

The JCCC News

www.jacksonchamberwv.com

January 2010

2010 Legislative Session

Wes Harvey

JCCC, Program Director

The 2010 session of the WV state legislature kicked off on January 13, 2010. A highlight of the items on Governor Manchin's agenda is contained herein. In addition, attachments to the newsletter will be provided to our members so that more detailed information can be referenced. If there are any items on that you would like to have brought to the attention of our elected representatives, please let me know as I have established a dialogue with those that represent Jackson County.

Items of note that are on the agenda include tax reform, judicial reform, better management of the state's vehicle fleet, educational system changes, and how to weather the economic storm during what is projected to be a very slow recovery from the worldwide recession.

When it comes to the area of tax reform, Gov. Manchin would like to pass a "constitutional amendment that will give us the flexibility we need to lower taxes on commercial and industrial property, while also considering the impact on local governments." This is an item that we will watch closely in Jackson County. Lower taxes are an incentive for businesses to locate in West Virginia and can allow for businesses to invest more in themselves. However, the removal of ad

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New Businesses Open; Others Expand

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When do you open a new business or expand an existing one? These are questions that many of you have faced at some point in your life. Although the national and local economies have been hard hit, Jackson County has also experienced some growth. January has not been an exception.

In the Ripley area several changes have been seen. One such example is the new Holiday Inn Express that is located behind the old Wal-Mart. This facility has 72 rooms for overnight accommodations, an indoor pool, exercise area, business center, conference room, and a welcoming area. This new hotel will be another asset and allow for our area to be a better draw to host future events.

On January 19th Hog Heaven BBQ opened across from the courthouse at 204 W. Main Street. With a full menu that offers items such as pulled pork BBQ, racks of ribs, beef brisket, to chicken wings, there will be something to please everyone's palate. Check them out in person and thank them for bringing a new business to our community. To peruse the menu and check out business hours please visit them online at www.hogheavenwv.com.

Ripley Family Medicine moved to an expanded location on S. Church Street recently. Not only does the new facility provide easy access for Ripley residents, but convenience for those in southern Jackson County. In addition, the larger facility now supports a full-time nurse practitioner in addition to its doctor and nursing staff. For more information about services provided, contact Ripley Family Medicine at 304-372-1033.

Finally, Ravenswood welcomed a new business Saturday January 23, 2010 when A+ Photography held its grand opening. A+ Photography, owned and operated by Angela Donohew and Tabitha Donohew, is located in downtown Ravenswood near the stoplight. I strongly encourage all members to stop by and wish them well with their new studio. On the web they can be found at www.getaplusphotos.com.

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valorem taxes could negatively impact the services that the Jackson County Commission provides to the county unless the state allocates additional funding to the county. This bill may prove to be the most significant for Jackson County and will constantly be monitored throughout the session.

Judicial reform is another area that everybody will be watching. Year after year our state ranks at or near the bottom in terms of our legal climate. Whether this is actually the case or not, it is the perception that businesses have when evaluating West Virginia as a potential site to locate. Changes with the state's appellate process look to be on the horizon, which would be a step in the right direction.

Governor Manchin wants to overhaul the way that the management of the state's vehicle fleet is handled. Audits have highlighted flaws within the current system that must be addressed. One revelation is that personal use of vehicles within the state fleet needs a better monitoring system. No one really knows how pervasive a problem this may be, but the state spent \$24 million on fuel in 2008. In addition, changes to how the vehicle maintenance program is managed could offer significant savings. A few years ago the state of Virginia addressed similar questions, and the changes that they have made could serve as a model for our state.

Changes with the educational system are forthcoming to make it easier for schools to meet the mandatory 180 days of instruction for students. The severe weather conditions this year put many school systems at risk for not being able to meet these guidelines. Removing the dates when students may attend class will allow all our school systems to provide the classroom instruction that our students across the state deserve.

Lastly, Gov. Manchin has stressed the need for a reduction in budget without tapping into the Rainy Day Fund. West Virginia has taken careful measures to not overextend its resources as some other states did prior to the recession. There have been no furloughs of state employees or moves to a 4-day workweek. No raises are being discussed this year as there simply isn't the money in the budget to accommodate such a proposal. The impact of the EPA on mining permits is something that will be closely monitored. If mines are idled because of increased regulatory scrutiny, then jobs will be lost and the coal severance tax that the state collects will drop.

Overall, this session of the state legislature is a bit lighter than ones in the past. With that being said, items on the agenda will shape the future of the state. Reform in certain areas will hopefully change negative perceptions of West Virginia. Momentum that we have gained from previous

legislative reform, such as that with the workers compensation system, must continue. As mentioned earlier, I have met with the delegates and senators that represent our county, and I would be happy to pass along any concerns that you have. As the session moves into full swing, I will update everyone on any major developments.

