brooke, Calhoun, Doddridge,  
Gilmer, Hancock, Harrison, Marion,  
Marshall, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants,  
Ritchie, Tyler, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wood  
Counties

## Highlands Water Supply Project Expanded

**A** \$1.5 million EDA Grant to the Ohio County Public Service District to extend a new 16" water main from a point near Wheeling Hospital to the Highlands has been rescinded at the request of the OCPD in order to pave the way for the Ohio County Development Authority to make application for a significantly larger EDA grant which would include a larger scope of work.

A meeting held in June with EDA officials and interested parties involved with the project, resulted in an offer by EDA to allow the OCPD to "terminate for client convenience" their existing \$1.5 million grant already awarded and re-apply (under the Ohio County Development Authority) for EDA stimulus funding through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) in an amount up to eighty percent (80%) of the total project cost. Non-ARRA funding through EDA is eligible for only fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost.

In addition to the opportunity for increased grant dollars, the project scope was altered to include a new 1 million gallon water storage tank to be located at The Highlands, which would add an additional \$2.5 million to the cost of the project, resulting in a total project cost of \$8 million.

The new EDA grant submitted by Belomar on behalf of the Ohio County Development Authority, requests \$6.4 million in EDA funds to be matched by \$1.6 million from the OCDA. The OCDA has made application to the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council for their share and has received a Binding Commitment Letter for a \$1.6 million Infrastructure Loan at 3% interest for a 20 year term. The IJDC Loan is contingent upon the OCDA receiving the EDA grant funds.

The OCDA's application to EDA is currently under review. A funding decision is expected within the next few weeks.

## Chairman Vincenzo Appointed to Task Force

**M**ayor Robert Vincenzo was recently appointed to serve on the Ohio Cities Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force is to recommend public policy that would help Ohio's cities further their economic development activities. Honorable Armond Budish, Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, made the appointment. It was quite an honor to be appointed to this Task Force and we wish Mayor Vincenzo well in this new capacity.

# Management Services Department

## St. Clairsville Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) Update

The City of St. Clairsville was awarded CHIP funds in the Fall of 2008 to be used for different types of housing activities.

Below is a list of activities, the number of projects completed or under contract and number of slots still available.



**Home Repair** - Three projects are completed and two others are under contract. There are enough funds for at least two more home repair projects.

This program is designed to address emergency situations that threaten the health and safety of residents. Typical repairs include: leaking roof, non-functioning or unsafe furnace or water heater, electrical conditions, and plumbing emergencies, among others. Grant funds are used to complete these projects, and there is no payback required. The home must be in condition to allow the repairs (up to two items) to be completed, and have the home meet the Ohio Residential Rehab Standards.



**Downpayment Assistance/Rehab** - Two projects are complete and one more opening is available.

This program is designed to aid households (who meet the low to moderate income guidelines) who currently rent or have not owned a home in the past 3 years to purchase a home. The program will provide eligible homebuyers with downpayment assistance of 10% of the sales price of the home up to a maximum of \$7,000. In addition to the downpayment, homebuyers may receive up to \$28,000 in home repairs to meet the Ohio Residential Rehab standards. Downpayment funds are provided as a zero-interest 10-year deferred forgivable loan. Home Rehab funds are provided in the form of a zero-interest 5-year deferred and reduction loans with a small portion of the loan recaptured when the property is sold or transferred.

**Private Owner Rehab** - Two projects are under contract and two others have been selected. There are numerous applications outstanding with three openings left.

This program allows homeowners who meet the low to moderate income guidelines to have their home brought up

to current Ohio Residential Rehab Standards. The program addresses areas such as electrical, plumbing, structural, roofing, windows, doors, weatherization, etc. Funds are given in the form of zero percent interest deferred, and reduction loans. Homeowners are required to remain in the home for a period of five years to have the largest part of the loan forgiven.

**Rental Rehab** - One project is in the bidding stage and one in the approval state. Two outcomes.

This program offers landlords the opportunity to have their rental property brought up to current Ohio Residential Rehab Standards. This grant will provide matching funds for the landlord, up to \$15,000. The landlord must agree to rent to low to moderate income persons for a specified period of time.

Applications are available for all projects by contacting Rick Healy at the Bel-O-Mar Office at 304-242-1800 or email: [rhealy@belomar.org](mailto:rhealy@belomar.org).

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## West Virginia Neighborhood Stabilization Program

Bel-O-Mar's Management Services Department staff is in the process of applying for Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds for selected areas in Ohio and Marshall Counties. These locations are designated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in a 3 tier hierarchy. Only Tier 1 areas will be considered for funding in HUD's first round. Tiers 2 and 3 will only be considered in subsequent rounds of funding. At this time Wetzel County has no Tier 1 HUD designated areas.

