

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

HUMAN RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

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FEATURED HUMAN RESOURCES EMPLOYEE



Do you have questions about unclassified contracts, personnel issues, employment, classification, position descriptions and the array of personnel systems? Then Gwyn Outka is someone you should get to know.

Gwyn joined the University on March 15, 1978 in the Human Resources Office. She has willingly accepted additional responsibilities and duties over the years and now functions in the role of Assistant Director for unclassified issues. She has had many exciting experiences throughout her career, including serving on negotiations for contract bargaining. Gwyn continues to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the University community.

Gwyn and her husband, Joel, a pharmaceutical representative, reside in Mankato, living in the house they built 35 years ago. They are blessed with two daughters and, as Gwyn will proudly tell you, two awesome grandchildren. Family is an important part of Gwyn's life.

Gwyn and her husband love to travel to new and exciting places and especially enjoy visiting our national parks. She loves cooking and finding new exotic restaurants to visit. Gardening is a rewarding relaxation for Gwyn. Spring is just around the corner, so get ready Gwyn!



JUST A FEW OF THE FOLKS WHO ENJOYED THE
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION WEEK COOKIE CONTEST!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a fun time of year to write about what is going on in HR. Despite the usual "hiring, getting people paid and dealing with benefits" frenzy, there are some very exciting and fun things that have taken place recently.

First, we kicked off the semester with Professional Development Day. By all accounts, this was a tremendous success. We offered 22 different programs; we had 664 total registrations and 379 employees (some registered for more than one program). The number of faculty was 160 and the number of staff was 219. The workshop evaluations were very positive and confirmed that we should have an annual day dedicated to Professional Development. Accordingly, mark your calendars for January 11, 2006, for the next one. Special thanks to the Professional Development Task Force and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for ensuring that this program was such a success.

Secondly, we just wrapped up Employee Recognition Week. Again, by all accounts it was a success. The week kicked off with a Coffee, Cocoa, Cookie social and ended with free admission to the very exciting men's and women's basketball games against SDSU. In between there were: lots of games, contests and prizes that were won; lots of thank you notes were delivered; and great events took place within individual work units.

Just remember – employee recognition is not just a one week concern. It is something we should keep in mind every day. If someone does something nice or well – tell them. You can always send a Maverick Pride Award from <http://www.mnsu.edu/humanres/erc/mavprideaward/>. Research shows that recognition and appreciation motivates people far more than money! Even though Employee Recognition Week was fun, take time to keep the spirit of appreciation alive and well at MSU.

UPD'S

We would like to remind everyone that the processing schedule for UPD's is posted on the Human Resources website under Calendars at <http://www.mnsu.edu/humanres>. We continue to receive UPD's that are not meeting the required timeline. This causes late payments to our existing employees and has even more consequences for our new employees. Late processing of new employees' paperwork affects their access to email, computer systems, MavCard and can result in late enrollment or deductions for insurance as well as not receiving payroll checks. This is not the way to welcome our new employees. Please help us to provide all our employees with timely payment for their work!

We also ask that you do not use shortened or informal names on UPD's as these are official employment documents and require the employees' legal name for accurate record keeping.

Always Keep your

ON-CAMPUS INFO
Current

<http://www.mnsu.edu/humanres/forms2/OncampusChange.pdf>

You can check your ON-CAMPUS info including mailcode, phone, etc. on the people finder located on the MSU web page under Directories. If corrections are needed please complete & submit the ON-CAMPUS INFO CHANGE FORM located at the web address listed below.

BENEFITS INFORMATION

HEALTH INSURANCE CARDS

By now you should have received your 2005 health insurance cards. If you have not received new cards, please contact your insurance carrier.

Phone numbers:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield...1-800-262-0819
- HealthPartners.....1-888-343-4404
- PreferredOne.....1-800-997-1750

Check your new cards carefully to make sure they contain correct names and clinic designations. Any errors should be reported immediately.

TRANSIT EXPENSE ACCOUNT (TEA)

Did you enroll in the Transit Expense Account (TEA) in 2004 and then forget to submit a reimbursement claim for your parking permit? Remember, reimbursement claims must be submitted within 180 days (approximately 6 months) of the date of purchase. Even if you missed that 6-month deadline for reimbursement, you don't have to lose the money that is in your TEA. It will carry forward to 2005 if you re-enroll by February 28, 2005. You can check your TEA balance on-line at <https://secure.eidebailly.com/benefits/index.asp> or by calling Eide Bailly at 1-800-300-1672. If you have an unused 2004 balance and want to re-enroll before the end of February, you may obtain a 2005 enrollment form from Human Resources or at <https://secure.eidebailly.com/benefits/stateforms.asp>.