West Virginia Chamber Hosts Legislative Briefing Sessions

The West Virginia Chamber will host several briefing sessions that focus on some of the main topics that are on this session of the 79th WV Legislature. The first session on January 19th brought two members from the Office of Governor Joe Manchin. Mr. Jim Spears, the Chief of Staff, and Jim Pitrolo, the Legislative Director were on hand to discuss the agenda and take questions. They offered detailed insight into some agenda items. One item that Mr. Pitrolo discussed was the proposed constitutional amendment that would allow for changes in the way that ad valorem taxes are handled. After listening to him I believe that any changes that are made will be weighed heavily, and that they will not be made without helping to offset the revenues that counties will lose.

The West Virginia Chamber will hold Legislative Briefing Sessions every Tuesday through February 9, 2010. These sessions are slated as follows:

January 26: Topic – [Judicial Reform](#) (link to WV Chamber Policy Papers)

The Hon. Jeff Kessler, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Hon. Tim Miley, Chairman House Judiciary Committee

February 2: Topic – Tax Modernization

The Hon. Walt Helmick, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Hon. Harry Keith White, Chairman, House Finance Committee
Christopher Morris, West Virginia State Tax Commissioner

February 9: Topic – The Economy, the Budget, and What Government Can Afford

The Hon. Brooks McCabe, Vice Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Hon. Tom Campbell, Vice Chairman, House Finance Committee
Mark Muchow, West Virginia Department of Tax & Revenue

These sessions will be held at the Charleston Marriott beginning at 7:45 a.m. I will be happy to find out further information for you or to ask any questions that you may have.

CALENDAR OF JCCC EVENTS

JANUARY MEETING

PLACE: JACKSON GENERAL HOSPITAL

TIME: NOON

DATE: JANUARY 28, 2010

Monthly Lunch Meeting – Amy Haskins with the Jackson County Health Department will be discussing issues relating to a drug free workplace and the efforts of the Jackson County Anti-Drug Coalition.

FEBRUARY MEETING

PLACE: RAVENSWOOD @ GREEN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

TIME: NOON

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2010

Monthly Lunch Meeting – The topic will focus on the free on-site consultation services that OSHA provides to small and medium sized business.

MARCH MEETING

PLACE: TBD

TIME: NOON

DATE: MARCH 25, 2010

MONTHLY LUNCH MEETING – LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP FOR 2010

APRIL

PLACE: TBD

TIME: NOON

DATE: APRIL 29, 2010

MONTHLY LUNCH MEETING – HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT: **VALUE OF NUTRIENTS** – DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO LOCAL LANDOWNERS FOR THE UPCOMING GROWING SEASON

WHEN: JANUARY 27, 2010 @ 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: WVU EXTENSION OFFICE @ JACKSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

CONTACT: 304-372-8199

WHAT: **JACKSON GENERAL HOSPITAL AND JGH FOUNDATION ART AUCTION AND GALA**

WHEN: JANUARY 30, 2010 @ 6:00 P.M.

WHEN & WHERE: MCCOY'S CONFERENCE CENTER

CONTACT: RHONDA DAVIS @ 304-372-2731

WHAT: **HEART HEALTH DINNER DISCUSSION**

WHEN: FEBRUARY 4, 2010 @ 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: JACKSON GENERAL HOSPITAL

CONTACT: NANCY GARNES, RN @ 304-373-1516 OR NGARNES@JACKSONGENERAL.COM

WHAT: **PERCUSSION CONCERT FEATURING AMMED SOLOMON**

WHEN: FEBRUARY 4, 2010 @ 7:00 P.M.

WHERE: RIPLEY HIGH SCHOOL BAND ROOM



104 Miller Drive
 Ripley, WV 25271
 Phone: 304.532.3565
 Fax: 304.372.1153

Membership Application

Firm _____

Representative _____

Street Address _____

Mailing Address _____ ZIP _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____

Classification (i.e. Yellow Pages) _____

E-mail _____

Website Address _____

As the representative from the above firm, I hereby apply for membership to the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, Inc. to help promote the growth and prosperity of our community.

Signature

Date _____

Membership Type

ORGANIZATIONAL \$150.00 – Any non-profit organization primarily operating in Jackson County wishing to join with the JCCC to achieve common goals.

INDIVIDUAL \$50.00 non-voting - Any individual having an interest in general welfare and prosperity of Jackson County.

SUBSCRIBING – Any firm, corporation, association, government entity, and/or individual doing business in or residing in Jackson County.

1-5	\$150.00
6-15	175.00
16-25	200.00
26-35	225.00
36-45	250.00
46-55	275.00
56-65	300.00
66-75	325.00
76-85	350.00
86-95	375.00
96-105	400.00

Two part time employees equal one with application. Dues will be refunded if application is not approved by the Board of Directors of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

Over 106: .50 per employee.
 Maximum \$1,000 per year