The purpose of the NSP is to provide subsidies in the form of foreclosed or abandoned household earning at or below 120% area median income as determined by HUD. These homes would then be available for recall on the open market. Applications are due by 8/10/09.

The State of Ohio is a little further along with the NSP and Bel-O-Mar's Management Services staff has been working to implement the program in Martins Ferry.

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# Northwestern Area Agency on Aging



## **WVRx Drug Program Continues to Deliver Quality to Health Care**

**L**ast January, West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin made a proposal during his State of the State address that aimed to provide citizens across the state a chance to better meet their prescription drug obligations. Since then, the Governor has been pleased to learn that that proposal and program, called West Virginia Rx (WV Rx), has made progress meeting the prescription necessities for the working people who can use some help. WVRx has been responsible for providing brand-name pharmaceuticals to low-wage, working West Virginians who lack prescription drug coverage.

Recently, he joined representatives from Charleston Area Medical Center (CAMC) and the local health care community to announce their continued progress in prescription drug coverage. WVRx soon will become the largest charitable pharmacy program in the country.

West Virginia has shown that it is a leader and model for the entire country. WV Rx has improved the quality of life for many of our citizens in just a short time.

Effective Sept. 1, more than 10,000 working West Virginians without health insurance automatically will become eligible for West Virginia Rx. We've accomplished this in just 18 months. This expansion will create a total enrollment of about 12,500 people.

West Virginia is the first state in the country to coordinate hospital charity care programs with its charitable pharmacy program. This is another example of how we in West Virginia come together to take care of our own. There are 5,000 people already enrolled in the Community Access Program of the Partners in Health Network, a non-profit, integrated health care delivery organization serving 13 counties in southern and central West Virginia. That includes 13 hospitals, seven community health centers and two health departments. Another 5,000 people are enrolled in CAMC's charity-care health program, which provides both free inpatient and outpatient care for individuals who meet the income guidelines.

The State's goal during the next several months is to extend this model to other hospital charity programs. When individuals have the medicine they need, emergency room use is reduced by roughly 41 percent. From a financial standpoint, every dollar spent on West Virginia Rx has a return on investment of \$37.

This program has been successful because of the wide range of support from both the public and private sector. West Virginia Health Right, The Benedum Foundation, the Heinz Family Charitable Trust, and many other health agencies have put a great deal of time and effort into making WV Rx a success.

To learn more or to find out if you qualify for this prescription drug assistance, please visit the WV Rx Web site at [www.WVRX.org](http://www.WVRX.org). For those citizens who do not have access to a computer, there is a toll free number: 1-877-388-9879.

## **Grandparents Scam Hits WV**

**T**hink you'd never fall for a scam? So did Hazel Lilly of Hurricane. But that's exactly what happened when she got a call from her grandson asking her to wire him money. Lilly said it sounded just like her teenaged grandson Austin, so much so she never even thought twice about wiring him \$3,600 when he told her he'd been arrested in Canada. "I have been through scams and I've never accepted them. Always knew what a scam was until this one," she said.

Attorney General Darrell McGraw says the crooks behind this scam are sophisticated. Somehow they're getting names and details you just can't pull out of a phone book. McGraw believes the scammers have the technology to listen in on phone calls and then mimic the voices they hear to trick their victims.

Lilly made a quick trip to the bank, went to Wal-Mart and wired money to who she thought was her grandson. A short time later she got a second call asking for the reference number on the wire transfer. Once she confirmed it, she heard a "Click" on the other end. When she didn't hear back from Austin, she had nagging doubts and made a decision. "I'm going to check this out for sure," she said. What she discovered is that her grandson was in Huntington, not Canada and her \$3,600 was gone.

McGraw says it's been impossible to find the scammers. "Once the scamster has the money there is no record that's available to be able to track where the money went," he said.

So far several West Virginian seniors have been hit by this scam. It's been used in Wood, Cabell and Putnam counties. McGraw says you can avoid being a victim by asking specific

questions of the person on the phone, things only a family member would know or offer to call the family back so you have a number you can trace.

If you receive a phone call like the one Lilly did, you're asked to call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-368-8808.

## DHHR SECRETARY NAMED ACTING 'GO HELP' DIRECTOR, PATSY HARDY TO BECOME NEXT DHHR SECRETARY

Governor Joe Manchin announced that the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) Sec. Martha Walker will become the acting director of the Governor's Office of Health Enhancement and Lifestyle Planning (GO HELP) effective Sept. 1. Originating from Senate Bill 414, GO HELP will oversee the state's health care reform initiatives and collaborate with all state agencies to coordinate the delivery of health care in West Virginia.