If you don't have an unused TEA balance from 2004, then don't worry about re-enrolling by the end of February. I will send out a TEA enrollment reminder in March when the next parking permits go on sale. Only insurance-eligible faculty and staff may enroll in the TEA.

RETIREMENT CONSULTATION SERVICES

Retirement plan specialists are available to help you understand and make the most of your retirement savings. MSRS and TRA have offices in Mankato, and TIAA-CREF and Wells Fargo consultants will be on campus in March.

Mark Olson, a Financial Consultant from Wells Fargo, is providing consulting services through MnSCU's Defined Contribution Retirement Plan (this includes IRAP and Supplemental Retirement) and Tax Sheltered Annuity/403(b) Plan. He will be available for one-on-one consultations at MSU on Thursday, March 24. To schedule an appointment, please call Therese at 6942 or Wendy at 2015.

Anita Schlueter from TIAA-CREF will be at MSU on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 1 and 2, for one-on-one meetings. TIAA-CREF members and others interested in learning about the TIAA-CREF options offered through the Tax Sheltered Annuity/403(b) Plan and the Defined Contribution Retirement Plan are welcome. To schedule an appointment, visit TIAA-CREF's web site at www.tiaa-cref.org/moc or call Dianne at 1-800-877-6602.

Minnesota State Retirement System represents the MSRS General Plan, MSRS Unclassified Plan, and Deferred Compensation Plan. Call MSRS at 1-800-657-5757 to schedule an appointment at their office in Mankato.

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) also has an office in Mankato. TRA participants can schedule individual appointments by calling 1-800-657-3669. TRA also offers group workshops. View the workshop information and schedule at <http://www.tra.state.mn.us>.

Not sure which retirement plan(s) you have? Look at the Before-Tax Deductions column on your paycheck stub to see which plans you contribute to right now. You should also be receiving quarterly or annual statements of account from any plans in which you have an account balance.

HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENT

The Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) is a new benefit plan provided to faculty under Article 11, Section G of the 2003-2005 IFO/MnSCU Agreement. In January, 2005, \$600 was deposited into a HRA account for each insurance-eligible IFO member. Faculty will be able to be reimbursed from their HRA accounts for qualified out-of-pocket health care expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2005. However, the HRA is still "under construction" and not ready to process reimbursement claims.

COBRA and other statutory regulations that apply to HRA's have raised some challenging issues. Staff at the MnSCU system office continue to work toward solutions which will protect unused HRA balances and keep administrative costs as low as possible. They are also working with the Department of Employee Relations (DOER) on the HRA plan document which will explain how the HRA operates and what expenses qualify for reimbursement. They hope to have all the details worked out soon so that reimbursement claims can be processed beginning in March or April. Faculty will receive further information about the HRA as it becomes available.

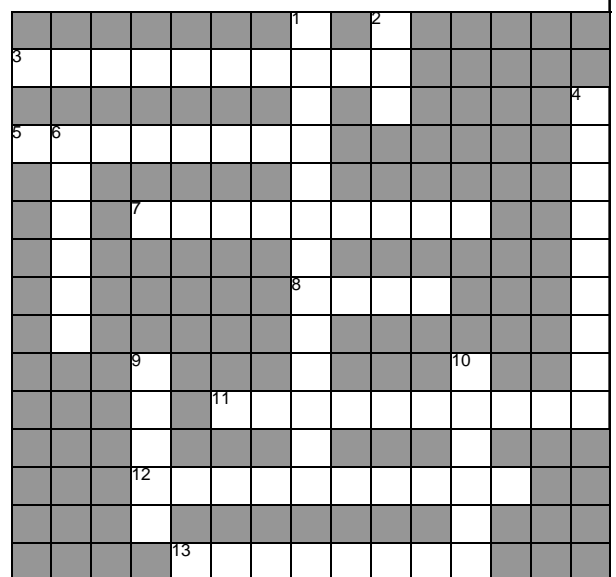
TEST YOUR MSU IQ

ACROSS

- 3. 1st female president of a University
- 5. Money in the bank!
- 7. Sofa
- 8. Friends?
- 11. Confessions?
- 12. Mapping Springs?
- 13. Dugan's Office

DOWN

- 1. Worth its weight in Gold
- 2. Univ. with 1st female president
- 4. Rebel Bulls
- 6. Been here, done this
- 9. 32 Colleges & Universities
- 10. Squirmy bldg, so to speak



ANSWERS: 1. PARKING PERMIT; 2. MSU; 3. TULLA; 4. MANKATO; 5. MONEY; 6. ALUMNI; 7. DAVENPORT; 8. PAIS; 9. MNSCU; 10. WIGLEY; 11. ADMISIONS; 12. CHARTRILLS; 13. SECURITY