"Martha has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of West Virginians as DHHR secretary for nearly five years," Manchin said. "I am so appreciative that Martha has accepted the new acting director's position. She brings a wealth of knowledge to this commission, and will help bring all of the pieces together so that GO HELP starts out right and on a solid path."

Walker said she has loved her time spent as secretary of DHHR. "The dedicated employees and the many programs they administer touch the lives of every West Virginian," Walker said. "I have learned a lot from them. I am ready for a new challenge and this opportunity will allow me to continue the work of coordinating health care reform on a state and federal level. This is going to be very exciting, and I thank the governor for his confidence in me."

Parkersburg resident Patsy Hardy will replace Walker as DHHR secretary effective Sept. 1. Hardy has more than 24

years of health care management and operations experience, including serving as CEO of St. Joseph's Hospital in Parkersburg and CEO of Putnam General Hospital in Hurricane. She also was the chief operating officer for St. Francis Hospital in Charleston.

"Patsy is an expert in health care services and business management and I am extremely pleased that she has accepted this position," the governor said. "She will build upon Martha's good work and will be a major part of our efforts to continue to move West Virginia forward." Hardy said she is excited to serve as the cabinet secretary for Health and Human Resources for West Virginia.

"Health care has been my passion for over 30 years and I look forward to working with the talented team for our future progress in impacting the overall health care status for the state."

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# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO HIGHLIGHT “SAVE THE DREAM” CAMPAIGN, UNCLAIMED FUNDS AND FIRE SAFETY AT STATE FAIR

The Ohio Department of Commerce will be featuring the state’s foreclosure prevention initiative “Save the Dream”, unclaimed funds and fire safety information at the 2009 State Fair from Wednesday, July 29 through Sunday, August 9.



The Department’s State Fair booth, located along the southern wall of the Marketplace Building, will be open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. during each day of the fair.

“The Department of Commerce’s State Fair booth is a great resource where Ohioans can obtain important educational resources to help them save their home from foreclosure, check for unclaimed funds, and obtain valuable fire safety information,” said Commerce Director Kimberly Zurz.

Save the Dream partners and housing counselors will be available each day from noon to 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to provide information on how Ohioans can take action to possibly save their home from foreclosure. Representatives of the following Save the Dream partners will be assisting Ohioans at the booth: Attorney General’s Office, ESOP, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Nord Center, Ohio Department of Commerce, Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Housing Finance Agency, and Ohio State Legal Services Association.

The core message of Ohio’s Save the Dream campaign is for homeowners to:

Contact their mortgage loan servicer at the first sign that they may have difficulty in making their mortgage payment.

At the same time, contact Save the Dream to work with a HUD-approved housing counselor and/or a legal aid or pro bono attorney.

The Division of Unclaimed Funds will provide kiosks for fairgoers to check for unclaimed funds for themselves, friends and family. Unclaimed funds consist of monies or the right to monies that have been dormant or forgotten. These funds are reported to the State of Ohio for safekeeping until the rightful owners can be found. Some common examples include: dormant checking and savings accounts, forgotten rent and utility deposits, uncashed checks, undelivered stock certificates, and uncashed insurance policies.

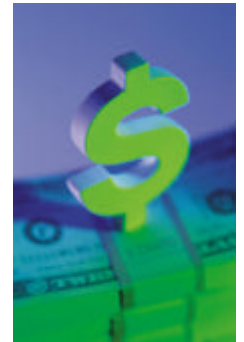
The Division of State Fire Marshal will provide fire safety information and an overview of the Division’s various bureaus.

The Divisions of Financial Institutions, Real Estate & Professional Licensing and Securities will offer consumer protection information about the home buying process and the mortgage lending process, as well as investor education.

The Department’s booth also highlights its divisions of Industrial Compliance, Labor and Worker Safety and Liquor Control.

The Save the Dream partners include the Governor’s Office, Ohio Department of Commerce, Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Treasurer’s Office, Supreme Court of Ohio, Attorney General’s Office, Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Ohio State Bar Association, housing counseling agencies, and various Legal Aid organizations.

The public awareness campaign includes an information-rich website at [www.savethedream.ohio.gov](http://www.savethedream.ohio.gov), and a telephone hotline (888-404-4674).



# Transportation Department

## New Transportation Improvement Program Approved

A new FY2010 - FY2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was approved on June 25, 2009. While the program covers four years in Ohio and Marshall Counties, only the first two years are covered in Belmont County. The Ohio Department of Transportation decided not to prepare a new four year statewide program at this time. Projects must be included in the local TIP and incorporated into the statewide program to be eligible for federal funding. Federal regulations require the program to be financially constrained, meaning that adequate funding can be expected to be available to implement the projects as scheduled. Projects may be delayed however, due to increased overall costs, the need to implement other projects in a timely fashion, or unforeseen delays in the project development process.

In Belmont County, 31 projects are included in the first two years of the program. While most of the projects have been carried forward from the prior program, seven new projects have been added to the program, while one project had a change in scope. As ODOT is not preparing a new program, these projects are being treated as a revision to the statewide program. Federal funding for Belmont County projects is estimated at \$53 million.

In Ohio County, 12 projects are programmed over the four year period. Approximately \$22 million of federal funds will be needed for these projects. Similarly, 12 projects are programmed over four years in Marshall County. An estimated \$20 million in federal funds will be applied to these projects.

With regards to transit, the majority of federal funds available to the Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority (OVRTA) and the Eastern Ohio Regional Transit Authority (EORTA) will be used for operating assistance. Federal economic stimulus funds, previously programmed for capital purchases, have been carried forward in the new TIP.

Given the area's previous designation as non-attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and fine particulate matter, it is necessary to consider the impact of implementing the TIP on air quality. In March, 2008, federal approval of the Air Quality Analysis and Conformity

Determination was provided regarding the local Transportation Plan for 2035. As the FY2010 - FY2013 TIP is consistent with the long range plan, it was not necessary to undertake a new air quality analysis, and the prior determination remains valid.

Over the course of the program period, additional projects can be expected to be added to the program for all three counties. Opportunities for review and comment are provided each time a revision is proposed. The complete document is posted on the agency website ([www.belomar.org](http://www.belomar.org)), and will remain available throughout the effective timeframe.



### Staff News

*On June 23, 2009 Trisha Carrothers joined Bel-O-Mar's staff. Trisha is our new Secretary/Receptionist replacing Heather Delbert, who took a position in Cleveland.*

*Trisha was the most qualified of over 40 applicants for the position. She comes to us with 20 plus years of experience with the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation. Trisha lives in Belmont County near St. Clairsville with her husband and two sons.*

*Welcome Trisha!*

## The Homestead Exemption

Persons who are 65 years of age or older, or permanently and totally disabled, are entitled an exemption from property taxes on the first \$20,000 of assessed value on their owner-occupied residence. The exemption may apply to mobile homes on leased land. Taxpayers must have initially applied to the county assessor's office and become eligible for the Homestead Exemption program in order to be eligible for the tax credit. Applicants must occupy their homestead for more than six consecutive months each year.



Seniors must first determine if they meet the low income test. Low income means federal adjusted gross income for the year that is 150% or less of the federal poverty guideline. Each year the federal poverty guidelines are adjusted by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The West Virginia Aging and Disability Resource Centers can answer any questions on filing for this exemption. Please contact Wendy Sturm at 242-1800 or 1-800-924-0088 or the state toll free phone number at 1-866-987-2372 with any questions.

## West Virginia Stimulus Information Available on New State Web Site

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Joe Manchin recently announced the launch of a new Web page comprising West Virginia Recovery Act (Stimulus) Information at [www.recovery.wv.gov](http://www.recovery.wv.gov).

This Web site will provide constituents with up-to-date information about the stimulus dollars that the State of West Virginia is and will be receiving from the federal government through the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

“It is important to be as transparent as possible, because West Virginians deserve to know where these Recovery Act dollars are going,” Gov. Joe Manchin said. “I wanted this Web site to be easy to navigate and to contain as much overall program and county-specific information as possible so our residents could see what types of projects are being funded. I thank West Virginia Interactive for helping us to build this user-friendly site, and encourage all West Virginians to visit the site often, because it will be updated frequently.”



Among many other components, the site contains a search feature and allows individuals to view information by topic or by county. The site will be continually updated as additional stimulus information and local county information is finalized and made available. Visitors will also be able to sign up to receive updates via email, RSS feeds or Twitter to stay apprised of all the latest developments.

“In the coming days and weeks, this site will develop into a vital resource for individuals who are interested in following how West Virginia spends its ARRA funds,” the governor added.

The recovery Web site was developed through an innovative public-private partnership between the State of West Virginia and West Virginia Interactive, which was established in 2007 to assist state government agencies to build and manage interactive online services. West Virginia Interactive, which also developed the State's main Web site, WV.gov, is a subsidiary of eGovernment firm NIC, a company managing more eGovernment services than any provider in the world, including 2,900 state and local agencies that serve more than 69 million people in the United States.

*The cost and preparation of producing this newsletter was financed through contributions of local member governments and various federal and state grants. It also has been partially defrayed through contributions from firms whose names you will find displayed in this issue. We appreciate their support!*

*The Northwestern Area Agency on Aging is a department within the Bel-O-Mar Regional Council and Interstate Planning Commission, and a member of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The "Regioner" may be freely reprinted with the customary crediting of the sources.*

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